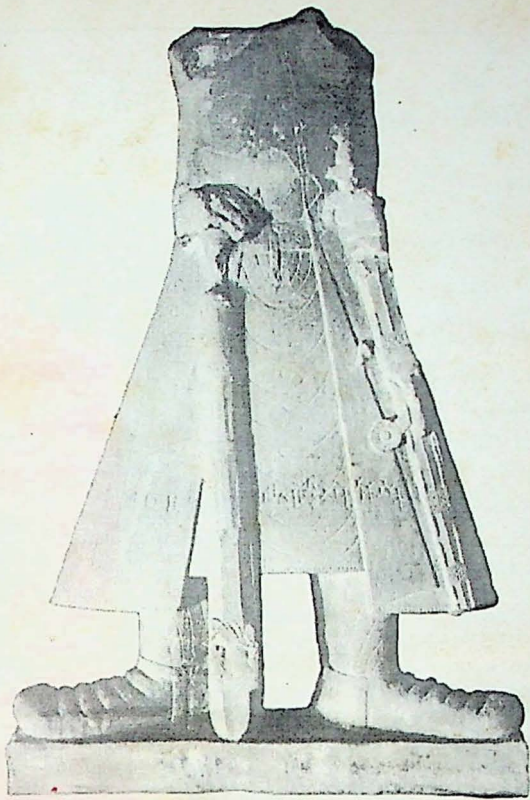
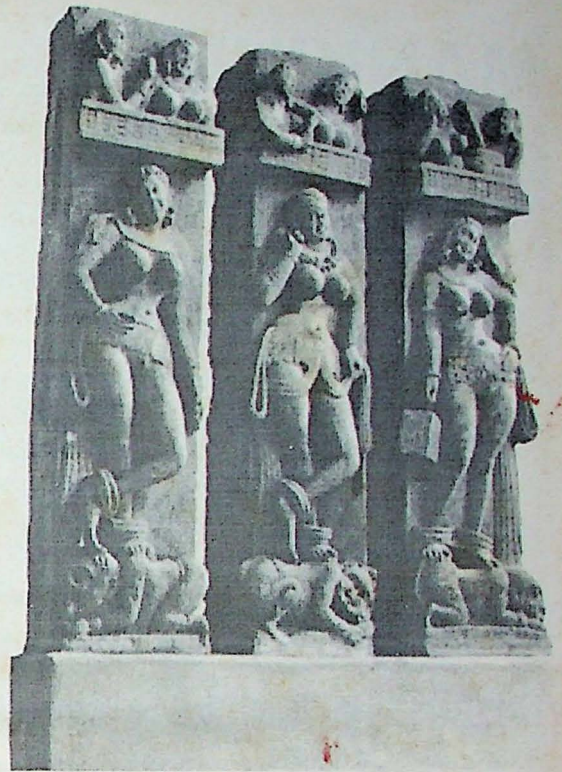


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4. Kanishka. Colossal. c. 1st century B.C. to 2nd century A.D.

Mathura School (c. 7/6th century ^{B.C.} to c. 3rd century A.D.)



5, 6, 7. Three Bhutesar Yakshis, near Mathura. Over life-size. c. 1st century B.C. to 2nd century A.D.

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KIND

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Mathura School (c. 7/6th century B.C. to c. 3rd Century A.D)

The classical art of India is its feudal art stretching from c. 700 BC to 1800/1860 AD.

In the Early Feudal Period of India (c. 700 BC to c. 300 AD), the first territorial kingdoms arose (16 Mahajanapadas, the Magadhan Empire that absorbed all the other Mahajanapadas, the Kushana Empire, and their immediate successors)

The first great feudalists of India wanted to make their mark in more permanent materials like stone (as against carvings in ivory, bone, horn, wood, etc. or as terracota figurines).

Naturally, the massive stone figures leave an impress of power and strength which feudalists wanted emphatically to convey.

These are the so-called Yaksha and Yakshi figures, identified as such by traditional art historians. These Yakshas and Yakshis are not "spirits of the land or forests" but actual portrait statues of immense majestic presence.

All sorts of wrong attributions have been made by imperialist art historians regarding the Early Indian Sculptural Schools. For instance, the vicious and stupid civil servant of imperialism, V.A. Smith, devotes whole chapters in his *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon* (Chap V, etc.), describing diverse foreign influences at work in India (Persian, Greek, Hellenistic, Roman, etc.) There is no evidence for this whatsoever. More recently, Benjamin Rowland in his *Art and Architecture of India*, follows the same line of speculative attributions and fantasies about "foreign influences". Actually the influence is the other way. It is Indian Sculptural traditions which travelled via Central Asia to China, Mongolia, Tibet, Korea and Japan; and via Sri Lanka and Myanmar to Thailand, Malaysia, Cambodia, Vietnam and Indonesia, and also naturally to the West, via Iran. The so-called Gandharan style is merely an adjustment made by the Indian sculptors to the tastes of the local art market of a garrison town inhabited by Perso-Macedonian mercenaries, using cheaper and non-lasting materials like terra-cotta and plaster.

The principal Early Indian Sculptural Schools were centered upon Mathura, Bharhut, Sarnath, Sanchi and Amravati.

All the Schools were promoted and patronised by the Saisunaga, Nanda, Maurya, Sunga and Satavahana dynasts.

Detailed comments on the seven figures follow.

1. **Manibhadra.** A Yaksha from Parkham, a village near Mathura, probably of a king of the Saisunaga Dynasty (642-322BC), bearing an inscription in the Brahmi script reading in part: "Made by Bhadapugarin ... Gomitaka, the pupil

(Continued on page 5)

AN OPENING STATEMENT :

AAJ KAL KE AKHBAR

Exe.Edr.

There are so many scams, and corruption scandals and *naukarshahi* excesses and miscellaneous imbroglions and other news events occurring in India and abroad that it is well nigh impossible to keep pace with them.

All over the world, the temprature is distinctly rising and there are many victories and half-victories that could be recorded.

• In S. Korea, the workers have successfully held street demonstrations (with extremely captivating rhythmic gestures and shouts) to halt atleast for the next two years, the application of draconian anti-labour laws passed in a secret session of the S. Korean parliament. The President beset by a corruption scandal involving his own son (Hanbo Steel bankruptcy) has apologised to the nation, and temporarily suspended the anti-labour law.

• In Hong Kong, the last rites of British imperialist rule are being performed, and quite correctly China is kicking into the wastepaper basket the suggestions made by the idiotic Governor Patton, who was the former Conservative Party chairman in UK. China's export surplus with USA has climbed from \$ 25 billion in 1992 to \$ 51 billion in 1996.

