

SWATANTRA

On Sale Every Saturday

Vol. IX, July 3, 1954. No. 22

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ON THE COVER:

Mr. A. B. Shetty opening the Seva Samajam Medical Centre at Mangalapuram, on June 24

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SWATANTRA

Vol. IX.

JULY 3 SATURDAY 1954

No. 22

THIRTY DAYS OF SILENCE

MR. CHESTER BOWLES, former U. S. Ambassador to India, said this week in a speech at New Haven that it would be good if the U. S. observed 30 days of absolute silence to just listen to and try to understand Asia, instead of indulging in so much talk, finger-shaking and telling them how things should be done. There is indeed urgent need for calm reflection by American statesmen about the effectiveness of their present policies. The official American conception of the world is that it is divided into two sections, the free and the Communist, and that the Communist power would occupy the whole world if the Americans did not look sharp about it and take adequate security measures in time. Superficially this analysis seems correct. But on closer examination it will be found that the international situation is vastly complicated and cannot be compressed within any simple formula. For example, it is a familiar American comment on the Communist system of government that it affords no security to the individual—the State is a Moloch and in its name the governing tyrants can pounce on any citizen and deprive him of life and liberty without due process of law. One major distinction that is generally made between the free democracies of the West and the Communist countries is that in the former all are bound by the rule of the law and no bureaucrat can deprive any citizen of his rights superseding the dictates of the law—whereas in the latter

nobody is safe against the treacherous play of power politics, not even a giant in his own right of the might and stature of Beria. This distinction is not without justification. But actually within the past four or five years, dread of Communist infiltration has substantially altered the whole character of the American administration. Under the impetus of the McCarthy witch-hunt, thousands of Americans are being deprived of their livelihoods, not as a result of evidence, but merely on suspicion. The sense of security is gone. After what has happened to Dr. Oppenheimer, no American citizen can feel that his loyalty will be taken for granted. Any day he might be ousted from his position—however dearly earned it might be with years of hard work and steadfast devotion to duty—and cast out as a "security risk" subject to concentrated social persecution.

In essential spirit there is little difference between McCarthy and the typical leaders of the Communist system which he is out to destroy. In the fight against Communism, the Americans are themselves approximating to traditional Communist methods, and some of the features of Communism which they have been denouncing have found their way into American domestic life and the relations of the U. S. with foreign nations. This degeneration means that the moral victory has to some extent gone to Communism in the U. S.—Soviet contest. The Commu-

nist powers seem to have forced the Americans to borrow some of their own weapons in the course of their efforts to save America and the world from further invasions of Communism. The thirty days' silence advocated by Mr. Chester Bowles will be useful and timely if invested in a thorough and searching introspection for a sensible and realistic revision of the American attitude to Communism. A wise reorientation of foreign policy and domestic administrative standards will follow automatically.

It may be conceded that in the best-governed democracies people are happier than in the Communist regimes. Americans may have good reason to shudder at the thought of their own present democratic system being transformed into a Communist government on some future, fateful day. In their own country and with their own resources they are entitled to take what measures they like to avert the threatened disaster. But even so, if they adopt Communist methods to counter Communist infiltration, the whole effort would have been rendered valueless; with their own hands they would have struck a blow at what is most precious in democracy, and in that way weakened it to the delight of the Communists themselves. In foreign policy the real question for America to decide is: To what extent it can rope in other nations under some appealing banner into its own plans of collaboration for collectively checking the expansion of Communist power. It is not for nothing that the Americans had comparatively greater success in drawing the Western European countries into their anti-Communist orbit than in Asia. The nations of Western Europe have had actual experience and knowledge both of the delights of democracy and of the horrors of the aggression and regimented life of the Communist regimes of the

Soviet. In Asia millions of people are still in the stage of starvation. The benefits of democracy are to them mainly academic. They are fascinated by the reports that reach them of the complete conquest of hunger that is admitted even by adverse critics to the credit of Communist countries like China and Russia. The soul-crushing tyrannies attributed to the totalitarian Governments associated with Communism have no terrors for the starving millions of Asia whose greatest immediate need is liberation from hunger, and provided they are offered food and livelihood, they do not care what else they have to face. The Communists offer them just this: as against it, there is no superior attraction proffered from the American side capable of winning their loyalty.

In their anxiety to check Communism, the Americans have sided with the corrupt and degenerate Kuo Min Tang clique of Chiang Kai-shek in China, the pleasure-loving sybarite Bao Dai in Indo-China, they have contrived to get the democratically elected Huq regime ousted in East Pakistan, and now in Guatemala, they are suspected of collusion with the insurgents against the established government. New tensions have been created in the world by these samples of American intervention, which the Communists have not been slow to exploit adroitly to their own advantage. It is time the Americans realised that other countries will not be stampeded into a community of outlook with them to withstand Communism except to the extent dictated by their own interests as they understand them. Let the Americans relax a little and allow these interests to have some free play. Their help will then be invited and appreciated; and not suspected and misunderstood and at times even resented, as now.

Sotto Voce

★

PILGRIM FROM CATHAY



I VIVIDLY remember my first encounter, as a boy, with a country cousin. It was at a family reunion and we were a pretty boisterous crowd of urchins. He was rather tongue-tied, and in our elation at finding one who seemed an easy butt we settled down to rag him. But hardly had we proceeded with our school boy pleasantries for five minutes when we found ourselves tumbling down like ninepins before his flying fist. Then we made up to him with unashamed snobbery, and he unbent so far as to tell us—his tongue was glib enough now—that many a Goliath, before whom we should have been as chaff before the wind, had bit the dust under that flail-like arm.

★

The ether is still reverberating with the paens of praise that Mr. Chou En-Lai's presence in New Delhi evoked. But I cannot help feeling that India's official enthusiasm was inspired by similar unheroic reasons. It was not so very long ago that a mild reminder from our Foreign Office that Red China's brisk absorption of Tibet was a violation of that unfortunate country's autonomy and was calculated to cause uneasiness to us as Tibet's close neighbour, was met with a strident "Mind your business" which had no diplomatic finesse about it. We retired in wounded dignity. But that was not the end of the story. We concluded an agreement with China which amounted to an admission that we had been in the wrong in speaking up for Tibet.

★

And now the "Five Principles" underlying that agreement are bla-

zoned by Mr. Chou as holding the key to universal peace. And we seem to be almost as elated as Mr. Neville Chamberlain was after Munich. I should have thought that our recent experience with Ceylon might have served to abate our ardour somewhat. Signing a blank cheque may be good Gandhian politics. But that is not the way to ride the whirlwind and direct the storm. The China of Tsung is very different from the China of Kung, but the sentimentalists of the North Block seem to look upon Mr. Chou as if he were the twentieth century Hieun Tsang.

★

We were in a mighty hurry to recognise Communist China. We undertook a thankless job in Korea and were roundly abused, not least by our two-thousand year old friend and admirer. But, undeterred by this churlishness, we have assiduously laboured to get Red China accepted by the Western Powers. We have, in our natural chagrin at the insolent assumption of the West that it could settle the fate of South East Asia over our head, sought to show that we could do a bit of organising on our own account. That, incidentally, suited China admirably. It has provided Mr. Chou with a platform from which to proclaim the Five Principles.

★

Those principles are unexceptionably worded—if, that is, you construe the words in the dictionary sense. But the world knows only too well that in the Red Lexicon such words as 'peace,' 'democracy,' 'co-existence,' mean something very different, they mean in fact just what the Reds say they

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shall mean. Now, India and China, we are told, will adhere to "mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence." But apparently none of these undertakings will be regarded by China as standing in the way of her taking just the same lively interest in the affairs of any other Asiatic country as she has been taking in those of Indo-China and Korea.

Mr. Chou declares unctuously that revolution cannot be exported. But North Korea and Viet-Minh are standing refutations of the comforting assumption that Red China will decorously refuse to have a look-in if tomorrow a so-called "resistance movement" should raise its head in any of those other countries which Mr. Nehru would preserve as an oasis of peace. It is as dangerous as it is easy to succumb to the temptation of supposing that Chinese Communism is in these respects very different from the Russian brand. The Coueists who build great hopes on Mr. Nehru being able to detach China from Russia are capable of believing anything.

Mr. Chou spoke with his tongue in his cheek when he suggested in his Delhi statements that all aggression came from the West. Did he forget that Russia also is in the West? And those who speculate nicely whether the lady will swallow the tiger or the tiger the lady might pause a moment to reflect on the significance of Red China's incorporating in her Constitution fulsome acknowledgement of her chela-ship to the Great Bear. I am all for realism. If we had to drop Tibet from prudential considerations—though we have been shouting at the predatory West, "Hands off Asia!"—well, we had to. But need we go on telling ourselves and a cynical world that where we sit is the head of the table?

VIGNESWARA

SIDELIGHTS ::

COMMENTING on the editorial under the caption "A Warning, Not An Example" (SWATANTRA, June 19) Sri V. Chander writes:

Your editorial is forthright, outspoken and trenchant in its expression—no Andhra would dare to write on the lines you have done. You have photographed my feelings in words—there are thousands who feel alike.

My father died when I was five—leaving large landed properties. Till my elder brother came of age, they were managed by a Muslim. When that Muslim gentleman died, my brother, a Brahmin, managed his family affairs for a number of years. I had no racial feeling—Hindu, Muslim, Telugu, Tamil, etc. After the creation of Pakistan, I have developed a dislike for a Muslim. After the creation of the Andhra State, I have developed a dislike for an Andhra. Paradoxically though, you were one of the strongest supporters of the coming into being of the Andhra State.

I am here reminded of a picture, illustrating Tagore's poem, where man, bound in chains, hand and foot, appears before the Lord of Judgement, who asks, "Prisoner, tell me who was it that wrought this unbreakable chain?" With bowed head, the man confesses "It was I."

In one particular Sri Chander is wrong. Neither I nor this journal ever advocated the linguistic division of the country. I was never in favour of the formation of an Andhra State. But I realised always the psychology underlying the demand, and its naturalness. Years ago I once asked Sri Kamaraj Nadar what he would do if Hyderabad were incorporated in the Madras State. Without a moment's hesitation he said: "If Hyderabad came into Madras, the Andhras would be the majority in the legislature. In that event, I would certainly ask for a separate State for the Tamils." If the Andhras had been the larger section of the population in composite Madras State, the demand for separation would never have come from them. Minority dissent is invariably the basis of secessionist movements. It is provoked by majority aggression, clan-

nishness, bad government. There would be no clamour for minorities to branch out into States of their own where justice prevails and democracy is well advanced: and where people feel that their lot is quite good and will not be bettered by a shift in jurisdiction. As long as there was a purpose in discussion, SWATANTRA opposed the principle of linguistic division. It did not abandon its view, but it desisted from expressing it, when the order went forth for the formation of the Andhra State. It is purposeless to persist in viewpoints however honestly held, once they are rejected and contrary arrangements get established as the order of the day.

Language is a dividing agent and the disuniting effects of multifarious languages in the same country were counteracted under British rule by administrative divisions that took no note of language and as often grouped together different linguistic regions as they cut across them. We became a nation because language did not work as a bar for the freest migration within national boundaries. Multi-linguality developed unchecked throughout the country and people from any part of it could go and settle in any other without any sense of being unwanted. The British built the Indian nation, and national consciousness was at its peak when they left. Since then the clamour for linguistic States has served to undo the nation-building effects of the British system of administrative division. We are going in for States where people of one language are being egged on to look upon the land as exclusively their own and others are viewed as interlopers and conditions of life are made as hard for them as possible. The natural consequence of linguistic division in a federal constitution is to provoke in each State the mentality of a separate nationality with an intensifying network of internal barriers. Even our national leaders have become provincial. The rancorous

strife of aggressive linguistic loyalties has already torn to pieces much of our precious inter-State nationality. There will be little strength left in the nation for any worthwhile fulfilment when national consciousness sickens in the people under the virus of parochialism as it has been doing with alarming rapidity.

The question of a merger of Andhra back into Madras State would never have arisen but for the reopening of the whole issue of linguistic division by the States Reorganisation Commission. Sometime ago an Andhra Minister threatened that if the capital were removed from Kurnool, Rayalaseema would go back to Madras. Like every attempt to fashion the destiny of States on minatory foundations, I thought it was a silly effusion. But the present occasion is quite different, it is appropriate for a careful and balanced consideration of the issue on its merits, taking into due account the experience gained in the Andhra State itself since it was formed. I am rather sceptical about the practical possibilities of a merger of Andhra back again into Madras. What is done cannot be easily undone, perhaps, especially after crores have been spent in the doing of it, apart from the question whether there is anything tangibly beneficial to show for so much spending. But I have met in recent weeks a surprising number of people who are disillusioned with the new Andhra Government and speak with longing of the far better conditions in pre-partition days. And these were all great enthusiasts clamouring for separation at about this time last year.

It is only fair to say that among my correspondents there have not been wanting admirers of the Andhra Government. One of them rates me roundly for not giving more time before passing judgment. Time of course there is in plenty and it opens up before the new State in an unlimited panorama. The eternity called time is a cosmic phenomenon which contains within itself every created thing, and it is in nobody's hands to give or withhold it in any quarter. But the particular Andhra

Government now functioning, with Sri Prakasam at its head, has not time on its side. The whole basis of Sri Prakasam's choice as Chief Minister is the assumption that within the extremely limited tenure of office which on account of his old age he was likely to have, quick results of portentous importance were to be expected, and he alone of all the Andhras, was the one leader marked out for achieving them. Sri Prakasam at 86 or 87 has no place as Chief Minister in any State that looks to leisureliness for a solution of its main problems. But it is not on the ground that the Chief Minister has been lacking in energy that his present leadership is open to criticism. It is much worse. The charge against him is nothing less than that he has moved in the wrong direction, set a bad example, and reduced to a fantastic absurdity the whole elaborate paraphernalia maintained at great expense to ensure the selection of the right man for every important post in the State.

I was told in England of a public servant who refused a coveted promotion because, he said, there was another man in the same office who deserved it better than himself. On examples like this, the greatness of England is built. How unheard-of they are in the new Andhra! Men are the media through which all the crores allotted for alleged beneficial Government projects are spent, and if unsuitable men or those less than the very best are chosen for key positions in the State, it will mean that the money will be mis-spent, and waste instead of fulfilment will crown much of the costly, heavily advertised Government activity. It is a pity that our Chief Ministers should overlook the obvious choice and bestow their preference in accordance with no determinable principle of administrative equity when high posts of great public importance come to be filled. Far too often it is found that erratic patronage has supplanted intrinsic justice. The result is that more and more among the ambitious in the public service who want to get on,

(Continued on page 43)

TOKYO: CITY OF SOUND AND FURY

By WALTER BRIGGS

Built with the aggressive fervour of Asia's most industrious people, Tokyo has become a curious blend of East and West in architecture, even in the personality of its active inhabitants.

TOKYO is a city of movement. It is a race-horse pounding down the stretch, a merry-go-round at full whirl, a gale-blown wave piling up on shore. The people of Tokyo walk with intense speed, crowd with a full-back's momentum into packed elevated trains, drive with throttle bursts that have one car passing another that's passing another. The electric saw is buzzing at the two-man furniture factory down at my corner long before I set out for work in the morning, is still buzzing when I pass by in the evening. Even entertainment is at breathless pace.

Yes, movement is a leading personality characteristic of this third largest city in the world. Its very population growth is one of momentum, up 350,600 in the 12 months ended last November 30. The total then was 7,494,280. The number of babies continues to proliferate, ambitious young men continue to come in from the farm. Census officials look for 8,000,000 by the end of 1954—pushing London and New York.

Once, say the keepers of the canals, Tokyo—which means merely East City—was an easy-going sort of place, much like the London and New York of times past. For a time after its 14th century founding, it was overshadowed by numerous Japanese cities. In fact, not until Japan's opening by the West a hundred years ago did Tokyo, at the heart of Japan's chain of four main islands, begin to amount to much. Since then its rate of growth, of development, probably has outstripped any other major city on the globe. And this despite a disastrous earthquake-fire in 1923 and the devastating fire bombs of the last months of World War II.