• In Israel - Palestine, the American

game plan is about to be finally buried. Netanyahu is going ahead with new Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem and an Israeli Minister has threatened the coward Yasser Arafat with renewed exile from

ATV - TRICK TO FOIL MULTINATIONALS

I strongly recommend to *Mankind* readers the simple device of putting the set on Mute / Silence / No-Voice, when listening in to any lengthy broadcast. For instance, a Cricket Commentary. The so-called Cricket Commentators and experts employ a flood-tide of repetitious cliché-ridden inanities. It's a total nuisance. If your set lacks the Mute device, it can be easily fixed by a minor modification of the gadgetry. It is real peace after that. The play is visible, there are constant slow motion and super slow motion re-runs, the scores are flashed in the top right hand corner, and what more do you want ? I would never go to a stadium, because the TV set provides much more information, and as many slow motion re-runs as one can desire. Unless of course, one goes to the stadium for a picnic, and not for cricket viewing !

It is the audio-visual combination that is deadly. If one shuts off either of the two, it is just bearable. It is not possible to shut off sound as easily as one can close one's eyelids. Therefore I am advocating the Mute device to knock off the sound.

I have consciously trained myself to overlook all newspaper ads, even if of full-page dimensions, and not even glance at the Editorials. I don't think I have read an editorial for the last 20-30 years. I have not seen an ad in a newspaper for an equivalent time. I have trained my eyes to pass over all such trivia and I think all of us can do this.

Even when watching news telecasts, I switch on the Mute device as soon as an ad appears. Nowadays ads can be very lengthy and very irritating. Even news channels are featuring them. But if we use the Mute device and close our eyes for a few seconds, every now and then, we can easily concentrate on the news items alone.

I watch all the news channels fairly regularly — CNN, BBC, DDI, Star News, and occasionally some other. The Mute device has relieved the pain of watching commercial rubbish.

Another trick is to lie down in bed with the TV on, and use the audio drone as a soporific. I go to sleep in my chair or on the nearby bed quite peacefully.

I never buy anything of which I have even glimpsed, for the briefest possible fraction of a second, an ad on the TV. I think we can all Silence and Mute the barrage of obnoxious ad campaigns unleashed by the MNCs and the TNCs by just refusing to buy anything that they advertise. I think that this would be a good Gandhian type Non-cooperation and Satyagraha struggle against these rascals.

I very happily recommend to *Mankind* readers the Mute device for cricket matches, for all ad inserts, and for all pop music channels, film music picturisations, *Antakshari* etc.

his own land. Arafat has offered his backside for repeated kicks, but nothing will satisfy the Israeli racialists. Part of Hebron has been reclaimed by Israel against the earlier signed agreement and Arafat has been forced to surrender again and again. His nose is being rubbed in the ground. Israel retains South Lebanon Security Zone, and Golan Heights in Syria, and is

now on the verge of not pulling out of both the West Bank and E. Jerusalem.

• In Zaire, the government of the rotten dictator Mobutu is about to fall. One-third of the country is already in the hands of the rebel forces led by Laurent Kabila, and Kisangani, the third largest town in Zaire has fallen to the rebels, who are poised to enter Kinshasa.

• The trial of Stephen Biko's murderers has led to confessions by 5 former high-ranking police officers that they deliberately murdered Biko. They have demanded exoneration on the grounds of "reconciliation". Murderers confess in order to escape Penalty!! In the meantime, Nelson Mandela has at last woken up from his Rip van Winkle slumber, and demanded the resignation of fellow Nobel Prize winner, de Clerk, on the grounds that the latter knew of, and participated in, the criminal murderous activities of his police.

• In Albania, following the failure of Pyramidal finance companies, in part promoted by the Italian Mafia, the ex-Stalinist President Sali Berisha has been forced to accept the opposition leader as the new Premier. But soldiers are deserting the army in droves, and looting their own weapon depots. Berisha's fall is imminent.

• In Serbia, the Stalinist scoundrel Milosevic has been compelled to ratify opposition victories in 19 municipalities, including that of Belgrade.

• In Bulgaria, the government of President Stogonov has been obliged to

advance election to the end of April, 1997.

- In Germany, coal miners have forced Chancellor Kohl to restore subsidies to the coal industry after massive street demonstrations in Bonn. Incidentally, unemployment has reached its highest level in recent times at 4.3 million, whilst German coal costs 3 times more than elsewhere in Europe, and German coalminers receive \$ 76,000 per year per head. These are the wonders of New Capitalism!

- Like other Europeans, Canada too has defied the US Helms - Burton Act against trading and investments in Cuba.

- Renault workers facing closure of their Belgian Plant employing 3,000 are demonstrating in Brussels, Paris, and Spain, where the plant from Belgium is sought to be relocated because of lower wage costs. Renault is owned 40 percent by the French State. More wonders of New Capitalism and European unity!

- World Armament industry, the Military Industrial Complex, is promoting a Namibia-Botswana war to take care, for the time being, of the falling world demand.

- In Peru, the Tupac Amaru rebels led by the brilliant strategist Nestor Cerpa are still defying President Fujimori, who is shuttling from one neighbouring capital to another, including Havana, and is virtually begging the Tupac Amaru guerillas to release the remaining 72 hostages.

- Deng Xiaoping has died at the age of 93, and this must also be viewed by the world with relief, since he was the prime author of the roll back of China towards market reforms and globalisation, though with many more nationalist safeguards than the *parvenu* brown sahibs of India have managed. Deng's disappearance will probably compel a realignment of forces in China, and possibly a cut-back in the excesses of "market socialism". At least, let us hope so!

PUNJAB ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

Party	1989	1992	1997
Congress	32	87	14
BJP	6	6	18
Janata Dal	-	-	-
CPI	1	4	2
CPI (M)	0	1	0
Akali Dal	73	3	75
Akali Dal (Mann)	-	0	1
BSP	-	9	1
Janata Party	1	-	-
Independents	4	7	6
Total	117	117	117

- The elections in Pakistan have led to the exit of the corrupt Mrs. Zardari. Nawaz Sharif is as much of an American stooge as Benazir was. However, Americans may themselves be having second thoughts on Kashmir, and in view of the poor showing of the Congress in the Kashmir elections, the Punjab elections and the by-elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies, indicating that the Congress is in no position to precipitate a quick General Election, the USA may be forced to play a waiting game in India. Thus relieving immediate pressure on the hotch-

potch UF govt. at the Centre.

- In Nepal, the Communist Party has entered into a dirty deal with the King, whose stooge Chand, ex-PM, has been allowed to take over the reigns of power. It is all a byzantine intrigue in the worst Stalinist tradition played out at the expense of the poor people of one of the poorest nations of the world.

On the whole, working class victories in S.Korea, Germany, Serbia, Bulgaria, Zaire, Republic of S.Africa, and Peru. Not too bad a score!

In India too there has been a rush of developments.