Tokyo has been built with the aggressive fervour of Asia's most

industrious people. It has been built with techniques borrowed from industrious people of the West. The result is a curious blend of East and West in architecture, customs, manners, even in the personality of its inhabitants. Perhaps from such a blend is arising a beginning of international understanding.

Tokyo has taken from the West what might be considered both the high and the low. Besides the striptease, for example, it has imported Western ballet. There is a Tokyo Philharmonic orchestra and a Tokyo Symphony orchestra. Last year such Western artists as Marian Anderson, Joseph Szigeti and Walter Gieseking performed to standing room—as did Xavier Cugat and Louis Armstrong. Every Tokyo teen-ager seems to have mastered the jitterbug. One of Japanese radio's most popular figures is a disc jockey with a "swing club" following for Dixieland tunes.

Tokyo industrialists learned from the West how to turn out an enormous quantity of textiles with machines—and how to turn out enough guns and fighting planes to despoil much of Asia. Today they are rebuilding their industry for peace—and for defence.

Japanese statesmen, sitting in Tokyo, fashioned parliamentary government in the image of the West's—then let it degenerate into a tool of the militarists. Today they are intent on clinging to democracy—however strong the attack from both Communists and Rightists—that grew up under the Allied occupation.

Signs in English give prestige to Tokyo enterprises, even such as "Flowers and Stuffs" and "Punc and Air Services." Youngsters on the streets proudly shout "Hello, mister" at the passing Westerners. Japanese youths carry Western magazines

under their arms and wrap their lunches in English-language newspapers to impress the girls with their modernity. The girls have become bobbysoxers in dress as well as dance (one department store employs models to teach them how to cope with the intricacies of donning the "old fashioned" kimono and obi). Women now walk with erect dignity besides their men, rather than trailing them. Championship baseball games are played to larger crowds than Yankee stadium's. Cinemascope has come to stay (Japanese optical firms are, in fact, turning out the projectors) and there are movie fan clubs.

But, as we say, Tokyo is a blend. There is the cherry blossom time, April and May, when all who can, traipse to Ueno park to meander amid colour and aroma. Buddhist and Shinto holidays are observed with hearty ceremonies that date from a time before these religions appeared on the Japanese scene.

Kabuki, the ancient and stylized dance drama, is always a sellout and title matches in sumo, the ancient and stylized wrestling, have television viewers packed by hundreds before store windows. Ornate geisha charm party-going males with their daintiness, their skillful playing of the harplike samisen, their beauty. Artists take infinite pains with ceramics and woodcuts, artisans with gay lanterns and shapely bamboo baskets. Boys take great delight in kite-flying their mothers and elder sisters in delicate flower-arrangement.

And there is a courtesy and grace—the repeated bows upon meeting and parting, for example—that is Japan's alone.

If Tokyo is a city of movement, it is also a city of noise. Sound engineers say that, scientifically measured, its hubbub until recently was four times New York's. Despite a police-enforced campaign to tone things down, there is blaring music from shop fronts, vocal advertising from street-corner loudspeakers. Tokyo's taxi drivers, than whom there can be none zanier, drive with their elbows on their horns.

Then there are the peddlers. Their shouts say that their wares are fermented beans, shellfish, bamboo poles. A handbell is for the garbage collector, (for Tokyo has no drainage system). Wooden clappers announce the man who entertains children with a series of paper illustrations in exchange for yen for candy of dubious quality. A weird "amooza-a-oh-ha-rye" tune is for the ragman, a gong and drum announce the opening of a store, a flute is for noodles. The wooden clacks at night are from the fire-watchers on their rounds.

And here, with the tots shod in wooden clogs, the children's hour is the clunk-clunk-clunk of little feet.

Noise there is—but quiet, too. Like other great cities of the East—Peking, say, or Bangkok—Tokyo has its quiet, narrow lanes, its large and beautiful parks, its imposing temple grounds rich in tradition. The children snare crickets in the lanes, the romantic await the moon in the gardens. For the seeking, there is peace to be found here.

Black marketeers get rich

THERE is a vast amount of construction work, as must be to accommodate the fast growing population, the rapid expansion of commerce and industry. The majestic Diet building, much of the Imperial palace, the historic Imperial hotel—these survived the debacle of war. But a great deal of the city was debris. Now new factories belch smoke across the horizon; additional subways are in the making; and apartment houses, something new to Japan, are springing up to house the middle-class.

But most of the residential building is as it always has been—small flimsy houses of wood, with sliding interior doors faced with paper, with wooden bathtubs for soaking, not soaping, with floors of woven reed. These houses stand close together on tiny lots of queer geometric proportions, they climb ravines and perch atop Tokyo's many hills. They are without lawns but there are rock formations and pine trees and flowers in season. Only in such residential

quarters can Tokyo be called a beautiful city—and then most especially when the clouds lift from the sacred Mt. Fujiyama in the background.

Before the war the Tokyo ward in which I live was virtually suburban. Now, so fast is the city spreading, it is considered to be near Tokyo's heart.

The smallness of most houses—one to two rooms is the rule—should be emphasized, for the Japanese, despite their immense energy, are not a wealthy people. Theirs is a land short of arable fields, poor in raw materials. There is no starvation in Japan, as elsewhere in Asia, but to survive is a struggle.

Of course, there are the rich (and the black market rich) to be seen in chauffeur-driven Cadillacs on the avenues, but actually there is only one car to every 1,200 residents. On the other hand, there is one bicycle to every seven residents.

Despite Japan's impoverishment, most observers—and the leaders of the present Government—believe the Japanese are living beyond their means. Stores on the Ginza, Tokyo's main shopping centre, are heavy with perfumes and liquors, with watches and fountain pens. Property on the Ginza is worth \$3,160 a square foot.

Premier Shigeru Yoshida calls for austerity, but the rich, often endowed with huge expense accounts, spend millions in gaudy night clubs, post-war creations, that have caused Tokyo to be dubbed "the new Shanghai." Mahjongg, now banned in its Chinese homeland, is played by hundreds daily at each of 1,282 licensed houses. Pachinko, upright pinball machines, are the rage; there is one to every 40 inhabitants and mothers with infants strapped to their backs feed yen into them trying to win soap and cigarettes.

What has saved Japan's economy up to now has been the occupation, the movement of U. N. forces to and from Korea, the presence of U. S. "security forces." Foreign spending has meant the difference between Japan's breaking even financially and going far into the hole. It is largely

responsible for the well stocked shops on Tokyo's Ginza.

Uncle Sam's troops, plus a sprinkling of Canadians and Colombians. Thais and Turks, other U. N. forces, are always to be seen on Tokyo's streets, to the delight of the city's merchants. They buy and send home the silks and chinaware for which Japan is famous. And they spend a great deal on Japanese girls—this may be Japan's biggest single source of dollar income—with whom they stroll arm in arm from park to theatre to cabaret.

Many of these soldiers have married Japanese women: 13,000 have taken Japanese wives to the U. S. Others have contributed to a prosperous "hotel" business; some 500 small inns catering to foreign troops have sprung up about the city. This business in turn contributes to organized prostitution—and girls are still sold by pauperized farmer-parents to the panders of the city.

These foreign troops, boon though they are economically, have among them unsavoury elements who have helped Japanese gangsters develop a rich black market. Soldiers buy cigarettes and whiskey, medicines and nylons, at post exchanges, then unload them for two or three times the price. The Japanese with whom they do business are, in the main, those who drive the Cadillacs.

As is natural under circumstances of gangsterism, there have been a marked increase in crimes involving violence, according to police authorities. And delinquency is growing among Japanese youths. In 1953, for example, juvenile sex crimes jumped 84 per cent over 1952. There has also been a rise in the use of heroin and opium, which are believed to be smuggled in from Red China.

Let it not be assumed, however, that Tokyo is a city notorious for criminality. Its police force is tough and efficient. Actually, Tokyo's crime rate probably is no higher than most big cities' figures—and it is said to be lower than New York's.

It would be unfair to end this report on Tokyo on a sour note, for

the city's movement, its energy, is a kind of inspiration to visitors. One is filled with confidence, after spending some time here, that, given a break, this city will succeed.

Perhaps one feels this most when one observes in the trains the multitude who are deeply concentrating on text-books, the throngs in the book-stores, the avid readers of newspapers that are posted on boards in front

of the big dailies. Here there is a will to learn, to succeed.

This, then, is Tokyo. Perhaps it has never been more fittingly described than by Oland D. Russell, a New York newspaper correspondent, in a new picturebook, "Here's Tokyo."

"It's a wonderful, hybrid, dissolute, noisy, quiet, brooding, garish, simplifying silly, contemplative, cultured, absurd city."—NNF

LOCAL LIBRARY AUTHORITIES

SOME movements begin with an enthusiasm, others with a philosophy; while others with both. But in Andhra Library Movement, sponsored by the Madras Public Libraries Act, 1948, it is unfortunate that both the elements are found missing. Vast sums collected as library cess from 1950, have been lying intolerably idle, for the overburdened D. P. I. and the D. E. O.'s could neither enthuse themselves nor evolve a philosophy. Further the sad feature of Local Library Authorities is that they make party-politics the main object and the running of libraries a subsidiary occupation. It is no wonder that, "Local Library Authorities meet at long intervals, arrive at no decisions and dissolve." For instance, the election of the Chairman to L. L. A., Visakha, was conducted towards the fag end of 1953 and one candidate was declared elected by the casting vote of the presiding member. But, as is usual with elections, the defeated candidate questioned the validity of the election of Chairman, and petitioned to Government praying for intervention. Already, six months have elapsed. The intervention sought for, by the aggrieved, does not seem to emerge. The candidate declared elected feels diffident to discharge his legitimate duties pending final settlement. Thus the L. L. A., Visakha, has been rendered defunct.

The Government do not seem to be aware of the role played by the Libraries in developing and enriching the entire community nor are

they alive to the size of funds set apart for this purpose, which, if diverted to other channels of nation building activities will not fail to yield the desired fruit.

The suggestions made below may be of some help towards the better implementation of the Madras Public Libraries Act, 1948.

(1) Immediate bifurcation of the post of D. P. L. from that of D.P.I.

(2) Relieving D. E. O.'s of the Library affairs of L.L.A.

(3) Appointment of District Librarian to be the Secretary of L.L.A., with adequate scales of pay in view of the special technical qualifications.

(4) Election of members to L.L.A's to be made from persons connected with Library movement.

(5) Frequent meetings of the Provincial Library Committee and of L.L.A's.

(6) Opening of Children's Libraries, Branch Libraries, Village Libraries, Delivery Stations, Mobile Vans, etc., as envisaged by the Act.

(7) More attractive and comfortable Library Buildings.

(8) Wide publicity by means of film strips, Cinema Slides, Public Lectures, etc.

(9) Suitable machinery to be set up for collecting and catering to the needs of the reading public.

(10) Appointments to D. P. L., (Director of Public Libraries), S.O.L. (Spl., Officer, Public Libraries) and State Librarian etc., to be made from qualified and experienced District Librarians, who may, if necessary, be sent to foreign countries for further training.

T. V. RAGHAVULU

LIFE . . .

PEOPLE AND THEIR FACES

SOMEbody has said our thoughts are constantly moulding our faces. On that cue, the reading of people's faces becomes a fascinating sport. I was introduced to this pastime years ago by an elderly friend of my family who, it was generally agreed, had made a mess of his life. All he had to show for sixty-five years of living was only a lot of mistakes. He was my confidante. I poured into his patient ear all my dreams and hopes and my half-dozen life-size ambitions. One of them was to be a writer. What sort of a writer, asked my friend and counsellor, did I want to be?

"I want to write novels," I said, fervently.

"What kind of novels?"

"Novels about—oh, people."

"Tales of high adventure and hazard, of blood-stirring excitement and breathless thrill?"

"No."

"Fairy tales, imaginative will-o'-wisp stories, fancy, thistledown, tripping vignettes?"

"No."

"Children's stories, bed-time stories, Stories the Letters Tell?"

"No."

"Stories of war, tales of the tattered battalion, of the men with the broken heads and the blood running into their eyes; spy stories, detectives stories, murder stories?"

"Oh, my goodness, no," I said. "Just stories about—well, people. Ordinary, everyday people. Not heroes, not children, not kings, but just people."

The first thing I must do, he said at once, was read.

"What?"

"Everything."

"I meant what kind of books?"

"All kinds. Good books, bad books, thin books, fat books, second-hand books, *de luxe* editions, easy books, difficult books, vulgar books. All of them. Anything printed on paper, stop and read it."

There was something else too.

"Everyday," he said, "when you are going by bus, or walking on the road,

or at the beach or in a restaurant, when you are waiting for a friend, when you are buying a magazine, notice closely the people around you and come home and put them down on paper."

"Well," I said, "that shouldn't be difficult." At seventeen there is nothing one cannot do—better than everybody else.

That was how I got into the habit of noticing people. And I reached a stage when I flattered myself that by applying the rule that our faces are constantly being moulded by our thoughts, I could read the minds and circumstances of people from their faces. All it needed was concentration.

I could recognise the happy, care-less people and the formal, rigid, unrelaxed people. I could spot the man who saved and spent carefully and the man who didn't give a damn. I could recognise the Communist, the anti-Brahmin, the religious fanatic. I knew the sensualist I knew the bachelor. I could recognise the nagging woman, the shrewd, mean woman, the open, generous fool. I could recognise the maid and the wife and the mistress. I could detect the grandfather who was regretting his past and the rare old man who thought of his future. I could recognise the young at heart, the petrified middle-age and the late blossoming.

Oh yes, I could recognise them all. And I built homes round them. Often before I had gone through two of them my bus reached my destination and the game was over. Of course, sometimes I forgot to pay my fare or to take the change back from the conductor or to take my umbrella but those were all what you might call occupational hazards.

But the other day while waiting for a bus I noticed a little girl of about ten, standing demurely beside her mother. Round face, lively, impish eyes, a healthy body. I could imagine the kind of young girl she would grow up to be. She would be

exhausting and inexhaustible, running around, chattering, breaking things, jumping. I thought I could almost see her mind on her face—a mind holding its breath in the wonder and delight of the world. The mother looked patient, calm, long-suffering. Obviously the quiet, angelic behaviour of the child was an imposed discipline for which the mother was mildly grateful. My rule about minds and faces couldn't fail.

Malaise in the Campus

A FEW weeks ago I happened to see the note circulated by the Union Public Service Commission to all the Indian Universities, expressing their concern and alarm over the steady fall in the intellectual standards of the graduates turned out by them. The Commission had also given its remarks on the performances of our graduates in the various subjects in which they are examined in competitive examinations. Going through the remarks which contained some shocking samples of the blunders perpetrated by our graduates, I felt there was one phrase that was used more often than any other to point out the defects of our students and that phrase was "superficial knowledge." Time and again, under all headings, it was this phrase that caught my eye. This, in my opinion, is a significant finding. It reflects directly the state of our students' intellect and indirectly the quality of instruction they receive. And it also explains the existence of that curious and artificial malaise that our students suffer from—chronic boredom.

No one who has moved closely with our university students can deny the existence and wide prevalence of this state of mind of theirs. When two of them get together in a classroom, library, playground, cinema-auditorium or any place for that matter, within a few minutes, one turns to the other and whispers: "Boring." The other agrees with him nine times out of ten. Then onwards, their attention wanders, their distaste increases, until finally they are "bored stiff." Usually it catches

The bus came and we got in. Mother and daughter sat in a double seat together. As the bus moved off, the mother turned to her little daughter and said something and the child smiled and instead of replying, made gestures with her hands.

And I suddenly realized she was a deaf-mute.

I think God has separate rules for children.

SANTHA

on, until a whole class of students lose interest in what they are listening to and begin to shuffle restlessly.

Of course, one realises that at times people of all ages and types get really bored. This boredom is caused by mental fatigue. Long stretches of study or any other form of brain work, periods of worry and mental stress naturally result in mental fatigue. As a result, people might lose interest in things and feel bored with everything. After some relaxation, the brain is refreshed and the boredom vanishes. Such boredom is real and natural, brought about by mental tiredness which a short period of rest and diversion will cure.