- The Indian Budget 1997-98 has been presented by the Harshad - Mehta - scam- tainted Chidambaram, who has juggled figures, to advance for the first time, the concept of Ways and Means Advance, which the *naukarshahs* will further manipulate.

To what end? Obviously the 97-98 Budget is an election budget, forcing the Congress to retreat further. It is obvious to me that Deve Gowda is preparing for a mid-term poll in Aug./Sept. 1997.

STATE	LOK SABHA (4)	ASSEMBLY (17)
1. Punjab	1 Akali	-
2. MP	1 BJP	1 Congress
3. Rajasthan	1 BJP	1 BJP
4. UP	1 BKKP (Ajit Singh)	2 SP; 1 BSP; 2 BJP
5. Andhra	-	3 TDP
6. Gujarat	-	1 BJP
7. Orissa	-	2 Congress
8. Karnataka	-	1 JD-Rebel
9. Maharashtra	-	1 SS
10. Tamil Nadu	-	1 DMK
11. Meghalaya	-	1 IND.
Total	4	17

- This is further confirmed by yesterday's (19-3-97) deal between the BJP and BSP in UP. The Chief Ministership will be rotated, the Speaker will be a BJP man, Mayawati and Kalyan Singh will take turns to become CMs, and the Ministries will be equally divided between the BJP and the BSP. (This was the obvious result of the BSP electoral rout in the Punjab Assembly elections of Feb. 1997, when its strength in the Assembly was reduced to just 1 against its 3 victories in the Lok Sabha elections of May 1996.)

This kind of cynical horsetrading has become the norm in India. We are glad that the wretched *naukarshah* Romesh Bhandari has been roughly shoved aside. That is very good for Indian democracy. However the limitations of our Constitution have been exposed, and the hiatus of 5 months Governor's rule should never be forgotten or forgiven by our people.

Since the Congress has been soundly kicked by the Akalis in Punjab, by the National Conference in Kashmir, and by the BJP-BSP combine in UP, and the Congress has lost 7 out of the 9 big city municipalities in Maharashtra, and most of the Lok Sabha and State By- elections, this miserable comprador party will have to keep quiet in the immediate period ahead.

- On the other hand, elections are surely coming in Aug/Sept 1997 as Deve Gowda is riding high on the basis of the Congress defeats as aforesaid, and the prospect of improving

his own Janata Dal's strength of 44 in a House of 543. The Stalinist - Communists are on the run. Indrajeet Gupta, the intrepid warrior of the CPI, who is Deve Gowda's Home Minister, first came out with a diatribe against Romesh Bhandari, another nominee of Deve Gowda, that UP was heading towards "anarchy, chaos and destruction". Beating a retreat, he later explained in the Lok Sabha that all that he meant was "political anarchy, social chaos and economic destruction". How this gloss diminishes the original severe indictment, only a Stalinist worm can know. We are not concerned with such flagrant confessions of idiocy

- Kalpnath Rai, the former Minister, has been sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment. This wretched rascal was forced to resign after the Sugar Scam and then put up his wife from his own constituency to retain his family's Congress *jagirdari*. A little later, he asked his wife to resign to make way for himself on the Congress ticket. He lost the Lok Sabha by-election in one of the rare instances of poetic justice to be met with in our comprador country.

However the punishment is very mild. 10 years is nothing for such hardened criminals as Kalpnath Rai. He should have been put away for life. Furthermore, his wealth should have been confiscated, because all of it has been acquired by dirty politics!

- The Punjab Assembly elections have resulted in an utter

route for the Congress. We give alongside the Table of party positions in the last three Assembly elections.

The results of the Feb. 1997 Assembly elections in Punjab show that the Congress tactic of fomenting dissensions within the Akalis, and forcing a boycott by them, as in 1992, failed this time, and the Akalis led by ex-CM, Prakash Singh Badal, won very handsomely, even going beyond their strength in 1989. The BSP, which had won 9 seats in 1992, was almost wiped out with only 1 seat in 1997, which, as noted above, resulted in its compromise with BJP in UP. The BJP tripled its strength to 18, compared to both 1989 and 1992. The Congress now stands third in party strength, with 14 in 1997 against 87 in 1992.

Whilst on the subject of elections, we may as well glance at the results of the by-elections to the 4 Lok Sabha and 17 Assembly seats in 11 States. We have tabulated the results on p. 4. These by-elections are a sort of popular poll.

All in all, of the 21 results, Congress won only 3, all Assembly seats, 1 in MP and 2 in Orissa, the only two States where it is in power. The BJP won 2 Parliamentary seats and 4 Assembly seats. Obviously the BJP is in the ascendant, and in the forthcoming mid-term poll it will surge forward and it will then 'renegotiated Enron' and come a cropper.

Thus both internationally and nationally, it was a hectic two-month period.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The second part of our article on
Twenty-five Turning Points in World History
will be published in the May issue of *Mankind*.

Mathura School (c. 7/6th century B.C. to c. 3rd Century A.D)

(Continued from Inside Cover)

of Kunika". The stone statue is over eight feet in height.

Rowland, in a flight of fancy, suggests that Manibhadra might be a guild master. NO blue-blooded King or Emperor is going to allow a mere guild master to put on such high airs, but Anglo-American "learned fools" arrogantly assume that they can speculate in any manner that they like upon the art objects from the Third World. They know that the "might" of their pens, backed by MNCs and TNCs, will not be challenged.

Mankind is sick and tired of such foreign and fancy attributions! The simple fact is that the rising feudalists desired their portraits in permanent materials, in stone that will last "as long as the sun and the moon continue to shine" (*Yavat Chandradivakarau*) and commissioned artists to implement their wishes.

2. **A Bodhisatva**, bearing the inscription that it was "dedicated by the Buddhist monk Bala". Why the attribution should have been made to a "a Friar Bala" as is usually done by imperi-

alist art historians, is a mystery that imperialist arrogance alone can solve.

3. **A Yakshi** from Mathura area. We can see a gradual refinement of the Mathura style. The figures are now more rounded and polished, unlike Manibhadra, whose sides were rather flattened. The curves are now fuller and smoother.

Further, since architecture in India generally took the form of a heap of sculpture, it is bas relief work that predominated.

4 **Kanishka**. This is one of the grandest masterpieces of Indian Art. The Scythian costume is emphasised, and even without the head, Kanishka stands supremely and majestically powerful.

5-6-7 The **Bhutesar Yakshis** on the uprights of a railing going round a stupa, are captivating, eroticised, lovely ladies, who are cavorting in the most naturalistic manner imaginable. The artist has captured their realistic gestures with a very fine eye for detail.

WESTERN CULTURE MERELY A CON-GAME AND A PUT-ON TO HIDE MULTIPLE DEADLY BARBARIC CRIMES AGAINST THE PEOPLES OF THE THIRD WORLD

Dr. Vinayak Purohit

This article is based on a lecture delivered by the Executive Editor, *Mankind*, on 26/2/97 at the Periyar Hostel of the JNU, under the auspices of *Independent Initiative*, to an audience of about 70 students on the occasion of the inauguration of the lecture series entitled "Indigenous Perception of the Indian Crisis and the Self-Reliant way out of it."

Dr. Purohit opened his speech by relating two true stories.

In 1054 AD, a spectacular fireworks display occurred in the skies, in the form of a supernova explosion, whose remnant is now identified as the Crab Nebula (NGC 1952 or 1958, MI). The supernova display was visible in daylight hours for 23 days and during night it was visible as a grand astral show for about 2 years! The event was recorded in detail by Chinese observers (see *Ency. Brit.*, 1983 edn., Micro., Vol. 3, p.215)

No European noticed this magnificent spectacular event. A rival to the sun had appeared in the skies, and was visible for over 3 weeks. A rival to the moon and to Venus and Orion was to be seen in the night skies for over 2 years. Were all the 'technologically advanced Whites' totally blind? Obviously, the Europeans saw, as much and what their ruling classes al-

lowed them to see in the period when the Grand Schism of 1054 occurred between the Western Catholic Church, and the Eastern Orthodox Church, and whilst intensive preparations were being made by the White obscurantists to launch the First Crusade (1095 - 98).

In India too, there is no record of this supernova explosion. This was the period when Mohammed Ghori's armies were ravaging India, destroying temples, ransacking and burning astronomical libraries and observatories attached to the places of worship and were massacring and dispersing the scholars and *gurus* teaching in the temple *pathshalas* and *tols*. Furthermore, Dr. Purohit observed, the brown comprador academicians of today cannot be trusted to discover the scattered references in Indian manuscript collections dealing with the supernova event of 1054 AD, since such an observation would go counter to their cherished presumption that the West was eternally technologically superior!

The second true story related by Dr. Purohit was that of the development of rocketry. Hyder and Tipu Sultan of Mysore intensively developed the science of rocketry between 1761 and 1799. In the course of the four Mysore Wars of the period,

Hyder and Tipu employed the rockets to devastating effect, much to the consternation and panic of the opposing British imperialist armies.

Since it is impossible to lie consistently over thousands of pages, we may rely on the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, to unfold the second stage of the rocket story.

"Congreve, Sir Williams, Ind Baronet (b. May 20, 1772, London - d. May 16, 1828, Toulouse, Fr.), artillery officer and inventor, best known for his military rocket, which was a tremendous advance in black-powder rockets that provided the impetus for an early wave of enthusiastic utilization of rockets for military purposes in Europe.

"Congreve based his rockets on those used by the Indian prince Hyder Ali against the British in 1792 and 1799 at Seringapatam. In 1805 he built a rocket 40.5 inches (1 metre) long, with a stabilizing stick 16 feet (4.9 metres) long, and a range of 2000 yards (1.8 kms.). Congreve rockets were used to bombard Boulogne, Copenhagen, and Danzig in the Napoleonic wars and in the British attack on Ft. McHenry near Baltimore, Md., in 1814, which inspired Francis Scott Key to write in the "Star Spangled Banner" (now the U.S. national anthem): "...the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air ..."

"Congreve Rockets : British military rocket of the 19th century, "The rockets red glare" in "The Star -Spangled Banner" refers to Congreve rockets, which weighed 25-60 pounds and were used both as incendiary and anti-personnel weapons". (*Ency. Brit.*, 1983, Micro, Vol 3, pp 82-83.)

Thus, one line of the US National Anthem, "The Star-spangled Banner", was "written by" the duo of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan!

We may now proceed to the third episode of the same rocketry story, which concerns the life and activities of Robert Hutchins Goddard (1880-1945). We do not know whether Goddard had been inspired directly by Congreve's rockets through conversations with the veterans of the War of Independence (1775-83), who might have survived to tell the tale of their use at Baltimore; or perhaps Goddard had been inspired by sci-fi novels written by H. G. Wells and Jules Verne (who themselves might have been inspired by Hyder-Tipu rockets). We do not know exactly what happened.

Anyway, Goddard "developed" upon the models he had inherited and became widely known for his efforts. Goddard died of throat cancer in 1945, and after much haggling, the U.S. govt. settled the claims

HUMAN RIGHTS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS— FROM WHEN ?

of his family and heirs for a sum of \$ 1 million.

In the meantime, Tipu's children (two of the sons had been held for ransom by British imperialism) were languishing, in indigent circumstances and knocking about the streets of Calcutta.

Goddard's family obtained 1 million dollars and Tipu's children remained penniless. That is neo-colonial justice!

The first story about the supernova explosion of 1054 AD bursts the bubble of Western technological superiority!

The second story of Hyder-Tipu, Congreve and Goddard rocketry, teaches the Third World a useful lesson regarding Intellectual Property Rights!

As a matter of fact, the entire complex of Western civilization and Western culture is nothing more than a con game, a put-on, a camouflage, and a mask for multiple deadly barbaric crimes committed against the peoples of the Third World.

We may now list the most prominent of those dirty deeds:

1. The genocidal massacres of Amerindians by white Europeans,

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE EURO-AMERICAN HISTORICAL CRIMES

Mankind demands that an International Commission on the lines of the Nazi War Crimes Tribunal, Nuremberg, and the Truth Commission presently working on apartheid crimes in S.Africa, and the Brussels-Hague Serbian Ethnic Cleansing crimes of the Nineties, may be set up with a majority of members from the Third World, especially India, China and Iran (or rather, in exact proportion of their national population counts.) This commission will include historians, economists, scientists, technologists, cost accountants, and scholars working in the fields of art and culture. The Commission will hold Open Sessions to precisely determine the borrowings made by Euro-America from the Third World over the last 4 to 5 centuries, particularly from 1765 onwards from India.

In particular, the Commission members will include experts to represent the victims, and heirs of victims, in the following areas:

1. The genocidal massacres of Amerindians, Australian Aborigines, Maoris, Polynesians, and others, who have suffered extinction or near extinction.
2. The Africans affected by the Slave Trade.
3. Jews, Gypsies, and others, who have suffered from the Nazi Holocaust.
4. Indians who lost their lives, to the extent of over 8 crores, in the course of British-made Famines of Purchasing Power from 1765 to 1947.
5. Chinese and other Asians who suffered as a result of the Opium Wars and other such promotional campaigns to force Narcotics Traffic upon them.
6. The sufferers from Limited Wars forced upon the Third World nations as a result of the machinations of the Western Military-Industrial Complex.
7. The cultural and artistic loss of their heritage by the thievery and banditry of Euro-American powers from the 16th to the 20th centuries.