But in the case of our "bored" students we are not up against mental tiredness but mental laziness. It is a stubborn refusal to become interested. The universal principle of inertia manifests itself in the minds of men also. There is a total absence of any inclination to learn. It produces the callous confidence that a few things mugged up before an examination will serve the purpose. How many times do students abstain from particular classes because they are boring. There seems to be an obdurate reluctance to broaden their minds and a satisfaction with their narrow interests. It is this condition that is directly responsible for the superficial knowledge revealed by our graduates in various subjects in which they are supposed to hold Masters' degrees. There are some who dismiss this intellectual apathy as the characteristic youthful groping for values. But groping implies the yearning, searching spirit of

inquiry. It is exactly this that is absent in our "bored" young men.

There ought to be many things that cause this mental inertia in them. To my mind, two causes occur. In the first place, lack of opportunities to exercise their thinking faculty. Secondly, far too many of our youngsters pass through school and college without making stimulating contacts with literature, with the arts, with music, philosophy or even individuals.

For the first cause, part of the blame must devolve on the educational system to which our students are subject. Our present examinations put too much emphasis on the faculty of memory and very little on that of original thinking. With a majority of our students, thinking is almost non-existent! This sorry state of affairs is worsened by the English bogey. Everybody knows the yawning gulf between the standard of English in schools and that obtaining in colleges. Our boys, by the hundreds, are laid low by this difficulty. What little capacity they have for thinking is set at naught by the lack of power of expression in the English language. They only memorise and remember until such times as they need to, after which they forget. It results in creating an indifference to original thinking. While four years of university education should have sharpened the thinking faculty of students and deepened their understanding and widened their range of appreciation, what one finds among the generality of them is intellectual and emotional immaturity, an almost juvenile excitability and the feeling that education is over with the end of the college course. Mental vitality, instead of being roused, sleeps and is finally sapped by sheer absence of exercise. When too far gone, it completely slips from the grip of a person.

The importance of stimulating contacts at the right times of their lives cannot be exaggerated. Development of reading habits, intelligent pursuits and cultivation of good friendships should be encouraged. A good set of friends can do a lot to knock all the nonsense, shame and complexes out

of one's head. By contacts with the arts, one learns to appreciate the beautiful things of life. An awareness of the richness and variety of life is a condition of culture. To condition the mind toward this end is the task of education. Sophistication alone will not do. Refinement must follow. Thus the seeds of maturity are sown in the minds of our students. Their receptivity is deepened, they register more and more new impressions and keep in motion the vital process known as the broadening of the mind. The time-sense and space-sense of human history and knowledge should form a backdrop in their minds. With breadth of mind should also come depth of understanding and feeling. All of which will keep the mind ever alert, engaged and active, and "Boredom" then will die an ignominious death.

D. NARENDER

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Indians in South Africa

By S. GOPALAKRISHNAN

THE decision of the Government of India to close the Indian High Commission in Cape Town from July 1 was the least that the Government could do to mark their disapproval of the consistently hostile attitude adopted by the South African Government against their citizens of Indian origin. Future contacts between the two Governments are to be maintained either direct or through their High Commissioners in London. In the light of this significant event, which is a positive evidence of the unfriendly relations between the two countries, it would be interesting to study the position of Indians in the Union of S. Africa.

In spite of the protests of the Indian Government, the S. African Government pushed through its Parliament the notorious 'Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Bill.' No useful purpose was served by continuing an Indian High Commissioner in S. Africa in view of the obstinacy of the Union Government. Nor have conditions improved after the return in 1946 of the Indian High Commissioner, Mr. R. M. Deshmukh. In fact, the conditions have worsened. The evil legislation based upon *apartheid* has hurt the people of Indian origin in S. Africa terribly. Dr. Malan has not made a secret of his hostility to Indians in general and Nehru in particular. The Malanists hate India because they feel that India's avowed sympathy for the dark races in their struggle against white overlordship has encouraged the Africans in the Union to fight, in a non-violent manner based upon Gandhiji's technique of satyagraha, for their inalienable human rights.

About a century ago Indians were invited to go to S. Africa. The Indians went as labourers and worked in the coal mines and on the railways and tilled the sugar plantations. By their sweat, they helped to make S. Africa the prosperous country she has now become. They were induced to

remain by the free grant of 'brown lands.' They enjoyed the Parliamentary and Municipal vote. No impediment existed to bar their progress. They were considered desirable citizens.

But recent years have witnessed the gradual deterioration of their status in S. Africa. Each year has meant the passage of some new law which has curtailed their liberties. They have been deprived of the Parliamentary and the Municipal vote; laws to curb their trading rights have been passed; they are made to feel that they are a subhuman people. They are segregated on buses and trains; separate seats are allotted to them in parks; separate counters are set up for them in post offices; even in the law courts, they have to sit separately. Almost a hundred different laws now exist which restrict their free movement and check their natural aspirations for economic and social development.

Today it is a third class citizenship that S. Africa is offering the Indian citizens there. On such flimsy grounds S. Africa claims in her defence, in answer to India's complaint before the United Nations Assembly that the Indians there are S. African nationals; that the issue is purely domestic; and that she is not answerable to the U. N. for her policy towards her Indian subjects. In like manner, Hitler defended his persecution of the Jews.

Though the Indians in S. Africa trace their origin to India, they have adopted western standards of living. Given the opportunity they could play their full part in the future of their country. South Africa is their home, the land of their birth. As sons of her soil, they claim full and equal opportunity in her development.

Now, it is for South Africa to answer at the bar of world opinion. Democracy cannot remain the special preserve of the Europeans in S. Africa. It must be extended to all her peoples.

"ABSCESS" IN GUATEMALA

By ANDREW ROTH

THE *Daily Worker* was probably not indulging in exaggeration, for a change, when it reported that on Sunday, June 20, their newspaper vendors were well received when they carried posters with the headline: "GUATEMALA FIGHTS BACK AGAINST YANKEE IMPERIALISM."

Even before the facts were in any way clear, British opinion was very solidly lined up against what was generally accepted to be an American-inspired invasion. Behind this reaction was a whole panoply of causes.

Not the least is the feeling that the U. S. is using a sledge-hammer to crack a nut, a high-explosive bomb to lance the alleged "abscess of Communism" in Guatemala. The free use of the word "Communist" to describe the Guatemalan regime has done a great deal to discredit further American political judgment here. "In the first place," retorts J. Halcyon Ferguson, *The Observer's* Latin American expert, "though there is strong Communist influence in the Guatemala Administration, civil service, police force and trade union movement, Guatemala is by no means a Communist State nor is her elected Government composed of Communists. The Arbenz regime has initiated no such Marxist policies as, for instance, Dr. Jagan tried to introduce into British Guiana, and the Communists themselves do not consider Dr. Arbenz to be one of them."

With their higher boiling point, the British are not fully impressed by the scare picture that the "Communist" regime in Guatemala is "only" 700 miles from the Panama Canal, since they are rather closer to the Iron Curtain. "Apart from China no Communist State has yet been set up except by expansion outward from the existing centers of Communist armed might. Guatemala, thousands of miles away from the nearest Communist center and flanked by Mexico and the United States, can hardly have served Moscow as much more than (as it now turns out) a

stick to beat 'Yankee imperialism' with. The question was never whether it could be got rid of but only whether it could be got rid of with more tact than the State Department has in fact shown."

It is felt here that Mr. Dulles' praise just a week before the uprising, for the "courageous efforts of Guatemalans" to "rid themselves of the malignant force which has seized on them" plus the effort to secure the right to search British and other vessels sounded too much like a call to arms.

Alistair Cooke, the Briton who seems perpetually to be justifying his decision to become an American citizen, compared the way in which the Guatemalan revolt broke upon the American public with the way "the Spanish civil war broke on Europe eighteen years ago." This is an apt but rather unfortunate comparison because this rather places the United States, by implication, in the role of Hitler and Mussolini. And British opinion has not yet come around to the U. S. notion that the Franco revolt suppressed a dangerous Communist threat to Gibraltar.

American excitement over the "threat" of microscopic Guatemala has given the British some new excuses for not-too-quiet humor at the expense of the American habit of transferring to others the guilt which Americans themselves apparently feel.

The notice that the United States had asked Britain and other ship-owning states for the right to board their vessels to prevent the shipment of arms to the 10,000-strong Guatemalan army, appeared on the same day that *The Times* published a dispatch from its Washington correspondent warning that many nominal supporters of the Eisenhower Administration will give Sir Winston a chilly reception because they feel that it is America's alliance with such "imperialist" figures that gives the U. S. its bad reputation.

"It is expected that the most diffi-

cult issue during the visit will arise over the problem of colonialism," he warned his unsuspecting readers. "The United States has been becoming more and more restive under the accusations of imperialism, not only from the Russians and Chinese but also from the Asian neutrals. There is a strong belief here that this accusation is made—and can only be sustained—because of American support of Britain and France, so there is considerable indignation when it appears that in countries like India the United States has become the symbol of imperialism rather than Britain."

THERE is apparently no realization in the States that it is the aggressive pursuit of ideological warfare which makes the U. S. suspect in Asian eyes. Despite a spate of Communist propaganda, most of those who accuse the U.S. do not do so out of suspicion that Washington is seeking land-and-resources in the traditional imperialist pattern. But the U. S. is attempting to compel people to have the same ideological conceptions and share America's fears and hatreds.

"The New Colonialism" is the title the strongly pro-American *Manchester Guardian* chose for its waspish comment on the American request for the right to search British ships bound for Guatemala:

One rubs one's eyes. Here is the United States, the great apostle of the freedom of the seas, asking Britain and the Western maritime nations to allow American warships to stop their ships on the high seas. Why? To see whether they are carrying arms to Guatemala? Why Guatemala? Because Guatemala is a scrubby Latin American republic at formal peace with her neighbours? Her offense? Mr. Dulles thinks her 'Communist' although independent European observers on the spot are by no means sure; she is crudely nationalist, not a satellite of Moscow. The British answer should be in no doubt (it was in fact 'no'). In spite of the United Fruit Company Guatemala is not yet an American possession. Miserable country though it is, it has a right to have a Left-wing Government if it wants to have one. It has even a right to have a large army of its own if it is idiotic enough to waste the money of its half-starved peasants in that way; it is one

way of providing for the unemployed. If anybody has reason to complain about Guatemala it is this country because the Guatemalans have been spending money financing a political party in British Honduras, a party that may be Left but is not Communist, and is now the properly constituted controlling party in the colony. Moreover Guatemala has put forward an old claim to our British territory. But while we can agree with the Americans that it would be wise for the Western nations to stop the export of arms from their ports to Guatemala—merely as a means of promoting the peace of an inflammable part of the world—it is another matter to endow the United States with police powers over the Atlantic. That is carrying things too far. In the first place, there is no proof that Guatemala is really "Communist;" in the second, the other States of the American Continent have not yet formally put themselves at the complete disposal of the United States. The British Government should be polite to Mr. Dulles but tell him that we do not trust his judgment as to whether a State is untouchable or not, and that we cannot allow either the Atlantic or the Caribbean to become his private preserve. This is historic British and American doctrine—at least it was before 'Communism' began to appear under every State Department bed. And who can talk of 'colonialism' now.

Well, for Americans who are supposed to like it 'straight from the shoulder,' that was it, only it was straight to the chin. The Foreign Office, of course, was not so brutal. It said that it would not permit U. S. warships to search British ships. But to placate the U. S. it pointed out that no British arms have been permitted to go to Guatemala since 1948. And, to further 'sweeten' the negative reply, it said that the Commander-in-Chief of British naval forces in the West Indies would be instructed to search British ships if they were suspected of carrying arms to Guatemala.

Britons, who have a sense of history, were somewhat surprised at the request. They thought that most American school children will remember that the United States went to war with Britain in 1812 largely because Britain insisted on searching American ships during Britain's war with France. As recently as 1915

there has been considerable friction between Britain and the U. S. because Britain insisted on searching U. S. vessels suspected of carrying war materials to the Central Powers, with whom the U. S. was not yet at war.

Britons had scarcely stopped shaking their heads and tut-tutting when the new news of the insurrection directed against the left-wing Guatemalan government was splashed in the *Daily Express*: "Banana Land 'War is on.'"

Even before the full facts were in, there were many who suspected that the United States had at least tolerated, if not encouraged the invasion, since it was based on countries in which American influence is very are Communists."

The Poor Crow

THE other day when I was seriously pondering over a personal problem, the two young ones in the house came along skipping and caught my hands and dragged me, their uncle, to the backyard. I obliged them readily so as not dampen their enthusiasm; I trudged to the place and they showed me a crow! I discovered that a string of three or four rings was tied to one of its delicate legs.

If this cruelty was the result of an irresistible desire to have some fun, I wonder what sort of pleasure one could derive from making a poor bird like a crow suffer. What was more pitiable was that one could not, even if one wished, relieve the crow of the burden; for the moment one attempted to catch the bird to untie the string it flew away in consternation.

As I went on thinking thus, the young ones shook me with their little hands, breaking into a peal of laughter, for the crow had already flown from the place.

A couple of weeks after I saw the poor crow again, one morning, through the bedside window. The same unfortunate crow—the rings were the mark of identification—was squatting under a neem tree. I came

strong and to which the U. S. has been flying military supplies.

The British are old-fashioned. They know that they did this same sort of thing very often themselves in the old imperialist days. But they did not then have to worry about international forums. How, they ask, can the U. S. attack China for selling arms to the Vietminh if American-supported states help mount an attack on a legally constituted and recognized government. To this Mr. Dulles can presumably answer: "We are not against the military overthrow of legally constituted governments in general. We are only against it when the insurrectionaries

out of the house and moved cautiously towards the bird. It did not fly off. For a stone had been tied this time to one of its wings, as if the suffering due to the string was not sufficient! I once again wondered how the person managed to fasten the stone. The crow had been victimised again. Oh, the unmitigated cruelty!

The bird appeared withered and depressed; it must have made strenuous efforts to fly, carrying along the stone.

I called my father who is a Vet, and holding the crow in his left hand he gently unfastened the string of rings with the help of a pleyer and then removed the stone. The crow tried to flutter its wings and fly away but it could not: its right wing (to which the stone was tied) was partially broken. For some time it lay motionless, then its head drooped, as though it went into a muse.

An hour later I came out, attracted by the cawing of a number of crows hovering above the poor crow—perhaps expressing their sympathy to their unfortunate comrade down below. It gave me some satisfaction to realise that the crow breathed its last free from the burden of rings and stones.

N. GANGA RAM

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN MARRIAGES

NEW YORK CITY: The following study made by some leading American sociologists will come as a surprise to many. Due to the fact that U. S. A. washes its dirty linen in the public and Hollywood movie stars who are known all over the world have had some colourful divorces the tendency has been to think that in America marriages are unsound. Well, let us begin with our first witness, an eminent sociologist:

A young woman visitor, browsing through my books the other day, pounced on this statement made in 1937 by an outstanding sociologist:

"The American family will continue to disintegrate . . . Divorces and separations will increase until any profound difference between socially sanctioned marriage and illicit sex relationship disappears . . . and the home will become a mere overnight parking place mainly for sexual intercourse."

"Was he kidding?" my friend asked incredulously—as well she might, being a happily married woman with three fine children and as solid and respectable a family life as one could wish. No, I told her, the professor hadn't been kidding, though he might well hesitate before making the same statement today. He was saying then only what a lot of others solemnly believed in the dark years of the thirties. The marriage rate was dwindling. The birth rate had hit an all time low. Sexual restraints were breaking down. Everywhere you heard, "American marriage is going on the rocks."

Well, the prophets of woe couldn't have been more wrong. True, American marriage as an institution was going through a rough period. But a careful look will show that in fact it has never been in a stronger position than it is now. We've become by far the most marrying people in the civilized world. We have the highest marriage rate in our history—93 per cent of all those of mar-

riageable age—and the smallest proportion of spinsters and bachelors. Our couples are marrying earlier and earlier. Now the average age for first marriages is 20 for women and 22½ for men. In our grandparents' day it was 22 for women 26 for men. And the birth boom—we have 53,000,000 children under eighteen—has scouted fears of imminent race suicide.