The Commission's findings will be approved by the General Assembly of the U.N. as a special resolution not subject to Big Power veto.

Not a single cent will be paid on account of patents, royalties, copyright fees, etc, of any and every description, to Euro-America, till the said Commission has worked out a **Grand Historical Balance Sheet**.

All the appropriations from the Third World, especially India, in the fields of mathematics, especially the use of Hindu Numbers, metallurgy, textile technology, printing, paper, magnetic compass, black powder explosives, rocketry, dyes and chemicals, Ayurvedic and herbal medicines and drugs, plastic surgery, tranquilizers and sedatives, distillation, and thousands of other stolen technologies, will be worked out on the basis of the rise in Euro-American GDP, from time to time from the 16th to the 20th centuries, and in the course of imperialist conquests, and particularly during the period of the so-called First Industrial Revolution, that occurred in Euro-America from the middle of the 18th to the middle of the 19th centuries.

The claims made by Euro-America on account of the Intellectual Property Rights, for video games, pop music recordings, films, video tapes and discs, and such other trivia and non-trivia will be balanced against the fundamental and basic scientific discoveries and technologies misappropriated by them from the East and the South. And a fair and just balance will be arrived at.

The entire exercise will be completed in 5 years with the co-operation of thousands of experts from the Third World and the First.

Let us not time-bar murder, rape, thievery, banditry, piracy and such other criminal activities and begin the count from just day before yesterday. Let us go into the whole question, threadbare and from the root upwards.

The Commissions would be free to award Penalties and Exemplary Damages to the Third World for Massive Brain-Washing, Camouflage and Prevarication, indulged in by the West, in order to bamboozle, befuddle, misinform and mislead the innocents of the Third World. In fact, the Commission would be enjoined to inflict severe penalties and exemplary fines for the entire cover-up campaign of brain-washing undertaken by Euro-America over the last 4 centuries (more particularly the last two), which campaign passes for Western civilization and culture today.

especially the Spaniards, the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the English, from the beginning of the 16th century to the end of the 19th. The last Tasmanian was exterminated in 1876 and Maoris were being killed off till the beginning of this century.

The pre-Columbian population of American Indians has been estimated by the Whites themselves at over 115 million. Of these, only a fraction survive. (EB, 1973 edn., Vol 12, p 54).

In the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries the best Indian was considered to be a dead Indian! Advertisements appeared in newspapers and posters were pasted all over the Western pioneering towns and camps, offering \$ 10 for a scalp! All these horrible deeds were romanticised in American novels and later in Hollywood films, as valiant attempts by heroic cowboys and intrepid explorers and adventurers to civilise and settle the frontier areas.

2. The de-

population and export of slaves from Africa to the Americas, to take the place of the Red Indians who had been genocidally massacred. The slave trade itself took a toll of lakhs on the trans-Atlantic voyages. British imperialism supported the Southern States during the Civil War of 1861-65. In Brazil, slavery was not outlawed till late in the 19th century. In Portuguese colonies, slavery survived till the 20th century!

3. Indentured labourers from China and India were then inducted, in turn, into Africa to take the place of the Black slaves who had been transported to the Americas. The trade in Indentured Labourers, who were semi-slaves, continued upto the Second World War.

4. In a campaign of secondary thieving by the French, the Dutch and the English privateers, buccaneers, pirates, sea-rovers, etc., preyed upon the Spanish treasure fleets returning with the loot of Americas. Drake, Hawkins, Raleigh, Frobisher, etc. were partners with Elizabeth I of England in this nefarious enterprise.

5. From 1765 began the Indian Loot. The acquisition of the *Diwani* or revenue collection rights of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, caused the drain of wealth from India, imports from where hitherto had to be paid with bullion. From 1765 this was no longer

gums, resins, spices, oilseeds, perfumes and a thousand other things and processes, particularly in textiles, ship-building, gun powder, rocketry and so on, were stolen without shame and without acknowledgement. The rights of "conquest" and "discovery" were asserted without any compunction, so much so that the supreme question became :

FROM WHEN DID THE WEST FEEL THAT INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS BECOME APPLICABLE ? FROM WHAT DATE AND YEAR ARE WE SUPPOSED TO CONSIDER THEM SACROSANCT ?

Not hundreds and thousands, but lakhs of works of art, and artifacts and cultural objects, were looted from the Third World to stock the museums and art galleries of the West.

Not even a small fraction has ever been returned to the Third World.

The children of the Third World have been deprived of their historical cultural heritage. No price has yet been paid to them in compensation.

In conclusion Dr. Purohit said that the entire complex of Western Culture and Civilization is nothing but an arrogant imperialist and neo-colonialist exercise in camouflage and brain-washing.

SUPERNOVA EXPLOSION OF 1054 IN CRAB NEBULA GOES UN-NOTICED BY WEST AND HYDER-TIPU ACHIEVEMENTS IN ROCKETRY MISAPPROPRIATED BY CONGREVE, AND BY GODDARD FOR 1 MILLION DOLLARS !

necessary, as the surplus from land revenue could be employed as primitive accumulation and "investments" by British imperialism. The flow of unrequited exports that began in 1765 continued upto the end of direct British rule in 1947.

6. Two Opium Wars of 1839-42 and 1857-60 were fought with China to force down opium into the throats and nostrils of the Chinese. This infamous narcotic trade by the West only ended after the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty in 1911-12.

7. Imperialist loot had continued throughout the world, upto the end of the Second World War in 1945, and still later. The French did not give up their Empire in Africa and Asia till the 1950s. The Portuguese retained their colonies upto 1975.

8. Endless Imperialist Wars of Conquest to acquire Colonies (from the 16th to the 19th centuries) have taken a toll of millions of lives and killed off crores of people. Two World Wars were fought in the 20th century to redistribute colonial possessions. And since 1945, 125 limited wars have been fought. All wars have been fought to "preserve democracy and peace" and they have all failed. A barrage of propagandist lies is unleashed every time a small or big war is planned or executed. A frightening level of brain-washing has been with us for the last five centuries!

9. Amerindian, Australian Aboriginal, and Maori slaughter; African Negro Slave Trade; Indentured Labour Trade; Piracy, Buccaneers and Privateering; Indian Loot; Opium Wars; were not the only forms of primitive accumulation which enabled first England, and then Europe and USA, to carry through their Industrial Revolutions. (1765-1860 and later).

Enormous and widespread thefts of science and technology occurred simultaneously in every field of knowledge. Indian mathematics, chemistry, metallurgy, pharmaceuticals, dyes,

What is Western ? It is nothing but stolen Eastern ! And African and Latin American !

To a question from the audience regarding "selective statistics", Dr. Purohit replied that there was nothing selective about demography. Between 1911 and 1921, the average expectation of Life at Birth had sunk to 20.1 in India. This was the result of the near-genocide carried out in 19th century India. A series of British-made famines of purchasing power had carried off over 8 crores of Indians !