Unfortunately, we've still got a hangover of pessimism and cynicism about marriage from our blue days. We can't seem to shake our tendency to see the marriage picture as much worse than it really is. For instance, I was recently at the home of some old friends just after their daughter, married about two years, broke the news she was planning a divorce. Her parents had hit the ceiling.

"Why get so excited?" the daughter said coolly. "Don't you know this happens to one in three marriages?"

We've been hearing that for years now. But the plain truth is that the "one in three are divorced" is and always was a statistical myth—never more than an exaggerated estimate made in a year when a backlog of divorces had rolled up. The whole divorce picture is in such a muddle that nobody knows what the real facts are. Top authorities will make only the roughest estimates, ranging from 1 in 6 to at worst, 1 in 4 marriages ending in divorce. And the probability is that the divorce rate has passed its peak and is now in a decline.

But the divorce figures tell only a fragmentary story. They're loaded with repeaters (the Tommy Manvilles and Barbara Huttons) and with people who report themselves divorced though they never married. Also they deal only with marriages broken legally; they ignore desertions and separations, which occurred much more frequently in the past than they do now.

More important, however, as

divorce expert Dr. Paul H. Jacobson explains. "Marriages used to be prematurely broken far oftener by the death of a mate. Because of the tremendous increase in longevity and the earlier age at which marriages now begin, we can surmise that even with the high divorce rate, the average American marriage today is holding together for a longer span than ever before."

In other words, the average American couple now stay married longer than did their grandparents. Nor should we forget that many an old patriarch who took himself a young girl for a third or even a fourth wife, after the previous wives had died, and many a woman widowed and remarried two or three times were having experiences not too different from those of people today who get a succession of mates via the divorce route.

And before surrendering to the myth that marriage was better and sounder in the "good old days," we must also remember these facts: First, the world isn't what it used to be. A whole series of cataclysmic social changes has greatly affected marriage, and in many ways made it more difficult. Second, modern couples no longer stay together under the conditions of marital misery that countless couples used to be resigned to. Third, many of the marital difficulties we're encountering have resulted from the fact our lives have been undergoing a period of abrupt transition from established patterns of the past to new, still not completely fixed patterns and we haven't yet had enough time to work out our adjustment.

Typical of many current marital cases is that of Alice and Fred. Alice complained that "Fred thinks sex is something a husband has the right to demand whenever he's in the mood. Well, I can't and won't give something I don't feel. And it's his fault for not making me more responsive."

Fred also had something to say: "She's blaming me when the fact is, and I hate to say it, she's just plain frigid. That's the trouble with these sophisticated American women. They

read and talk so much about sex—psychoanalysis and all that stuff—they lose their natural feelings. The European girls could teach them a few things about sex and making love. Believe me."

If Fred had known "sex was something he had a right to demand," as Alice said, he had a strong tradition to back him. Attorneys Harriet F. Pilpel and T. Zavin, writing about marriage law, report, "The cases involving sexual problems between man and wife are replete with references to the 'right' of the husband to insist on and the 'duty' of the wife to 'submit' to 'reasonable' sexual intercourse."

So the conflict between Fred and Alice was much more than a clash between individuals. It involved a collision between the old ideas about sex that had long prevailed in a man-dominated world and the new ideas brought about by woman's emancipation.

A look into this couple's background showed that Alice, a delicately handsome woman, had been reared and educated in New York as the only child of a professional couple. She had moved in intellectual circles and had been attracted to Fred because he seemed so "earthy" and "masculine." Fred was a construction engineer, reared on a Midwest farm, one of eight children of an autocratic farmer who rigidly ruled his household and his submissive, gentle wife. Fred's deeply ingrained idea, that sex in marriage should be governed mainly by the husband's wishes and the wife's compliance, was heightened when he served as a G. I., in France, Germany, and later, Japan, and found everywhere he went that the women he met were eager to please the men and took the initiative sexually. It didn't occur to Fred that the very thing that drew him to Alice was the fact she was so different from the women he had had affairs with. In his confusion, he wanted his wife to be the impossible combination of the picture he'd built up of a "good" woman, as typified by his meek little mother, and the sexually aggressive "bad" woman.

"As for Alice," said the marriage counsellor they later consulted, "her ideas about sex had gone too far in the other direction. She had been led to believe—quite wrongly—that successful sex in marriage is a matter of the husband's behaviour and technique, and if the wife doesn't respond, it's because of ineptness, indifference, or physical and psychological weaknesses in the husband. Since we've gotten far away from the Victorian idea that 'ladies' don't have sexual feelings, we're also recognising that with equal sexual rights in marriage, women must assume equal sexual responsibilities.

"To achieve sexual harmony, the wife must be as considerate and understanding of her husband as he should be of her. When this was sympathetically pointed out to Alice and Fred, and they both began to let their true emotions and desires overcome their wrong mental attitudes, they made a very happy adjustment."

IT goes without saying that the American view of marital sex—that it should always be a freely offered, loving, mutually respectful and mutually pleasurable relationship—is a lot harder to achieve and maintain than a marriage in which sex is considered merely an obligation and a function. With the stress on faithfulness, the American husband is under much greater constraint to be a sexually and romantically satisfying mate than is the husband in many other cultures that openly tolerate mistresses and prostitutes, let alone countries where polygamy and concubinage are the rule. On the other hand, the American wife is expected to keep herself sexually alluring to a greater degree and for a longer time than are women in other countries.

With all this, the encouraging fact is that more and more of American couples—the younger ones especially, are measuring up to new sex standards. Many don't get along sexually, of course, but when I asked a number of authorities, "Do you think there was less sex conflict in past generations?" they all said, "No."

As Dr. G. Lawton, analyst and

marriage counsellor, who has dealt with many older as well as younger couples, put it, "The fact that people once had the ostrich idea about sex didn't mean sex problems weren't there. I believe there actually was much more sexual repression and frustration before, but the symptoms either went unrecognized, or were prudishly ascribed to other causes. Altogether, I'd guess that today's American couples are more compatible sexually, and have more satisfying sex lives—the women, especially—than their grandparents ever did."

A veteran gynecologist also pointed out that in the so-called tranquil and respectable old days, red light districts were wide open almost everywhere, and the great majority of the patrons were married men.

Sex is only one aspect of marriage that has been greatly affected by the change in women's status. Throughout our history, marriage demanded that the wife do the adjusting in all respects ("... and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee"). The husband's authority was not too seriously challenged, and chances for conflict were further lessened by the rigid rules and customs that defined what a man's jobs, responsibilities, and roles should be and what a woman's should be. This well defined separation of the male and female worlds was swept away by the women's march into jobs, professions, politics, and types of behaviour—such as public drinking, and smoking—that were formerly the exclusive domain of males.

Yet, always going counter to this equality for women surface stream is the deep undercurrent of belief that the husband should be dominant and masculine, the wife feminine and dependent. When either husband or wife, or both, fail to live up to the prescribed notions of their sex's characteristics, the marriage is often subjected to a strain that may be fatal. Here's a rather touching example related by a clergyman about a young couple belonging to his church.

Some years ago the wife came to see him after service, which her hus-

band hadn't attended, and weepingly reported, "George got terribly drunk last night."

As she unfolded her story, it developed that Muriel and George had been married when he was twenty and she was almost two years older. Friends had kidded Muriel about being a cradle snatcher. Later George's sense of masculinity took another blow when he was classified 4-F in the draft. He got a job clerking in a chain grocery, while Muriel kept on with her typing job. "Until you can support me," she said.

George agreed that meanwhile it was only fair for him to share in the cooking and housekeeping. But usually Muriel let him do most of this. "I'm so tired. You're a man—and you've got more strength," she would say. George didn't mind except when friends dropped in and saw him with an apron while Muriel was spreading the paper.

The biggest blow came when Muriel changed to a factory job. She proved so good at machine operation she soon was earning more than George. One weekend her take-home pay reached fifteen dollars more than his, and she then said, after a quarrel, "If you were a real man, you'll be making more than me." That was the weekend George went out and got very drunk.

The clergyman continued with a smile, "I had a good talk with them both. Since Muriel's earnings were a sore point, I explained that wives must everywhere have always worked to support the family. What's a farm wife who tends chickens, milks cows, raises vegetables for sale, doing but just that? And if Muriel was earning a little more now, the odds were that George would soon pass her.

"Well, nature took care of the problem. A few months later Muriel became pregnant, and the factory work was too much, so she went back to typing. By the time the baby was born, George had been made manager of a super market, and with bonuses, he's hitting over \$110 a week. That's more than Muriel ever made.

"He gets a tremendous kick running the store and handling the women customers. Muriel does most of the cooking. Both like it best that way."

IF we seem to be stressing the man's view more, it is because most of the newer marriage situations have hit hardest at the husband's ego. Within a few decades, husbands have had to unlearn attitudes toward women developed over countless centuries. Mostly they have been upgrading their views about women, whereas women have been downgrading their views about men, that is, getting less awed by the male as they've invaded his realm and taken the wraps off his mysteries. And it hasn't been easy for the men to accept this challenge to their masculinity and their authority, inside and outside their homes.

One of the unhappier examples involves a well to do businessman and his college professor wife. I have only the man's account as he gave it to me at the home of a mutual acquaintance, the lawyer who handled his divorce.

"Maybe it was a case of two right people wrong for each other," he said wryly, as we sat on the penthouse terrace overlooking Central Park. "Started at a summer resort, twenty two years ago. Jane was a school-teacher. What intrigued men was she didn't look or act like one. Very pretty, swell figure, cute. Had a lot of advanced ideas, but I figured I could handle them in my stride. After we got married, I learned different. She went on teaching. Money wasn't the thing I was making plenty, but she said she wasn't going to be a 'kept woman.' Kept on to her maiden name. Worked for equal rights all down the line. But she'd be the first to blow up if you didn't treat her like a lady—stand up when she came into the room, pull out her chair, all that stuff.

"She wanted to be like a man, have all the privileges, but she wanted to be a woman also. When she was a woman, when she turned off that mind of hers and let herself go, she was wonderful."

THE story went on about their quarrels over his friends, whom she called "cave men." "Boors and bores," and her friends, whom he spoke of as "long haired phonies and sissies"; about her running him down before others and belittling his business success ("Making money—that's all you can do") as compared with her friends' and her own "real contributions to society;" her ridiculing his hunting trips ("He-man Hemingway will now tell us about the moose he shot"). But mostly it centred about their son, whom "she took time out to have while getting her Ph. D." and the way she's brought him up. "What did I know about raising kids in this modern age? I was just a 'crude businessman,' according to her. She tried all the new theories fast as they came out. If I wanted to put my foot down, or spank the boy when he acted like a little stinker, she'd say 'Don't you dare bully him.' Well, she's made a fine mess of him. He'll never be a man, that's one sure thing."

What the wife might have said could be read between the lines: the husband's unwillingness to accept her as an equal; his jealousy of her better education, perhaps greater intelligence, which hit at his notions of female inferiority; his constant efforts to cut her down to size, which caused her, in turn, to strike at his new ideas about child rearing, and because he was confused about what to do, throwing the whole responsibility on her, so she could be blamed if anything went wrong.

The charges and countercharges on both sides have been familiar ones in the stories of many career women wives and their husbands. In various ways these couples, with their new situations, were social pioneers, experimenters, innovators—psychological shock troops in the "battle of the sexes." That they did resolve many problems is proved by the way their own sons and daughters are adjusting to the same situations in marriage that formerly produced so much conflict.

Today's co-eds worry little about "career versus marriage." Those who wish combine both—often beginning

before they finish college. More and more career women are also having children, and rearing them with far less marital conflict and in a more relaxed way than did their predecessors. The younger husbands not only don't resent, but are proud of their professional women wives, and more and more husband and wife teams are found in all fields. It's no longer a case of what is properly a man's job or a woman's but of what each is best able to do.

Accompanying all the other changes we've dealt with, and quite as important in its impact on American marriage, has been the greatly lessened authority of parents over the marriages of their children. A New York friend of mine drowsily picked up the phone late one night and heard his daughter calling from Chicago, where she was at college. "Hold tight, Dad," she said. "You know Ed Daniels—the fellow who took me out once last Christmas vacation? Well, we're getting married!"

Her father recalled how his own marriage had been preceded by months of nervous strategy and intrigue to win over the respective families, and a generation before, how his parents in the old country were married off through "arrangement," without knowing much more about each other than had been revealed by furtive glances and hesitant conversations at heavily chaperoned meetings. The extreme shift to the American companionship marriage, dictated almost entirely by the couple's attraction for each other and their wish to live together, has been a real social revolution. Naturally, when immature judgments are involved, mistakes may be made. But we can only guess at how often in the past misguided or selfish parents married off young people completely unsuited for each other.

The charge that freedom of choice has made Americans reckless in their choice of mates is refuted by sociological studies which show that about 95 per cent of the marriages are between persons very much the same in all major respects—social

level, religion, race, education. Moreover, as differences among Americans of all classes, groups, and regions have narrowed, the chances are ever greater that a young couple entering marriage will be compatible in interests, views, and living habits.

One mother, recovering from a riotous teen-ager party at her home, where her daughter had entertained a score of friends, said happily, "They were really all lovely kids. Which-ever boy you picked would have been pretty right for whichever girl."

Leaving things so much to the young people has, however, produced certain difficulties. With greater independence from their families has also come greater isolation for couples, and this in turn often means a greater strain on their marriage. Families of the past did play a part in keeping marriages together. The family as it used to be—parents, children, grandchildren, and relatives living close together—was an enduring stronghold within which quarrels were smoothed out; troubles were talked over; widows, orphans, and those who'd suffered misfortune were cared for; and the aged lived out their lives securely and usefully.

This has changed. Like no other people, American families break up and scatter. The separation is often more than geographic. Tremendous differences may develop between children and parents, brothers and sisters, in education, income, and ways of living. Millions of American couples have to start afresh, making their own social circles, and often, as a result of changes in jobs and homes, they have to repeat this a number of times. However worthwhile these friendships, they are no substitutes for a family when sympathetic and understanding advice is needed. The result is that all too often marital problems and resentments are kept bottled up, to seethe and boil until they explode.

Formerly, the principal family worry

was keeping the wolf from the door. Today American physical well-being is far beyond the wildest dreams of earlier generations in very respect—food, housing, health, medical care, and clothing. Education is reaching ever higher levels, work hours are being cut down, and leisure is increasing, and recreation and amusements are provided in abundance. Yet the very fact we are accustomed to the highest standards in all other respects makes us expect a great deal more out of marriage, too, than human beings ever did before. What we've set as our goal is simply this: that marriage should be a union of a man and woman who've come together and who hold together, not through compulsion or dire necessity, but through love, understanding, and mutual respect, and who bring children into the world not as a duty or a function, but to enrich their own lives, to affirm their faith in mankind, and to join them in living as fully, happily, decently, and usefully as they can.

Are we achieving that goal? One night I asked a group of professional friends, at my home. "What would you consider the most distinctive thing about American marriages? It remained for a European sociologist to answer.

"Your togetherness," he said. "I do not believe that anywhere in the world are husbands and wives so together in everything they do. No taboos. In their jobs, their sports, their jokes, even their clothes—when the women wish, they wear the men's pants, shirts, pyjamas. In all ways, your husbands and wives are together."

AND it might be well to remember that despite the many failures and exceptions, the overwhelming majority of American couples stay together throughout their lives and for a longer span of years than any couples in history.—P. G. Krishnappa's *Service*

Reason has moons, but moons not hers,
Lie mirror'd on her sea,
Confounding her astronomers.
But, O! delighting me.

RALPH HODGSON

THE THIEF

Short Story

By

M. Sivaramakrishna Rao

THE four o'clock bell rang clangingly in the corridor and almost at once a surging torrent of noisy boys came pouring out of the warrens of the stairs, moved uneasily down the steps and disintegrated into individual units of bolsterous egoists moving down to the playground behind the palatial school. The senior boys came more slowly, thoughts still oscillating between Pascal's law and bloated footballs.

A lean fragile lad among the group, dressed in a baggy shirt and pyjamas dirtied at the ends was seriously posing a query:

"Why do you think a bad egg floats?"

"Ramu? Coming for Cricket?"

"Don't disturb us now."

"But are you coming? We are going to toss."

"Sorry. Have to go home."

"As usual, I see," the boy spoke with frank sarcasm.

Ramu turned away in disgust. Nobody could answer his question and in revenge they began to taunt him as of old. Only three days ago Murali called him "Little cry-baby . . . Mamma's darling! go drink milk and hide behind her sari!" Everybody jeered at him and only the headmaster's sudden appearance saved the moment.

The memory rankled but the sensation it evoked now was dulled with forgetfulness. Time more sweet than any mother's touch laid her cool hands over every tender spot caused by jagged emotions and soon apathy descended like a blanket and shielded him from further taunts. But why, oh, why was the anomaly . . . that he a fifth form student, whose responsibilities were there for all to see, why had he to go home at once after

school, while his friends bruised themselves happy all over the field? Rough games, his mother said; rough games, his sensitive body agreed. She scolded him

then when he came home late and that beggar Sampath betrayed him when he told him that though honest to God he swore he would tell no one . . .

They pulled his ears from behind in class and they stole his slippers once and dropped them in the well through the grating. And Gopi and Vasu and all of them, yes, all of them would tear pages from his fair-note books when they pleased and it was only that day they had squirted ink on his shirt. They would giggle at the teacher's dome and then one would stand up and say: "Please, sir, Ramu is talking in the class, sir"—"On the bench, Ramu"—and hee hee the snigger would go around the class; and even the three girls in the front row sniggered at him. When he came home tattered, hurt in mind and body, invariably there would be more trouble awaiting him. Ramu sighed without sorrow, with a dull ache for something intangible.

Now came the sensation of the year. A gang of child-kidnappers was in town, and several kids were missing from their homes.

"They are taking them to Golden Rock to sacrifice to the new bridge there."

"No, they are Muslims and they are kidnapping the children to make them eunuchs."

"They're Kali worshippers who practice human sacrifice."

"They're Christians who are converting the boys to their religion."

"They have got long beards and red eyes; they chant *mantras* always and they use skulls for begging bowls."

Not one or two but eleven 'kidnappers' were rounded up, and not one's guilt was proved. Maybe they were ghosts . . .

As Ramu walked back home along the lonely road every evening, his thoughts found no outlet from his narrow world; his mind grew troubled and festered over awful fears in a swirling abyss of misery that refused to be quiet.

That evening a tiny girl came to stay in his house. She was a distant cousin of his, and after a diffident interval of pretense when each looked down on the other, they arrived at a pact. She had a whole vacation to look forward to, and precious little company. He found her a ready listener and behind a facade of boredom she took a curious interest in his private world. He showed her how to hold a catapult, and he boasted of his prowess in a mango grove, and how he once hit the bald dome of his maths teacher with a little angular green mango. All lies, but how gratifying to see her believe it. In a quiet corner of his ravaged world he rebuilt his paradise but even here trouble made its way.

It was a traffic policeman who was a family friend. He was talking about the kidnappers, and said it was all humbug.

"Even if it was true, I am not scared of the kidnapper" blurted the boy. He turned to the little girl. She looked at him with her wide, impressed eyes.

"What will you do?" asked the policeman pityingly.

"I will kick him in his belly before he does anything. Then I will hit him on the jaw and run away."

"Ho ho ho! That is good! Hear him." jeered the man, "why, you are so skinny you can't even hit a goat."

A tropical tempest burst from the heart of the boy, overflowed his eyes, and he hurled himself at the dim vision before him and battered away at it with his puny fists.

Oh, the shame and the humiliation of it! To be thus humbled and taunted, and that, before her. How could they ever share sweets again or ever have a quiet game again? The

little world of flowers and music, song and laughter, walled by rocks that sheltered pools where a boy might see in his reflection a dashing adventurer was shattered beyond recall. Gone were all the fancies and the little game of pretense, gone was all the magic of imagination wherein he was the hero and she the damsel in distress. A thick veil of misery now lay between, and the hot iron of shame branded him—branded him—branded him—and seared into his tortured brain.

"I hate him, oh, how I hate him!" hissed every fibre of his being, as the dull ache came on again and with it the realization of his weakness, and he collapsed afresh on his bed with a silent torrent of hot salty tears . . .

★

SATURDAY next he went to the city's biggest bookstore. After a glance at the parade of comics and magazines, and a guilty look through sexy journals, he found himself before a shelf full of sports books. Here were books on cricket, on hockey, and what not. Why, yes, what about that on Judo. What is Judo, he thought idly, and reached for it.

He glanced through the book for a little while, looked at the price, and sighed. Seven rupees, o lord!

As he walked back home, he was suddenly struck by an idea. He returned to the shop, and went through the book more carefully now. A Judo expert can disarm an assailant, conquer a man much stronger than himself. The book said so, at least. Ramu grew thoughtful, then looked again at the price, and sighed. His mother would never give him so much money for a sports book.

That night he idly wondered how much the secondhand bookseller would give for those novels his uncle gave him last birthday? They were new and not even his name was written on them. That rascal would give only two rupees for that ten-rupees' worth of books, he thought sadly. Fair exchange. Why not? Smuggle those books one by one into the shop and smuggle out that Judo book from the shop. But he would

Every eye was on him, every typist on the gallery above viewed him with suspicion . . .
Sweat dripped behind his collar and his shoes felt like lead.

have to take out that book first, otherwise after smuggling in those books he may not be able to get this one out . . .

★

FIVE days tussling with his conscience, and then three more with the instinct of fear that the idea inspired. Now at last he was near the shop. Dressed in spotless white shirt and pyjamas, his scholarly face and tall lanky appearance made him look like a collage student.

He had made an inward pact with himself that he would consider it a bad omen if any policeman happened to be near the shop. His heart sank now when he saw not one but two policemen standing near the entrance, and they seemed to be waiting for him . . .

He passed them and they made no move to stop him. One of them only moved his foot to crush a spider on the pavement. He entered the doorway and nausea deepened as he approached the shelf. Every eye was on him, every typist on the gallery above viewed him with suspicion. Every man who carelessly turned over some book or magazine was a shop detective. His heart was throbbing and shrieking wildly, shrieking in vain for silence and peace. Could they not hear the shouting in his brain, the roar of his pulse, the heaviness of his feet and the gurgle in his stomach? Sweat dripped behind his collar and his shoes felt like lead.

He felt a hand on his shoulder, and spun round with a dry, wild sob.

"I am sorry, sir, I thought you were somebody else."

Ramu swallowed spittle and nodded with a distraught look.

"You want that book, sir?"

The salesman picked the Judo book that Ramu was taking out at that moment and glanced at the fly-paper. "Seven-three, sir, less seven annas discount, plus sales tax."

"Shall I make out a bill?" he paused.

"No, I just want to see it. I may . . . I may buy it later."

"Just as you wish. Thank you," he said and returned the book to Ramu.

After he moved away Ramu clutched the book under his arm and made his way to the reduced-price book section, which was a small isolated room. Expanded metal gauze separated him from the busy heart of the big shop. Here he felt nobody's gaze on him. At the other end of the room sat an old-newspaper seller who was counting some pulp magazines on the floor and packing them up. He was taking his own time and Ramu began to get fidgety. Somebody is bound to come in there soon, and maybe they would discover him. The man seemed absorbed in his task. Ramu turned his back on him and with nervous fingers tucked the book under his shirt between his body and his trousers. His fingers were shaking, his palms clammy with sweat, and the feat took some time to accomplish. Satisfied, he turned round, looked briefly at the man and then with an overdone nonchalance sauntered up to the magazine stand and picked up a cheap picture magazine. He turned over its pages, laid it down, went to the cloak counter, and asked for his school books.

The old-newspaper man stood across his way, and he said coldly: "Please remain here for a while, sir."

An icy chillness drove out the nausea from Ramu's belly.

"He has tucked a book under his shirt," said the man to the cloak-desk assistant.

Ramu dragged him to a side, begged him pathetically, and promised to replace the book in its place at once. All in vain, and the accuser went to the manager's desk. The messenger boys gathered round Ramu, and looked at him.

Panic-stricken, yet with a calm unmatched even by his accuser, Ramu made his way back to the reduced-price book room. Nobody stopped him, and no customer among the scores in the shop ever knew what was up.

He pulled out the book and pushed it far behind a shelf, where it fell to the floor. He took up another old magazine and pretended to be read-

ing it, heart thudding painfully at his ribs. How to get out now? Those policemen outside. It was a bad omen. He should not have come in then. What a fool he was!

No, they won't call the police. It would be bad publicity for the shop, and he would raise hell. He debated whether to make a scene or to leave in icy calmness. If there was a scene, it had to be a good one. He did not feel equal to it.

The manager came in, followed by six or seven people, and headed by the accuser.

"This is the gentleman."

"Where is that book?"

"He must have thrown it somewhere here." The accuser ruthlessly pulled the shelf forward and retrieved the book with some trouble.

The manager spoke. "Your behaviour is improper. Did you try to steal this book?"

"What do you mean, sir?" Ramu blustered but half-heartedly and it had no substance. "I come to your shop and one of your men accuses me of stealing. You ought to be ashamed."

"He is not our man. He is a customer like you. He has no cause to lie. You tried to steal this book."

"You are lying and unnecessarily insulting me."

"Then why did you bring this book here from the shelf?"

"Yes, I brought it here, of course, thinking of buying it after looking around here."

"You should not have removed it from there. Now that you have brought it here your intention is obvious."

"See, how he has tried to steal it. We are deeply thankful to this gentleman," the manager told his assistants. He paused, and half-sorrowfully, half-reproachfully shook his head. "Please leave our shop now, sir. We want customers who buy books. Not people like you to steal books. I am very much distressed." He called to his peons and said: "When this gentleman comes here next time, one of you please follow him always."

The manager left the room, and mutely waited outside for the boy to follow.

Righteous anger burnt in Ramu's heart. What right had that fellow to speak to him like that? He would borrow some money and come in the afternoon and buy that book and throw it into the manager's face. Or maybe he would throw a ten rupee note in his face and say: "I don't care for money. You are a scoundrel and you have insulted me, you beggar."

A peon hovered near him, but Ramu took no notice of him. He walked over to the magazine stand, picked up a film magazine, and bought it with grace. Then he asked for his books at the cloak counter and tipped the man. Ramu left the shop, his lanky form throwing a sharp shadow like a scare crow on the pavement. The messenger boys gathered round the cloak counter and looked at him as he walked away.

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LAUGHTER IN THE RAMAYANA

INDIA'S first poet, first in so many of the achievements of the poetic spirit, is perhaps greatest in his command of pathos. The Ramayana is in many places soaked in tears, tears that start with the shooting down of the innocent 'croucha' bird. With that initial story our poet suggests not only that poetry is an overflow into song of powerful feeling, but also that the most powerful feeling of all is that of sorrow and pity, and that therefore the sweetest songs cannot but be those of saddest thought. It also suggests the connection between feeling and rhythmic expression: meter is but the expression of a rhythm set up within by an agitated heart.

But Valmiki's tears do not blind him to the laughter that is but their other side. He often smiles through his tears, though perhaps, not often enough. He feels in earnest, but his thinking mind tells him that it could not have been so comic if it had been not so tragic. His humour is therefore generally though not invariably, the highest type of laughter, the smile of sympathy. It is the laughter of a laughing father at the inconsistencies, follies, of his children. And it is sometimes a laughter at himself and his class, the father laughing at himself with his children.

See the Maharshi laughing at the ascetic Romapada (Balakanda 10th Sarga) whose Brahmacharya is built on simple exclusion from and entire ignorance of womankind. With what delight the poor boy eats the new fruits (Modakas) that the Veshyas offer him! What an undreamt of bliss he feels in their joyful embraces! How agitated he is after their departure, and with what willingness he agrees to follow them to their 'Ashrama!' It is a tragic subject, the break-up of a long tapasya, but treated smilingly. And the results of this tragedy are not at all tragic as Valmiki hastens to point out. It rained and the World was glad.

By
C. R. Kerala Varma

This story and its loving laughter became so popular that it re-appeared in the Mahabharata. Or could it have been the other way round?

Valmiki has another laugh, a laugh that is half pity at his own people in the Ayodhya kanda. Rama is giving away endless gifts of money and jewels and cattle to Brahmins and dependants prior to his departure for the forest. It is a touching scene. Every one except Rama is in tears. Rama smiles at the Brahmins assembled. "Give to these" he says to Lakshmana. "Give to these lazy gourmands, lazy, still respected even by the great precious stones in plenty," and Lakshmana gives. When the distribution is almost over an old poor Brahmin, yoked to a young wife suffering from poverty and too many children, and acting under her advice, arrives in torn clothes and asks for Rama's blessing. Rama with a smile on his lips tells him, "I give you not a mere thousand head of cattle. Throw your staff with all your might and as far as you can, all the cattle up to that limit are yours." Hastily winding his cloth round his waist, nervous, he, waving his staff, throws it with all his strength and sends it flying at top speed. He wins many thousands. Rama after ordering that they be taken to his home by his servants, embraces him and consoles him, "Pray don't be angry. It was only a joke." Rama regrets even the triumphant smile of the man who gives to the needy a hundred times more than they had the courage to beg for. Valmiki too seems to be half afraid of laughter, fears that laughter cannot be completely separated from malice or at least a sense of superiority. Hence perhaps the comparative rarity of laughter in his work.

When Valmiki laughs at Kaikeyi the laugh is not perhaps so innocent or pure. The moment Mandhara's specious arguments win approval witness the change that comes over Kaikeyi. She suddenly discovers that

this hump-backed wretch is beautiful as a lotus that bends in the breeze; every part of her is now lovely, and every ornament. Her gait as she walks before her mistress is now the gait of the swan . . . Then comes another and more interesting discovery, that her intelligence resides in that hump as big as the nave of a chariot wheel. With this arises the desire to decorate the hump with gold ornaments, she would even give it a coating with molten gold! And again a last reward. She would have other beautiful hump-backed ones to serve her. The moment a hump develops in Kaikeyi's mind all humps become beautiful as all wrong advice becomes right. Thousands of years of research, after Valmiki, still finds Valmiki well ahead.

Is there any sympathy in this laughter? Perhaps there is. Valmiki seems to be telling Kaikeyi "You are not yourself. Everything is upside down with you. You know not what you are doing or saying!"

There is some sympathy for Kaikeyi. But there is apparently none for Mandhara. Shatrughna returning after the 'Sanchayana' ceremony of his father is offered, by the guards "Mandhara, the cause of it all, for exemplary treatment. As she appears what a contrast she is to the sorrowing children of Dasharatha. She is decked from head to foot in ornaments. She is smeared all over with sandal paste. She wears queenly robes and is surrounded by friends. Bound by gold girdles and other ornaments (all ornaments blind!) she shines forth like a monkey led forth in ropes. Valmiki is evidently unable any longer to contain his contempt and that glorious smile is its outlet. There is more coming. Shatrughna drags the frightened shouting Mandhara on the ground, now by her hands, now by her legs, now by her hair. Her ornaments now lie scattered in the palace yard, once more beautiful because now once more in place. Here is no subdued, smile. It is the loud laughter of triumph, of writer and reader, the Homeric laugh, the laughter of the savage when he has clubbed his enemy to

pieces. This kind of laugh too is not perhaps without its place in character culture. It achieves a purgation of the dangerous impulses accumulating even in the calmest hearts. Mandhara's cries purify the atmosphere in the palace, so it does the atmosphere within us. "The sky is once again clear as in Sharath."

BUT the absence of sympathy for Mandhara is only apparent. By making this woman a hump-backed one Valmiki has suggested the cause of the crookedness within. The fates have been cruel to her and she could not be expected to be straight in her responses and reactions . . . And she has one virtue, she is loyal to her mistress. Perhaps she is only Kaikeyi's own evil nature projected outside herself in human form.