Dr. Purohit went on to state that India had enjoyed surplus in trade with the world from about 4500 BC to 1818/60 AD. This was initially due to the fact that India had enjoyed meteorological, physiographic, floro-faunal, and geologic advantages of an exceptional nature. India was the focal point wherein four great floro-faunal regions of the world coalesced, namely, the Himalayan, the Mediterranean and Arid Lands, the East African, and the Indo-Malayan vegetations. Whilst India was generally considered to be a tropical country, actually almost three-fourths of the country lay north of the 23 1/2° N Parallel. But it was a temperate mass, further tempered by the Himalaya-Hindu Kush wall of about 5 miles in height. This prevented the cold Siberian, Central Asian and Tibetan winds from entering India, whilst the southwest monsoonal currents reached Eastern India initially, and then swerved Northwest upto Afghanistan and Baluchistan. These "geographical riches" lay at the root of Indian Trade Surplus of 6000 years and for its current population of 93 crores, one-sixth of the world's total population.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks by the organisers Mr. Sumer Singh and Mr. M. Sunny.

GREATNESS THRUST UPON B. R. AMBEDKAR

Dr. Vinayak Purohit

INTRODUCTION

They say that some people are born great, that some achieve greatness in course of their lives, and some have greatness thrust upon them.

B. R. Ambedkar (1891-1956) falls obviously in the third category.

Human beings do make history, but they make it as history itself provides. Both, the human mind that is interacting with history is conditioned by its social surroundings, and the social setting itself is historically determined. Thus, man is a brainwashed child attempting to transform the past into the future as a mere link in the vast historical chain.

Man cannot think or fantasise anyhow, any which way, as the idealist philosophers posit. Man thinks within strict limitations. All science fiction novels, films and videos prove our point. The external circumstances described in such works, are all shown to be, logically or illogically altered, but the protagonist is invariably our contemporary.

When the protagonist is shown to have changed selectively in a certain direction, it is no longer Sci-fi, but then it becomes the Anti-Utopian novel, like Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* or George Orwell's *1984*.

That is the limit of human imagination. Sci-fi or Anti-Utopian!

We cannot escape from our environment, just as we cannot escape from gravity!

Provided we align our thoughts with the movement of history, and the gearing is simple and basic, we may be able to accelerate or retard historical societal

evolution. That is all!

We cannot alter the past, which gestated us. We cannot change the present, which envelops us. Therefore we cannot change the future, except as it tends. We can only accelerate or retard the arrival of the future. To this extent, and

THE C.A. OF 1946-49: THE POLITICS

- (i) The British imperialist army was in occupation of India when the C.A. of 1946-49 met. This is ridiculous, for a truly free C.A cannot function under a British jack-boot!
- (ii) Indian pseudo-independence was achieved by an act of foreign parliament. The House of Commons in London passed the India Independence Act in 1947 creating the two dominions of India and Pakistan.
- (iii) India remained a member of the British Commonwealth and accepted the Queen of England who heads the Anglican Church as head of the Commonwealth.
- (iv) India remained a member of the Sterling Bloc.
- (v) India under Nehru devalued the rupee unnecessarily in 1949 and frittered away Sterling Balances that were equivalent of \$ 4.7 billion to suit British interests.

if interpreted in this way, Makkhali Goshala was right. All is *Niyati*! And Buddha was right too. All possess Conditioned Origination! To come into being, to be, and to cease to be! That is our human lot and that is our human fate, and above all, that is our human existence, within this vastness that is this universe.

As they say, if monkeys or lions could create mythologies, they would make their gods and heroes monkeylike or lion-like. Just as our Hanuman and Narasimha are, all said and done, merely anthropomorphic, half human, very human, quintessentially human!

It is because of the inherent limitations

of humans in history-making, that liberal bourgeois opinion makes the three distinctions that are given at the beginning of our article.

Some men are born great, they say, meaning thereby that some men display the qualities of will and determination from early days of childhood and youth.

Some men are supposed to acquire greatness later in life. **Actually, this is the universal case.** No one except those belonging to aristocratic and royal families, descendants of a blue-blooded lineage or, in a caste society those belonging to *Brahmin* and *Kshatriya* or *Dwija* castes can make empty boasts of having been 'born to greatness'. Such racialist, communalist, upper class, higher caste and aristocratic families alone can make such spurious claims. As a matter of fact, life moulds everyone, and everyone can attain greatness, provided circumstances are favourable.

In the third bourgeois category are placed those upon whom greatness is thrust. The majority of heroes recognised by liberal bourgeois society as heroes, belong to this third class.

Take the case of the Greeks. They were the scum of the earth, the riff-raff of the Eastern Mediterranean, raiding each other's settlements or colonies, and enslaving each other's citizens, mercenaries available for hire to Persian Kings, or Egyptian rulers, or to any other paymaster who was willing and able to pay. However, after the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries, when the Europeans were in frantic search of some ideological props, it became necessary to convert the scum into "heroic material". All of South Europe and East Europe had been conquered by Arab-Berbers, Turks and Mongols. The Islamic armies had reached Poitiers in Central France, Marseilles, Sardinia, Sicily, Malta and Rome in Central Mediterranean, upto Vienna in South-east Europe and upto Poland, Prussia and Scandinavia in eastern Europe. The Islamic armies had to be beaten back. The Crusades had failed. World Trade had remained centered on the Indian Ocean. Arab, Turk and Mongol middlemen had to be eliminated in order to provide European access to

cheap and profuse Indian imports. Therefore, a way had to be found. Therefore, weak and petty European feudalism had to be shattered. Therefore, finally, incipient bourgeois Communes, Cities and Ports had to be developed based on an ideology inherited from the supposedly Classical Slave Societies of Greece and Rome. This path logically and correctly led to greatness being thrust upon all sorts of petty tyrants and little minds of the European Ancient World. In short greatness had to be thrust upon them.

We can give hundreds of such examples from European history. All that the European historiographers needed was to attach the appellation "The Great" to any Tom, Dick and Harry; or Fredrick, Louis, Charles, Catherine or Elizabeth, and hey presto! you have a great guy or gal, all finished and shining!

That is the way of bourgeois historians, who are forever making such post-facto, fantasy-based, reconstructions. They are not concerned with the real movement of history, the real life changes in modes of production, and in the true transformations that societies undergo.

Men change as societies gestate and change. Men change history as stages in the expansion of productive forces arrive, stabilise and disappear.

From this flight of historical philosophy, let us return to the earth.

II

THE TIMES

Let us briefly review the socio-historical setting, that unfolded as the 19th century was ending in India.

Drain of Wealth

1. A dramatic reversal of fortunes had taken place in 1765, when the East India Company acquired the *Diwani*, or land revenue collection rights, from the last Mughals for Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and the Northern *Circars*.