Valmiki does not seem to show much sympathy for Shurpanakha either. He makes her fall headlong in love with Rama and hastens to point out the utter incongruousness of it. She is ugly, big bellied, squint-eyed, red-haired, terrible-voiced, old, notorious; and he, lovely, long-eyed, thin-bellied, dark-haired, sweet-voiced, young, famous. And she not only loves but expects him to love her and prefer her to Seetha. See what she thinks of Seetha, "I am powerful, I go where I like, what could this Seetha do? She is deformed, she is ugly, she is not fit mate for you. Look at her belly! I shall eat this ill-formed creature and your brother too."

Rama cannot help smiling. It is a long time since he has smiled like this. He would like to enjoy the joke a little longer, and in pure fun he tells her. "Lakshmana is unmarried, he is the one for you." Immediately she flies to him. Lakshmana joins in the joking, agrees that Seetha is old, ugly and thin-bellied and that Rama would gladly leave her and join the lovely Shurpanakha. Seetha too must have joined in at least at this stage. Imagine the whole group laughing. If they restrain their laugh a little it must be out of fear of the Rakshasi.

Does Valmiki show any sympathy for this giantess? Perhaps he does. As a rakshasi she naturally finds beauty only in women like herself.

After all beauty is what we are accustomed to. The wonder is that she finds Rama and Lakshmana beautiful; from her that is true homage as well as love. Anything moreover could be, and should be excused in a rakshasi especially in the grip of passion.

Still it is so ridiculous, this woman who wants some young man immediately. She does not seem to care whether it is Rama or Lakshmana, to secure one she is prepared to eat up the other two. Valmiki does not forget to point out that she has no sense of humour. She is always in earnest, takes words at their face value; something could be forgiven her for this simplicity too.

IN this scene what Valmiki probably wants to emphasise is the nearness of tragedy to comedy. How quickly and unexpectedly a mere joke proves the gateway to blood, mutilation, vengeance, war. Rama and Lakshmana are playing with fire. Rama realises but too late, that with, or at, the cruel and bad, there should never be any laughter. The rest of the Ramayana is the dire result of his realising this too late.

Is Valmiki condemning all laughter in this scene, especially unsympathetic laughter?

Valmiki smiles sweetly again in Sundarakanda. Hanuman is having a look at Ravana's many wives, sleeping huddled up around him after the night's orgies. Some of these women in their sleep mistake their neighbour's faces for Ravana's and kiss them again and again; and these other women so excessively in love with Ravana are only happy at this. Most of these women were won in war, but some of these, Valmiki adds, had come of their own accord to find satisfaction for their mad passion. And still they are evidently not satisfied, they have to seek satisfaction, in sleep, among themselves. See what shrewd psychology we have here, thousands of years before Freud.

In the next scene we see these unsatisfied women again. One is sleeping embracing her drum; another is asleep kissing her flute.

Ravana is after all one, though Ravana, amongst so many.

We now come to another joke that proves almost as costly as Rama's. This time the joker is Ravana, his antagonist. Hanuman should not be killed being an ambassador. But he could be punished. Ravana's sense of humour prescribes an interesting punishment. (Ravana can laugh unlike his sister.) "Monkeys are proud of their tails, their loved ornaments. Set fire to his and let him go home with a burnt tail. Let the miserable, mutilated one be seen and scoffed at by his friends, relatives." Then an afterthought. "Let him be taken round the city, let him be laughed at here first." This curious procession is soon in the streets. Men, women, children pour into the streets to boo, grin and make merry. The laugh is not all on one side. With that burning tail he has felled not a few of his guards and then thinking better of it, has calmed down; the fire is not burning him, and here moreover is an opportunity to see Lanka in day-light. He is not laughing, though mischievous ideas are sprouting within him. He is letting them laugh for a time. He will laugh best because he will laugh last.

There! The monkey has made a beautiful leap. He is now on the roof top. Now he can laugh. The others too can continue to laugh, a monkey on a roof top is interesting. But soon laughter turns to cries. He is setting fire to houses. He jumps nimbly from roof-top to roof-top and sets them all on fire. People are now running for their lives. Women with their children in their arms flee and fall crying. A small flame has become a wild fire, a joke an unspeakable tragedy.

But the readers continue to laugh with Hanuman and Valmiki. But is Valmiki laughing? Or is he pointing out once again how near neighbour laughter is to tears? Is he warning us once again of the dangers of the not-so innocent laugh?

Valmiki soon takes us to a less agreeable scene: Monkeys drunk. Here is low humour; still the picture is vivid. No one could do it better.

"Some are singing, some stooping, some are dancing, some are laughing, some are falling, some are talking, some are babbling, some cry as they laugh. There is not one undrunk and not one who has not had enough; the madhu is dripping from some mouths, some drunk are throwing the wax at each other . . . They beat their enemies and show them their buttocks." After all they are monkeys and Valmiki the Maharshi does not seem to disapprove of this in the least. All his sympathies are on their side and yet he laughs.

There is plenty of savage laughter in the Yuddhakanda, the laughter of the victorious soldier at the downfall of his enemy; laughter at these blood-drinking rakshasas now themselves spitting blood. It is indeed a savage fight. There are also scenes of fright and flight from the battlefield, jumping into the sea, disappearing in the forest. The monkeys too run away, too often.

But in the midst of all this bloody and terrible laughter Valmiki provides some innocent comedy too with a picture of the sleeping Kumbhakarna and the attempts to wake him. Ravana is returning from the field beaten and desperate and yet this brother of his is sound asleep in some vast underground shelter. He must be awakened, he is necessary. Ravana's messengers approaching the cave are taken aback by the snoring that proceeds from it. With an effort they enter. They see him lying like an ugly mountain. They heap mountains of food, huge jars of blood and wines, before this hell-mouthed monster. They put sandalpaste on him and offer this snorer incense, they shout, they clap, they shake him. Frightened birds take to their wings at this, but unable to fly fall to the ground. But Kumbhakarna is undisturbed. Now they beat him with their heavy weapons but to no purpose. They dare not approach his nose, because though strong they might be sucked in. They beat him again, whip him with all their might, they raise hell. All Lanka and all the surrounding forests are echoing with it. Still Kumbhakarna is not awaking. They pluck his hair, they

bite his ears, they pour hundreds of pots of water down these pot-like ears. They drive thousands of elephants over him, he just feels that he is touched. At last he wakes up but only because of returning hunger. He takes a few deep breaths they blow like the wind in the mountains. And he immediately falls on those food heaps. With eyes still half closed and turbid he surveys the people around. Here is neither pity, nor much contempt, but pure fun. It is the child's laughter at the sight of an enormous snoring monster.

IN the Uttarakanda the laughter is mostly directed against Ravana. Ravana flying in his newly won Pushpaka plane finds its movement arrested over a mountain. He is told Shankara is amusing himself with his wife and followers in that mountain. His eyes red with anger he descends from his plane and scoffs, "Who is this Shankara?" At the foot of the mountain he has another laugh at the monkey-faced Nandi. Determined to root out the offending mountain he puts his arms under it and shakes it. Everything in it shakes. Parvathi, shaking, takes refuge in the embrace of her Lord. What a beautiful picture in one line! Valmiki leaves us to imagine the smile on Shankara's lips, the dawning smile on Parvathi recovering from her fright in his embrace. Mahadeva with another smile presses slightly, in fun, one toe on the mountain. Poor Ravana's hands are suddenly caught firmly under the mountain. He shouts in rage, in vain. But not entirely in vain. With that world-shaking shout it is that he becomes Ravana, Lokaravana. And he grows proud of this name born of disgrace! Helpless, he conciliates Shankara with his prayers. He has to pray long, a thousand years with his arms under the mountain.

We have another huge laugh at Ravana in the hands of Bali. Proud, haughty Ravana, the war-monger, goes to Kishkindha seeking war with Bali. But Bali is not there. He is told to seek him on the shore of the South sea. He immediately flies in

that direction. He approaches the praying Bali from behind and is in a flash caught in his arm-pit by Bali who has not even turned his head. With Ravana hanging from his arm-pit, like a serpent from Garuda's claws, Bali jumps from sea to sea. After his prayers, at last he comes back to Kishkindha. Releasing him now Bali asks with a loud laugh, "Wherefrom are you?"

WE find in Valmiki, at least once, hysterical laughter, laughter that is the child of a sorrow too deep for tears. Tara weeping over her dead husband lying on the ground walls: "The earth is dearer to you, Lord of the Earth, than I. You have left me, but even in death you embrace her." There is some jugglery with words too in her lament. This is the laughter of the soldier who on finding his hand blown off by a bomb begins to laugh.

There is also occasionally the humour of the grotesque as in the descriptions of the Mandha Rakshasas who hanging in different terrible shapes from mountain peaks fall into the water with sunrise, then heated by the sun slowly come up again to hang like balloons! There are also creatures that can cover themselves up completely with their ears, others with their ears on their lips, etc.

For an early writer there is comparatively little of purely verbal humour in Valmiki. He does not revel in puns like some of his own successors or like the much later Shakespeare. He is carried away, of course, by the wonder of words, their music and their meaning. He cannot occasionally help playing a little with his meaningful proper names. Homer too has been shown to have found mischievous delight in playing with the names and surnames of his characters. His Odysseus is 'odd,' a man of all 'odds.' His name originally came from a pun.

There is also present in Valmiki, as again in Homer, the oft-repeated stock epithets suddenly proving ironical

and humorous. Homer gives the Greeks his recurrent epithet "Great-hearted" even when they are behaving like cowards. Even when the dawn is late he calls it 'early.' The like effects are produced by Valmiki when he calls people 'Navakovidas' and 'Vakyavisharadas' even when they are actually behaving tactlessly or talking foolishly. What can we do but smile when Rakshasas and Rakshasis are called 'Kamarupis' and 'Kamarupinis!' When Lakshmana is furious, Rama calls him 'Soumya' and lets us smile though probably he does not, for it is a hint as well as a wish.

What are all these almost unnoticed verbal ironies and the always noticed dramatic irony compared to the deep and wide cosmic irony permeating the poem! It is apparently a story of losing a kingdom and winning it, of losing a wife and winning her back again, and of many other less important losses and gains. But survey the losses and gains with the impartial eyes of Fate. Rama wins his beloved, only to reject her, gets her back again only to lose her again, and again. Seetha insists on being taken to the forests to be always with Rama, but only to lose him almost forever. With her cutting tongue she drives Lakshmana away from her side, but thereby serves not Rama but Ravana. And in the end, when Seetha gets her husband back and for the last time, she rejects him, in her turn, to go back to the Earth, her mother and ours. The Kingdom that Rama succeeds in winning and expanding, he leaves to his descendants, divided, weak . . . Think of Kaikeyi, Tara, how gains becomes losses and losses gains. And think of that last sad procession to the other world that winds up all achievements, as all defeats . . . but we have to be Gods to laugh at all this. (*The text used is that of the Dharmalaya Edn., Edited by the late Rao Bahadur P. S. Krishnaswamy Iyer, Dharmalaya, Madras.*)

Man should comfort himself for not having great talent as for not having a high station. The possession of a good heart may give a nobler rank than either talents or worldly eminence can bestow.—VAUVENARGUES

New Books

THE CONFIDENTIAL CLERK

By T. S. Eliot
Faber and Faber Ltd., London
10s 6d

MR. T. S. ELIOT has proved for the fourth time that the possibilities of poetic drama are excitingly and exhilaratingly endless. His is not the best that could be done with verse in drama. There are other playwrights writing even now who do almost as good a job as he. Christopher Fry, the new Elizabethan with his twinkling, dancing words and Ronald Duncan who begins so well and never ends. But neither has the smooth, streamlined quality that Mr. Eliot brings to his work. The present verse drama has not the depth or the richness or the dazzle or the nobility or the majesty of the dramatic verse written in the time of the first Elizabeth but then nobody has claimed that it has these qualities nor is it expected to have them. Elizabethan verse drama sounded like verse drama. If it didn't nobody would have gone to the theatre and Shakespeare would probably have perished unsung. But if verse drama sounds like verse drama at the present time nobody would go either and Mr. Eliot would have to make up his mind to write plays as Mr. Terence Morgan or Mr. Tennessee Williams writes them in which case he would make as much money—if not more—but would not be so widely discussed and written about. All that he has tried to do—with considerable success—is to make his blank verse so much akin to prose that it is difficult quickly to tell the difference. It seems merely very mellifluous prose, the kind of prose a poet would write. But the lines scan, have stresses and a metrical harmony. In fact, almost the only difference between Mr. Eliot's dramatic blank verse and his poetry seems to be that the former makes more sense.

Sometimes, it seems that in art now, incomprehensibility is all. To be completely and clearly understood



T. S. Eliot

is considered a little dull like the perfectly honest woman. So a little literary coquetry has become permissible, indeed imperative. It proves that there is something behind the words uttered. It denotes either a profundity or a complexity of thought which marks the deep thinker and the merciless—almost sadistic—prober into what has been called "the submerged iceberg of the unconscious." It is not surprising then that the secure and the established people, the people with roots, find their standards and values sadly shaken by the new art and literature. They are prepared for the art which entertains, the art which teaches, even the art which explains, but the art which shuts the door is simply above their heads. In fact, there is a general feeling that since Sigmund Freud brought out his *Interpretation of Dreams* at the turn

of the century, nothing has been quite the same again. Even Mr. Eliot seems a little influenced by the prevailing fashion in art. "I should not think very highly of any play," he said in connection with *The Cocktail Party*, "of which I could gather the whole point after only seeing it once and without having read it . . . I should not like anyone seeing a play of mine to feel completely comfortable."

The need now for the choice of slightly uncomfortable subjects for dramatic writing developed upon the deep and inexhaustible drain which the novel has made on life. In the last fifty years, H. G. Wells, Virginia Woolf, Freud, Rebecca West, James Joyce, Wyndham Lewis, Hemingway, Lawrence Sterne and a dozen others have tried so many experiments in the writing of the novel that they have all but exhausted its possibilities and potentialities. There seem literally no themes to write plays about. Man in Time, Man in Eternity, Man in Society, Man as an Individual, the Predicament of Man, the Destination of Man, the Religion of Man—they have all been worn threadbare. The drama has been forced to go to the nuances of emotions, not to the emotions themselves, treat the undertones and overtones of situations, not the situations themselves, highlight minor niceties and refinements. If it is true that when Nora Helman slammed the front door at the end of *A Doll's House* she slammed it on an epoch, it is also true that when James Joyce wrote *Ulysses* he said the last word on the art of novel-writing. Graham Greene speaking, I am sure, for many present-day novelists believes that "the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity." The natural consequence of such a shattering belief among writers would be for them to try to help us continuously and desperately to look into ourselves, analyse ourselves, explain ourselves and justify ourselves in perhaps an unconscious desire to try to prove to ourselves that we do not deserve what we are getting or at least that we are not instrumental to our own destruction.

So the novel has exhausted itself and in that process anticipated the

themes of drama. It also limited the area of dramatic action. Sometimes in modern plays as in the plays of Mr. Eliot, there could hardly be said to be any action at all. The movement is in the thought and the world. The minds and men and women meet, their thoughts intermingle and clash and the result is the drama. If at least their wills collided, we would have some physical action. But when thought jostles thought there is not a sound though the soul might be lacerated and the heart torn beyond repair. English poetry which has not been able to feed so well on this kind of material of disintegration has produced a different kind of poetry from what we are accustomed to call poetry. It has produced *The Waste Land*, the subject of which is chaos.

The evolution of drama has been more gradual. After the Elizabethans came a pause and then the Restorationists. After another pause came the imitators, Thomson, Moore, Home etc. Then came the brilliant and thought-provoking prose plays of Shaw, Otway, A. A. Milne, St. John Ervine, Sir Arthur Pinero, Sir James Barrie, Lord Dunsany and others. But even as these playwrights were producing their excellent plays, a new note of symbolism, precursor to the change that was to follow was creeping into their plays. We see the high point of this change in Mr. T. S. Eliot. It has worked its way through W. B. Yeats, Abercrombie, Gordon Bottomley, Synge, Stephen Phillips, to Christopher Fry, Ronald Duncan and T. S. Eliot. It has meant not only bringing verse back to drama, but a democratisation of dramatic verse. It has with a degree of success bridged the gulf between poetry which was becoming the food of the intellectuals and was consequently becoming incomprehensible to the ordinary run of people and colloquial speech which was losing its dignity. The themes these dramatists choose are simple. Their writing is reflective, imaginative, introvert.

Mr. T. S. Eliot, like most artists, like Epstein for instance, who are trying to do something different, has two kinds of readers. There are those who understand him and so admire

him and look upon him as a master and initiator. Then there are those who do not comprehend him and can't think what on earth he is trying to say. What would astonish them would be to be told that he is not trying to tell them a thing but only just trying to give them a good play. Somewhere between these two, of course, is the third minority which understands him and consequently dislikes him. To them verse drama is Shakespeare. The rest is sacrilege.

Mr. Eliot did not start off as an innovator. His first two plays followed the classical and historical tradition. His *The Cocktail Party* of course, was a tongue-in-the-cheek play. It is sometimes difficult to say if Mr. Eliot is being funny about something serious or being terribly serious about something which is really so commonplace it is funny. But when he talks mysticism and about *Guardians* he sounds like Father Keegan in *John Bull's Other Island*—a bit of a hoax. But, both in the *Party* and in *The Confidential Clerk* we feel the undertones of a deep, moral integrity.

In *The Confidential Clerk* the central theme is the meeting between four parents starved for the love of children and three children hungry for parental affection. The characters are a little odd and the situations just a trifle unusual. Sir Claude Mulhammer, the gentle peer who wanted to be a potter, finds his past catching up with him in the shape of an illegitimate son and daughter. Lady Elizabeth, his absent-minded wife, who liked to travel for her health and had a 'good' heart, is trying to catch up with her past somewhere in which is a son who had carelessly been 'mis-laid.' Then there is Lucasta Angel, the daughter, who is spiritual and moral driftwood. 'lonely' in her loneliness, the bastard afraid of being hurt, trying desperately to catch up with her future; Colby, the son, who eventually proves not the son, the thwarted musician, who has neither a past nor a future; Barnabas Kaghan, the foundling who wants to be 'a power in the city,' bluff, 'good company' who lives heartily in the present and finds that Fate has discovered for him an exciting past;

and, lastly, the inimitable Eggerson, the ex-Confidential Clerk, friend, adviser and confidante, who lasts for ever. Like *The Cocktail Party* it has no climax. There is no definite point at which the drama of the play is concentrated, but, there are, as in the *Party*, various points at which the play touches intellectual excitement.

The Confidential Clerk, as regarding material, gives one the impression of being milk-and-water stuff but as a stage play it seems technically perfect. One would find oneself, if not sitting on the edge of the seat, certainly sitting still and straight basking in the feeling of gratification one has when one is actually able to enjoy a play which is more than middle-brow.

SANTHA RUNGACHARY

Sandhya Vandanam

By Pandit V. K. V. Acharya

The Manu Publication Series No. 2.

Ramani Press, Mylapore, Madras 4

Rs. 2-4, Sh. 3-6, 48 cents

BERTRAND RUSSELL the eminent octagonarian philosopher in a series of talks broadcast over the Home Service of the B. B. C. under the caption 'Living in An Atomic Age' observed: "A way of life cannot be successful so long as it is a mere intellectual conviction. It must be deeply felt, deeply believed, dominant even in dreams." It is only boundless faith and a strong conviction that really solidify a religious cult. Disbelief in one's religious tradition is like a contagion and infects the whole system which is eventually buried in oblivion.

In our age of plastic surgery and electronic brain anyone who performs the Sandhya Vandana in the true brahmanic tradition is apt to be branded as a superstitious fool trying to camouflage his spiritual vacuity by punctilious observance of minor rituals. This state of depraved profanity is all the more condemnable taking into account the ignorance displayed by some critics who fail to grasp the real import and the deeper significance of Sandhya Vandana. The performance of the ablutions thrice a day—at sunrise, sunset and

at noon when the sun is in the full blaze of his majesty at the meridian—has got a potential spiritual purport.

Sri V. K. V. Acharya in his book *Sandhya Vandanam* brings forth all his erudition and scholarship in laying bare to us the world of meaning that lies embodied in the *mantras*, and provides us with lucid commentaries and exhaustive explanations. The last section of the book 'The Evolution of the Universe' has been suitably dovetailed and deals in a scientific manner with the concept of the universe, the idea of democracy, the temporal and spatial aspects of universal energy in its kinetic and latent forms and winds up with the code of human conduct and principles of legislation. The book is a valuable addition to the existing literature on the subject.

K. VENKATRAM

Communism and Peasantry

By Ram Swarup

Prachi Prakashan, 12, Chowranghee Square, Calcutta

Rs. 9

AS is evident from the title of the book, Mr. Ram Swarup studies the communist tactics and strategy in relation to the peasantry. He elaborates on its political drive, collectivist agriculture, its future implications and pattern; its promises and achievements. He finally warns Asia against these slogan-mongers.

The author studies from various angles the relations between the peasants and communists, their temporary and tactical alliance with the peasantry, how it leads to ultimate destruction of the agriculturist, how in a communist land system the land belongs to the ryot and the produce to the Government, the ruthless exploitation of the peasant, the inequality that in course of time, arises.

Mr. Ram Swarup tries to show the possibilities of reconstructing Indian agriculture on a sound and smooth basis, he examines the causes for the sorry plight of the peasants and suggests ways of relieving them. He exposes the shallow nature of the communist chain of reasoning. He

pleads for the rejection of communism "not because it lowers the living standard of the masses, not because it is cruel and violent and lacks conscience, not even because it controls human mind, but because it controls the aspiration of man, because it is ruled by an alien consciousness, because it is the first organized political effort in history to demolish the principles of divinity, the aspirations towards Godhead in man."

K. R.

BHAIRAVI

RUFFLING the steely face of mountain stream

In early winter frost, the nocturne air
Needle stings to frenzy; the silken stare
Of the mocking moon voodooes the dream
Witching the rose-flaked bowl to sour cream

Until the glass sword dispels with fanfare
Ragwool blanket cast in styptic care
And bamboo-bends the wind to chord
supreme.

Withal, the magic reed encores the pain
Spelt in the plaintive lilt of darker grief
As the gasping lotus strives to clasp
The broken stem and the dew-flecked leaf:

Dulcet the dirge, and clear the flute's refrain

To sing of moon-fate and the twisting asp.

SHRINIVAS THAMBI

DECEIT

WHAT if my flowers fade, ere time to bloom—

This life perhaps will linger but with gloom.

Let all the rainbows vanish from my sky
And leave alone the tears to rise on high.
Securely closed let door of joy remain—
Stay beside me, oh, you shunless pain.
Deathless ogre of sorrow stay by me
Pinching e'en the little joy you see.

Inured to depression I still shall live
With painful smile residing on my lips.
Fitful current of life that fails to give
Me pleasure—yet to others lend the bliss.
Yes, let the life thus flow as others wish,
My pain I'll hide, while sorrow's doom
I kiss.

MAYA

In the Movieland

By

A. MUTHUSWAMI

Films and the intelligentsia

THE attitude of the intelligentsia, so far as films are concerned—paradoxical as it may appear—is anything but intelligent. This is most unfortunate and one is extremely sorry to say that.

Films in relation to society create so many problems and if the people, who have a duty to mould public opinion on right lines, fail such dereliction is bound to react disastrously both on films and society.

When faced with serious problems, delicate problems, we have found, people take different attitudes according to their different temperaments. Some, ostrich-like, bury their head in the sand and refuse to consider that there is any problem at all. Some, like bulls, shut their eyes and charge madly creating more problems than they set out to solve. Others, unable to meet their difficulties sanely become hysterical. Yet others, calmly consider the problems, understand their implication and arrive at right conclusions. So armed, they face the problems squarely and ultimately meet them with success.

The last method, you will concede, is the right method, the intelligent method. Take films and you will find all the four methods exemplified at different times by different people. There are people who simply shut their eyes and consider films too mean to merit their attention at all. There are people whose definite opinion is that cinema is bad and you cannot by any means mend it, and the sooner it is ended by governmental fiat, the better to all concerned. Other persons, just like the housewives in Delhi—news of which you might have read in the papers—throw up their hands in despair and shout hysterically for governmental intervention which, constituted as governments are today, would be only

shortsighted and in any case futile. People who have studied the problems and can offer constructive suggestions, both to the good of cinema and society, are indeed so few and their feeble voice has been invariably drowned in the shouts of the many.

What is this thing called Cinema? Man as a social being, which he is destined by his nature to be, is under constant necessity of communicating his ideas to his fellow men. In the dark dim ages of the past, he should have used for this purpose some noises and gestures and these noises and gestures later assumed the form of language and pictures. Once language was born, words followed and with them arose the necessity for an alphabet. With the coming of the alphabet, as a necessary corollary, writing replaced memory as the repository for man's treasured ideas. The labour involved in writing was relieved by the invention of printing. In this cumulative process of conveying ideas of man in society, the film is the latest medium.

As a medium, film can be put to good as well as bad uses. Just like a knife, it can be used in the hands of an assassin to kill but also, in the hands of a skilful surgeon, it can be used to save human lives. There is nothing right or wrong basically about it and the distinction arises only in the use to which it is put.

Somebody has remarked that "Mother Science gave the films a premature birth and Father Opportunism sent them to work before they could walk." Early associates of the cinema, with few exceptions, were drawn from a class of people with whom decent people considered it a shame and sin to mingle. The big profit that films offered attracted to their production a class of financiers whose sole aim was to make the utmost profit possible irrespective of any other considerations. Left severely alone in the hands of these people, and lacking the direction and correction which serious minded and intelligent people could have bestowed on it this latest medium of information and instruction, the film I mean, has assumed monster-shapes, a problem to itself and to the society in which it functions.

Passage of time has in a way removed many of the film's anomalies. More and more decent people have been attracted to it. But all along, it has always lacked the intelligent direction which it needs for its proper functioning.

In the film we have a wonderful medium for imparting instruction and information. It utilises both sound and pictures, two powerful ingredients, which in their combination, becomes more potent for swaying men's minds. Its attraction is great for all classes of people, young and old, men and women. If only more and more intelligent people would come into it as workers and leaders of public opinion offer constructive suggestions for its advancement, its full potency can be used to the maximum for the regeneration of society.

Man of destiny

DO you know that Mr. Vasanthakumari refused not once but many times to have anything to do with films at one time, the same Mr. Vasanthakumari who now occupies the pre-eminent position in the Indian film world to-day? The year was 1932 and it was the time when the starting of the first studio for the production of talkies in Madras was in the air. The present writer offered him a share in

the undertaking and persistently urged that he should do something for films, important as he was in the allied field of journalism as the conveyor of information and instruction to the public. He politely refused saying that the distance between him and the films was so wide that it would be impossible to bridge at any time. Then about 1934 or 1935, Kalki again approached him and got his permission to produce "Thilagabhoomi." Interviewed again by the writer Vasanthakumari said that in the production of this picture he was only interested in helping his associate but to enter films he still had the same objection as of old. Who denies, I ask, that there is a destiny that shapes our ends and shapes to right ends?

Picture points

A. V. M.'s "Penn" is an eagerly awaited picture. For the second time Vyjayanthimala is appearing in a Tamil picture. Vyjayanthimala is a good artiste and one has to say that her going to the North has not been beneficial. I am speaking only from the point of art, both to herself and to films. In the creation of better films, she has a purpose to fulfil and one eagerly awaits the picture "Penn" to see if this expectation is in any way realised in it.

Seeking stability in Asia

By MAURICE LATEY

(Maurice Lathey is a well-known radio-commentator specializing in European affairs. Here he speaks of the Western Powers' common aim.)

THE Geneva conference, unlike its predecessor in Berlin, has to deal with a situation in flux—with nations only just emerging into modern nationhood, with wars still raging or only just ended. The chief Western participants in the conference have different traditions in Asia. France is engaged in a bitter war which she has long wanted to

end, on honourable terms. Britain and the U. S. A. support the French Union forces in resisting Communist aggression in South-East Asia, and recognise that they are fighting the battle of free men everywhere.

Britain's attitude derives from her ancient connection with Asia. The only remaining ties of the old sort are with the colonies—Hong Kong, with its large British garrison, and Malaya, where the British forces have fought a long and bitter struggle with groups of Communist terrorists in the jungle.

But links of a newer kind with members of the Commonwealth who have achieved independence since the war are even more significant.

If it is the main problem of Asian nations to achieve full independence without losing it again to alien Communist domination, then the example of India, Pakistan and Ceylon may well be decisive for Asia today. Their independence is complete; they may, on occasions—as the Indian Government has done at times—disagree with British policy. Yet they can rely, in the event of any threat to their independence, on full British support.

Independence, in fact, has not meant dangerous isolation for them. It is natural that successive British governments should see in this combination of independence and partnership the model for relations between Asia and the West. Therefore, in any durable settlement in Asia the representatives of these hundreds of millions of people must play their part, and Britain must help them to do so.

For the U. S. A., on the other hand the second World War began at Pearl Harbour. For many Americans the Far Eastern war loomed larger than the European because the bulk of the burden of defence fell on America. This experience led many Americans to two conclusions—firstly, that they should have no dealings with Chinese Communists; and secondly, that they should never again get involved in a land conflict of the Korean type. Then, in the weeks before Geneva, it came to look as if the situation in Indo-China might well threaten the American people with a choice between just these two abhorrent courses.

The U. S. Administration began to prepare public opinion for this hard decision. The Secretary of State, Mr. Dulles, stated America's vital interest in saving South-East Asia from Communist domination. The Vice-President, Mr. Nixon, suggested the possibility that American troops might have to fight in Indo-China.

Mr. Dulles visited London and Paris to confer with his country's allies on the next step. He did not carry with

him any cut-and-dry policy for direct intervention in Indo-China, since such a decision would have needed the approval of Congress, which had not been sought and would, in any case, have been doubtful. His journey was, in fact, part of the process of policy-making.

This process in America is commonly accompanied by one of those great debates which cause such alarm in other countries. The most famous of them was on the issue whether the United States should "go it alone" in Korea, and it culminated in the dismissal of General MacArthur.

In such debates, all sorts of extreme courses are advocated. All sorts of brickbats are flung by extremists at allied countries, where they are picked up by the opposite extremists and flung back with equal vigour. And the result is usually the right decision—as it was in the case of the Truman doctrine, the Marshall programme, and the North Atlantic Treaty.

That pattern is, to all appearance, repeating itself now. America's attitude and approach differs in important respects from that of her European allies. In particular, Americans are far more pessimistic about the possibilities of any negotiations with the Chinese.

If they are right and no honourable settlement can be got in Indo-China, then Britain, France, and the U. S. A. are committed to look into the possibility of a collective defence organisation in South-East Asia. Assuming, on the other hand, the possibility of some sort of Indo-Chinese settlement, these countries and others are already consulting together on how to guarantee it.

The aim, therefore, is a collective security system which will secure for Asia the same relative stability that has already been achieved in Europe. And even if the Powers approach this from different positions, it is not the route but the destination that counts.

CITY TRAMWAYS: Case for Revival

DR. P. VARADARAJULU NAIDU

THE Madras Electric Tramways was the oldest transport service in Madras, next to the Railways. The bus transport came in only later on. The tramways were more popular than bus service in the City. The Madras tramways was a well organised transport system in Madras. Though the tram fares in Madras were not so cheap as in Calcutta and Bombay, it could be said to be more efficient from the service point of view than in Bombay and Calcutta. So far as Madras City is concerned, it was the cheapest transport system.

The suspension of tram service all on a sudden from the 12th April 1953 was a sudden stab in the back not only to the labourers serving in the tramways but also to the middle and poor classes who could not afford to go in for other modes of transport as the upper classes. Conveyance has nowadays become a costly affair; and the middle classes and business people as also others who have to cover frequent journeys especially of short distances are put to great expense and difficulty in the absence of the tramway season tickets.

It cannot be denied that transport run by electricity is the cheapest and in these war-mongering days it is not safe always to depend on petrol-driven conveyance though for the time being it may be convenient. It is an irony of fate that while trams are running in other cities of India, they are put out of use in Madras City on some plea or other. It is also strange that while schemes are made to electrify even the train service even for long distances and electricity is used for various purposes including domestic service and is extended to rural areas, the same electricity is switched off for the main purpose of transport for which it was introduced in the City, along with the general purpose of lighting.