Hitherto, from 1601 to 1765 there had been a drain of wealth from England and Europe to India.

DEFECTS OF CONSTITUTION

The defects of the present Constitution of India, as framed by a self-appointed Dominion Status Assembly of 1946-49, are obvious and may be briefly stated :

1. It has entrenched Executive Irresponsibility.
2. It has provided for extreme and overt Corruption, which has gone absolutely unpunished, and for Cost and Time Overruns for all State Undertakings.
3. It has provided for total absence of real Parliamentary Control over the *Naukarshahs*.
4. It has sanctified a system of built-in Legal Delays that has negated the Rule of Law.
5. It has allowed for absence of Right of Information.
6. It has permitted supremacy of English (as extended from time to time).
7. It has sanctioned no Right to Work or Living or Social Security for "We, the people" (our Preamble too)
8. It has granted unlimited powers to the Congress Speakers, who have thwarted even discussion rights to MPs, on the grounds, mainly, of something being a State Subject, or being *Subjudice*, or being Defamatory in Implications, and, generally, of being inconvenient to the Establishment.
9. It has usurped all State Rights and Revenues, making India, a super-centralised administrative entity.
10. It was called into being whilst India was still under the imperialist iron heel in 1945-6.
11. It has perpetuated a highly biased and elitist educational system, and a regime where healthcare is essentially available to only those who can afford it. Over 30 crores of Indians eke out an existence below the poverty level.

THE C.A. OF 1946-49 : A FOREIGN GRANT, NOT AN INDIAN ACHIEVEMENT

How can any body of persons call themselves the Constituent Assembly? How can any set of people, generally brokers, commission agents, banians, *kala gumastas*, *dubashes*, title-holders by imperial grants, how can any such body ensure the liberties of the Indian people? It is a fantastic presumption!

Under Jawaharlal Nehru's rule, India remained a member of the British Commonwealth, and as a Republic accepted a Monarch as the Head of the Commonwealth and as a symbol of the Commonwealth's unity. A true Constituent Assembly has to be given by a Free People to themselves. It can not be granted by an outside force or agency.

As we have written earlier, "India continued to be a sink of precious metals. Van Twist writing on the wealth of the kings of Hindustan says that "although there were no gold or silver mines in India, large quantities of both were imported from foreign countries, and it was forbidden to export them". (Brij Narain, *Indian Economic Life*, Lahore, 1929, pp. 56-7). "India is rich in silver," writes Hawkins, "for all nations bring coyne and carry away commodities for the same; and this coyne is buried in India and goeth not out" (*Ibid*, p.57). Terry estimates that "an Indian ship returning from Red Sea was usually worth two hundred thousand pound sterling, most of it in gold and silver" (*Ibid*). He adds, "many silver streamers runne thither as all rivers to the sea, and there stay, it being lawful for any nation to bring in silver and fetch commodities, but a crime less than capital to carry any great summe thence."

From England alone India imported in 50 years from 1708 to 1757 twenty-two million pounds worth of bullion. (Balkrishna, *Commercial Relations Between England and India, 1600-1757*, p. 208). Only a fraction of the large imports of specie was used for coinage, the rest went into private hoards and manufacture of jewellery.

"The complaint that India hoards the gold supply of the world is as old as Pliny." (*Historical Naturalis*, VI, 26). The early Muhammadan historian Shahab-ud-Din notices it. (Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, Vol III, p.583). Bernier complains : "It should not escape notice that gold and silver, after circulating in every other quarter of the globe, come at length to be swallowed up, lost in some measure in Hindustan." (*Travels*, 1914, p. 202). Dr. Fryer similarly writes, "So that though it be not of the growth of this country, yet the innate thrift of

the Gentiles and the small occasion of Foreign expenses, and this humour of their laying up their talent in Napkin, burying the greatest part of the Treasure of the world in India." (*A New Account of East Indies*, Hakluyt Society, p. 283). "The love of Indians for precious metals and their hoarding habit attracted the attention of early British Officers." (See Foster, *Letters Received IV*, Introduction XXXIII, *Mankind*, Vol.2, No. 1, October 1996, p.10).

After 1765, the surplus, that is, the balance after meeting all the administrative expenses, became 'investment', in the hands of the E.I. Company for its commercial transactions. No longer was bullion brought in from England. The investments were utilised to buy Indian goods :textiles, foodgrains, spices, tea and anything else that was allowed to be manufactured in India or which went out as raw produce.

After 1858, when the East India Company was taken over by the British Government the so-called Investments became "Home Charges", "Expenses incurred by India Office in London" and other Invisible Transfers.

Drain of Wealth from India continued unabated.

India was de-industrialised, ruralised and pauperised.

With this Primitive Accumulation along with other items of the same nature, like Slave Trade, Genocide of Amerindians, Secondary Piracy involving Spanish Treasure Fleets returning from the Americas, Protective Tariffs against Indian Manufacturers, and such other Thievery and Robbery, Britain completed its First Industrial Revolution(1765-1860).

This Drain of Wealth was the Paramount Economic Development of the entire period of British Imperialist rule over India, 1765 (Partial) to 1860(Complete) and to 1947(when direct colonial rule ended and indirect neo-colonial rule commenced).

(For Drain of Wealth, the interested reader may consult the following works :R.C. Dutt, *Economic History of India* Vols I & II, 1901 and 1903; Dadabhai Naoroji, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, 1901; William Digby, *'Prosperous' British India*, 1901; B.D. Basu, *The Ruin of Indian Trade and Industries*, 1935; Congress Select Committee, *Report on the Financial Obligations between Great Britain and India*, Vols 1 & 2, 1931; and Tarachand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India* Vols 1, 2, 3 & 4, 1965, 1967, 1972 and 1972 respectively.)

2. Famines and Demographic Nadir

As Drain of Wealth continued from India, and as India was Deindustrialised, Ruralised and Pauperised, an unending series of British-made Famines of Purchasing Power stalked the land.

British imperialism instituted a regime of genocidal famines as their tentacles spread over the various regions of sub-continental India. From 1765 when for the first time the British acquired the *Diwani* (i.e., revenue collecting rights) of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and the Northern Circars to 1775, in just ten years they wiped out one-third of the population i.e., approximately one

and half to two crores of the Indian poor. (The so-called Dastak Famine of 1769-70 was the major culprit). In 125 years from 1775 to 1900 the mortality from starvation and its consequences was 40,000,000. In 44 years, from 1900 to 1944 the number of famine deaths have been placed at 30 million. In short, something like eight and half crores of Indians were killed by British-made famines from 1765 to 1947 (Wadia and Merchant, *Our Economic Problem*, 1959, p. 88).