Taking all these into consideration, and if not for anything else, at least

to solve the unemployment problem among the poor labourers out of employment and to cater to the urgent needs of the middle and poor class passengers who only look to the cheaper modes of transport, the tram service should be revived. Finance should not stand in the way of its revival, especially when trams are running in Calcutta and Bombay at the old rates and Government are trying to make good the loss to some extent in the interest of the general public. The agitation against enhancement of fares in Calcutta is still fresh in our minds. In Delhi the deteriorating tramways have been rehabilitated and put to proper use by the constitution of a Transport Corporation. No city in the world is free from bustle and noise. The poor class passengers would not mind a little extra noise if it enables them to make a little saving of money. It is a pity that persons in responsible positions should choose like laymen to make sweeping observations instead of giving useful and constructive suggestions for the revival of the tram service.

As regards the question of running the service, either the Government should themselves take it over or permit the Corporation of Madras to take it over and run it or constitute a Tramway Transport Corporation for the purpose consisting of Government and Corporation representatives and certain leading transport magnates. Now that there is a move on the part of the Corporation to take over the tramways and run them in the interest of the poor public, there should be an increasing public support to the Corporation in this noble venture. The Government which exists for the people's welfare should give every aid possible to the Corporation. If the Government cannot grant an interest-free loan to the Corporation, they may permit the Corporation to raise a loan in the open market for the purpose of taking over the tram service. The Corporation was able to get loans at advantageous terms, and in this case, the public will willingly subscribe to a loan substantially. Trade unions all over India are also

very keen and enthusiastic on the question of revival of tram service in Madras, as it affects not only a large body of labourers but also the bulk of the middle and poor classes.

It is hoped that Sri Kamaraj Nadar, who has an abiding interest in the welfare of poor people and labourers

and who is a great democrat and the poor man's representative will boldly come forward and see that the tramways are revived in the interest of common people and resumed on the 15th August 1954 to mark the occasion of the National Festival, viz., the Independence Day.

(Continued from page 8)

tend to abandon the hard way of efficient work, hanging around the pials of the ministerial Olympians in suppliant poses as the likelier way to distinction and success.

One correspondent accuses me of personal motives in condemning the example set by the Andhra Chief Minister. There might be personal motives in profitable journalistic conduct that seeks to placate and get to the right side of the mighty. The record of this journal has been just the reverse—to befriend the forlorn and stand up to the powerful and incur the consequential wrath. I

recollect that Sri Rajagopalachari once wrote in a letter to me: "Your fondness for Prakasam misleads you." But that was at a time when there was as little to be gained by being fond, as now by being frank. When motives are impugned it is futile to resort to verbal counter-denials—everybody can do the same. In each case as it comes, it is for the public to whom all printed matter is addressed, to determine whether comment is just and springs from duty and no malice, or whether it is mixed up with inferior objectives and deserves to be spurned.

SAKA

HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR FINANCIAL OPERATIONS AS AT

31st December 1953

Our Policyholders number	1,16,923
Life Assurances in Force exceed	Rs. 26,96,57,000
Total Assets exceed	Rs. 8,37,53,000
Total Income exceed	Rs. 1,48,69,000
Life Assurance Fund	Rs. 7,48,98,593
Total Claims paid in 1953	Rs. 40,00,256

Policyholders' Funds vested in the Official Trustee of Madras exceed Rs. 8 Crores

(Disability Benefit free. Accidental Benefit at Rs. 1-8 per thousand extra.)

Ask for Particulars of our ESTATE DUTY POLICY.

THE UNITED INDIA LIFE ASSURANCE CO., LTD.

(Established : 1906)

Head Office: MADRAS-1.

The Yugoslav Example

By KAMALA APPARAO

IF Socialist youth have to account for their nationalism, they can do it in no better way than to help reconstruct their country. The Yugoslav youth came forward to build their country which had a history of years of exploitation by foreign capitalists, and was damaged by two wars with a loss of two million of its inhabitants.

Perhaps in no other country has voluntary labour of the youth played such a significant role as in Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav youth had behind them the tradition of a Partisan war of liberation and the tradition of having successfully organised their country on a Socialist basis. The Yugoslav youth had also set a precedent in inviting the youth of other countries to join and work with them shoulder to shoulder in helping to rebuild a people whose industry was destroyed, whose houses were demolished, whose communications were disrupted, fields devastated, and whose standard of life was far less than that of their European neighbours around. Youth from Europe, America and Asia came not only to help but to gain experience and foster friendship. They participated in building roads, railways, factories, bridges and canals. Work-drives became a tradition and participation in them became the pride of every young person in Yugoslavia.

The idea of voluntary work among the youth took shape as early as 1942, when Yugoslavia was fighting for its liberation. The younger people who could not join the army and fight, organised themselves into youth brigades and did the work of carrying food and other equipment to the front lines of the battle. Soon after liberation, the youth realised the importance of developing their country industrially with proper communications, and plunged themselves whole-heartedly into construction work. In 1946 they organised themselves into brigades and started to build the railway line of 135 miles to link the coalfields with the industrially important centres. Work planned for four years was completed in 6 months and when the first train

started plying, it was greeted by the whole country with great enthusiasm. With encouragement from the people and the State they launched on another gigantic construction, a railway line along the whole length of the Bosna river which meant 363 miles. This they completed in a year's time, much to the amazement of the public. In the same time they built a modern machine tool factory near Belgrade. In the following year they built another railway line from Niksic to Titograd. Further, a motor road of 495 miles was built with the help of the army. Another railway line was built in 1950 and in 1951 the line from Doboj to Banj Luka was built, which connected the eastern Bosnian basin with the industrial centres in the west. The youth further participated in building water power plants, non-ferrous rolling metal mill and a big iron works at Zelnika. They helped to construct co-operative houses in rural areas.

In all these works, over a million and half youth participated and worked voluntarily without any pay, getting food, shelter and facilities of cultural programmes. To join the city students came young men from villages and countryside; young peasants who had never been out of their village came in carloads with flags, singing songs, perhaps for the first time to play football or listen to the radio or drive a car and to mix with young people from other countries.

The brigades consisted of 150 to 200 youths each. Brigades from abroad were smaller. The work day consisted of about seven hours which were generally in the morning. In the afternoons the young people were free to take some rest, or wander about, or play sports. Lectures were organised on various subjects. The evenings were spent in dancing and singing or sitting round the campfire. Dramatics became popular and guest artists and singers came to the campsite for the benefit of the youthful workers. National evenings of various countries were celebrated, to which one and all were invited.

Work was the most important

(Continued on page 48)

FILMS

By V. P. SATHE

ACCORDING to all responsible people in the trade, at least in Bombay circuit the film business is better in 1954 than the corresponding period in 1953. Moreover, this year the number of pictures which have done good business are perhaps double those of last year. So far during the first six months, the pictures to fare well at the box office are *Taxi Driver*, *Ali Baba*, *Boot Polish*, *Aar Paar*, *Aulad*, *Dharmapatri*, *Nag Panchmi*, *Ilzam*, *Shabab*. Then both *Badbaan* and *Mayurpankh* have fared far better in Bombay than in other provinces. In other circuits *Danka*, *Subah Ka Tara*, *Manohar* and *Bhagat Singh* are reported to have been very successful.

So with this record of success, things should have become brighter for the producers. But in reality the reverse is the case. The producers are facing the worst financial crisis; and consequently the stars are finding it more and more difficult to get their dues. A feature-player working in thirteen pictures at a time is unable to get 100 rupees from each producer per month; another starlet finds that though she has so many contracts and she is so busy otherwise has not got money enough to run the house. The lack of cash is so acute that the other day a producer had a unique experience. He offered a starlet a contract to work in his picture. She demanded five thousand rupees while the producer offered her three thousand. A lot of higgling-haggling went on with no result. In desperation the starlet made a counter-offer. She asked for only 2000 provided all of it was paid on the table. The producer was stunned. He went away and returned with just Rs. 1500 cash and offered it on 'take it or leave it' basis. And the starlet accepted it.

This incident illustrates how much shortage of money there is in the industry and what miracles money can work. As a producer said, if any one has cash today and knows how to use it, he will produce the picture at almost half the stipulated cost. Even making allowance for exaggeration, there is no gainsaying that with ready cash, the producer would be able to lower the cost of production to an amazing degree.

Thanks to this paradoxical situation the industry, in spite of improvement in returns, is still in the doldrums.

Picture of the week

PRODUCER P. N. Arora is one of those competent men who makes pictures as per schedule and provides reasonably good entertainment. So if his pictures do not hit the bull's eye, at least they do not flop miserably.

But in the case of his latest offering *Chor Bazar* one is doubtful whether it will keep up Arora's tradition. For the scenarist has bungled so badly in his adaptation of the story from the popular Hollywood film "The Prince Who Was A Thief" that he has failed to make the screenplay even interesting and the long-drawn out pedantic dialogue has further helped to bring whatever the tempo the original may have had to a stand-still.

Thus in the very beginning considerable footage is wasted on the philosophy of the King of Chor Bazar and on an incident with Randhir which has no relation to the main story, which begins when Om Prakash is assigned the job of killing the tiny prince. Instead of killing the prince, Om takes him away from the capital and brings him up as his own son and returns to the capital after eighteen years to reclaim the throne from the usurper uncle. When the prince who is now a thief falls in love with his uncle's daughter, the story becomes more interesting. The theft of a pearl by a girl lends suspense and mystery

and one gets ready to behold a very engrossing film.

But, alas, all the hopes are dashed to pieces as the mystery girl gets involved with the prince who gets back the pearl from her and pretends to love her for an ulterior motif. This pearl business is dragged for a considerable time and the anti-climax comes when the people of Sherkand hail the prince as their king, march to the palace and the prince gives away the cousin he loved so ardently without a tear in his eyes and marries the mystery girl who once used to bore him.

Lengthy dialogue, lack of suspense and the most phoney treatment of romantic triangle with the result that almost till the last moment you do not know who is the real heroine, have all contributed to a weak scenario. What is worse, Shammi Kapoor failed to be dashing and the amateur way in which he wields his sword is deplorable. Sumitra is colourless and ill at ease in the difficult Urdu dialogue. Chitra is lively and Om Prakash is entertaining; both of them are responsible for some lively moments in the film. The music too is nothing to write about.

The only redeeming feature of the picture is the competent manner in which Arora has produced and directed it. He has been badly let down by his writers, music director and artistes this time and a golden opportunity to make a really top entertainer has been missed.

Personality of the week

CHITRA who is being acclaimed for her performance in *Chor Bazar* has taken quite a long time to get this break.

Chitra whose real name is Afsarbanu came years ago to Bombay from Hyderabad to join films. She got small roles in the beginning and the people in the industry started talking about her as a promising starlet. In V. M. Vyas' *Sanskar* she had a small role which she did with zest. So Rajendra Jain of Filmkar signed

her to play the female lead in *Maan* about two and half years ago.

But unfortunately for Chitra, Filmkar itself was passing through a crisis when it undertook this venture. And it was with great difficulty that the picture was completed recently. It is, I think, not yet released.

So the delay in the production of *Maan* was another unfortunate event in her life. She had to struggle hard and be content with inconsequential roles until Arora gave her a role in *Chor Bazar*. And now that the picture is released and she has won acclaim, she is on the road to stardom. For, apart from her personal triumph in *Chor Bazar* she has good roles in Arora's forthcoming films as well as Wadia's pictures and as a result of these major roles, like Shakila and other starlets, Chitra is bound to go a long way.

Chitra is not exactly a beauty. She is a petite charming star with striking eyes, an innocent face and a good range of expressions. She can be depended upon to enliven a situation with her sprightly performance as she does, for instance, in *Chor Bazar*. No wonder, Arora preferred her to sedate and sombre Sumitra and made her the heroine in the end.

She is a welcome addition to our starry skies and she may be expected to blaze a new trail of glory.

News of the week

THE muhurat of Hemlata Pictures' *Basant Panchmi* directed by Jayant Desai was performed on Sunday the 20th June and Bhagyodaya Pictures' *Nav Ratri* directed by Raman Desai was performed on Sunday the 27th June. Nirupa Roy is starred in both these pictures.

Amiya Chakrabarti has resumed the shooting of *Badshah* in right earnest at Modern Studios.

V. Shantaram went to Delhi to supervise the special documentary which Films Division is making on the visit of Chou En Lai, the Prime Minister of China.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor welcomes letters on subjects of general interest or topics arising out of articles printed in SWATANTRA but reserves the right to abridge them for reasons of space.

Sales Tax on Hides and Skins

Sir,—On January 26, 1950, when the Constitution of the Republic of India came into force, tanners were led to believe that under Article 286 of the Constitution, they need not pay any sales tax on hides and skins, as this is mainly an export trade and comes within the clause "in the course of export". So with smiling faces, they stopped the further payment of the tax from that date. At that time, the Government also were not aware of the correct interpretation of Article 286 of the Constitution and they didn't insist on payment of sales tax. So from 26th January 1950 the Government didn't demand any tax from the tanners and the tanners also except a few didn't pay. This state of affairs continued till March 10, 1954.

But after the recent judgment of the Supreme Court (delivered on March 11, 1954), about the levy of sales tax on hides and skins and the validity of the Madras Sales Tax Act of 1953, it appears that the Commercial Tax authorities are taking steps to collect from tanners, the sales tax due from 26th January 1950 to this date. Now between the Commercial Tax authorities and the slump in leather trade, the tanner is like one between the devil and the deep sea.

The sales tax, now due, by most of the tanners from 26th January 1950 exceeds their assets. They are not able to make both ends meet, due to continuous loss and slump in this trade, for the past four or five years. Most of the middle class tanners are at present leading a hand to mouth existence. If the Government all of a sudden call upon the tanners to pay the sales tax due from January 1950 to March 31st 1954, most of the middle class tanners will be ruined and their tanneries will have to be closed down. Quite a large number of labourers will be thrown out of employment, in addition to the Government losing a major dollar-earning industry.

Under the circumstances, the Government should waive the sales tax due by tanners from January 26, 1950 to March 31, 1954, and save the tanners

from the crisis facing them. If the Government feel that the levy of sales tax on hides and skins in future is justifiable, they should call a conference of tanners in Madras and settle this question once and for all.

V. S. VASAN

An opinion

Sir,—Word by word and letter by letter, I concur with the views expressed by Santha Rungachary in her "Letter to Vighneswara," published in *Swatantra* dated 22-5-1954. I don't consider myself erudite enough to accuse Vighneswara of orthodox slant. Chastity is a virtue to be practised by both the parties. In the Ramayana there is an episode that Sita entered fire to prove her purity during her stay in Lanka and walked out of the fire without a single burn on her body. I am of the firm opinion that Sita would have been burnt alive, but for Rama's principle of monogamy and constancy in love for his devoted beloved. Divorce is a necessary evil and passing an act granting it as a claim of right under extreme cases of necessity is what the society needs. Equality of women is an accepted principle and in modern times, the very idea that marriage is only a life-time masculine support for femininity economically and otherwise, is condemned. According to Santha Rungachary no man of ordinary discretion can tolerate the burning of a candle at both ends by the same person. Atrocities and chastity activities can be prevented, if not completely put an end to, by the enactment of an act of this kind. The Special Marriage Bill provides only an audible form of resistance when men ill-treat women. When Raja Ram Mohan Roy struggled for the enactment of an act for the abolition of 'Suttee' he met with bitter opposition from the learned men of his days. But for him, even today, we can witness before our own eyes the horrible scenes of widows being burnt alive in spite of the so-called popular sentiment which is supposed to have abolished the system earlier according to Vighneswara. The two-legged vermin are spared to breathe the air of this mundane earth by the Lord Almighty. If due to some uncanny process in the gravitational activities of the solar system our mother planet explodes into annihilation throwing life into the abyss of extinction, it is not going to cost Nature even a little. God is conceived by man as one Greater than the Greatest, Better than the Best, Nature of the nature and equivalent to Mathematical infinity. With all respect to