All these famines were famines of purchasing power. Foodgrains and oilseeds remained the principal items of export from India, from the beginning of India-wide direct, British rule in 1860 to the Second World War. (Vera Anstey, *The Economic Development of India*, 1942, Table XVII, and R.C. Dutt, *The Economic History of India. The Victorian Age*, tables on pp. 162, 347 and 532).

"Instead of absolute lack of food, famine under the new conditions assumed the form of a sharp rise in prices and the development of a large export trade in grain ... India experienced for the last 40 years of the 19th century, a boom in the grain market and a continuous depression in the labour market". (B. M. Bhatia, *Famines in India, 1860-1965*, 1967, pp. 9, 24).

Four Famine Commissions were appointed by the imperialist administration in quick succession. The First, under Sir George Campbell, reached the strange conclusion that Indians were excessively dependent on agriculture and until the occupational pattern was diversified, famines were bound to recur! This was a vicious conclusion since the British had deliberately followed a policy of de-industrialisation and ruin of crafts so that India had perforce developed a monoculture of agriculture.

The Second Famine Commission of 1878-80 was presided over by Sir Richard

Strachey, Sir John Strachey's elder brother. Sir John had suggested in 1874 a Famine Insurance plan as he considered that famines in India were "normal periodic calamities". Accepting John's ideas, Richard actually instituted a regular department of famine relief and went on to suggest "that the greater and necessary efforts to save all possible lives would go far to render the future government of India impossible. The embarrassment of debt and the weight of taxation, consequent to the expenditure thereby involved, would soon become more fatal to the country than the famine itself." (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1973 edition, Vol. 9, p. 58B. See also *EB*, 73, Vol. 12, p. 149.)

In other words, genuine famine relief was incompatible with British rule. That is to say, for British rule to continue, Indians must continue to die in famine so paternistically organised for them by the benevolent imperial administration!

A Third Commission appointed in 1898 under Sir James Lyall, confirmed the principles enunciated by the Second.

THE C.A. OF 1946-49:THE ELECTORATE AND VOTES

The C.A. of 1946-49 consisted of 389 members of which 93 were nominated by the princelings (almost one quarter of the total).

Of the remaining 296, 74 or 25% were held by the Muslim League who did not join the C.A.

The remaining 222 members were all indirectly elected by the Provincial Assemblies.

The Provincial Assemblies were elected on the basis of a 14% franchise by more than a score of communal electorates. **The C.A. of 1946-49 was a travesty, a joke, a betrayal, a farce and an absurdity.**

The total number of actual votes cast for the Provincial Assemblies was about 1.9 crores in a nation of 40 crores.

The C.A. of 1946-49 was composed of *dalals*, brokers, commission agents, *dubashes*, banians, and title holders who were not entitled to frame any kind of constitution for the free people of India.

The Constitution of free India must be framed for the first time by a new C.A. elected on the basis of universal, adult, equal and direct vote.

The Fourth Famine Commission of 1901 went one better and placed special emphasis on the importance of moral strategy since moral depression led to physical deterioration." (E.B., 1973 edition, Vol. 12, p. 149.) It was suggested that Famine Relief consisted of Moral Suasion!

All these calamitous and genocidal horrors were bound to have their impact on Indian demography. Let us look at the data on Expectation of Life at Birth.

We are not concerned here with the post-1947 data.

EXPECTATION OF LIFE AT BIRTH

Year	Expectation of life at birth (Years)		
	Male	Female	Combined
I Mainly British Period			
1901-11	22.6	23.3	22.9
1911-21	19.4	20.9	20.1
1921-31	26.9	26.6	26.8
1931-41	32.1	31.4	31.8
1941-51	32.4	31.7	32.1
II Mainly Post-Independence Period			
1951-61	41.9	40.6	41.3
1961-71	46.4	44.7	45.6
1971-81	50.9	50.0	-
III More Recent Data			
1960	-	-	42.0
1975	-	-	50.0
1985	-	-	56.0
1994	-	-	62.0

Sources : C.M.I.E, *Basic Statistics Relating to the Indian Economy*, Vol. 1, All India, August 1986, Table 2.2 for data in I & II

World Bank, *World Development Reports*, 1976, 1987 & 1996, for data in III, Tables 17, 1 and 1.

We request the reader to focus upon the data for 1911-21 in Section I, Mainly British Period. The expectation of life at birth during this decade sank to 20.1. Indians refused to live under imperial dispensation. They just couldn't live! An average expectation of life of 20 years is an obvious absurdity for the Indian people!

As far as Indian demography is concerned, a point of no return had been reached. The nadir had been attained! An Indian could not averagely live to adulthood, if adulthood is defined as 21 years.

The drain of wealth from India caused the deindustrialisation, ruralisation and pauperisation of the country. This in turn resulted in famines of purchasing power. Genocidal killing of over 8 crore Indians led to the attainment of the demographic nadir. All these developments were bound to cause and did cause Nationalist Resistance, which we will examine now.

Nationalism was a life and death matter for the masses of India. In order to live, the people of India had to turn to Nationalism and expel British Imperialism.

3. Nationalist Resistance

The cumulative distress by the Drain of Wealth, by the processes of Deindustrialisation, Ruralisation, and Pauperisation, from the Dastak famine of 1760 that carried away one-third to one-half of the population of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and onwards to the series of famines which were deliberated by the Four Famine Commissions, famines that stretched upto the end of British imperial rule, were cumulatively bound to and did cause National Resistance.

This National Resistance was directed into three channels

A) Heroic, armed attacks upon British imperialism, and its institutions and personnel.

"The first rising occurred in Bengal in 1858-60, when the indigo cultivators revolted against the tyranny of the planters. Then riots occurred in Patna in 1873. In 1874 came the riots of the peasants in some of the districts of the Deccan-Poona and Ahmednagar. Complaints of oppression against rack-renting were carried to the government by the riots of Barrackpur and Paikpara in 1878-79." (Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Volume II, p.306)

The Anushilan and Jugantar underground formations arose in Bengal. The Ghadar Movement developed in Punjab and amongst the emigres to U.S.A and Canada. The Ghadar was a successor to the Kuka Movement in Punjab. Aurobindo Ghosh returned from abroad and established a revolutionary cell in Baroda. Later he and his brother Barindra took up the same activity in Calcutta. In Nasik, V.D. Savarkar developed a group which sought to carry forward the work of Vasudev Balwant Phadke.

Hundreds of small and big groups with diverse revolutionary programmes came into being all over the country.

It is impossible in the short space available in this essay to even present an adequate outline of the revolutionary activity that was carried on in India and abroad, to realise freedom from colonial rule.

The interested reader may follow the story in R.C. Majumdar's *History and Culture of the Indian People*, Volumes 9&11 as well as in Tara Chand's 4 Volumes of *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, R.C. Majumdar's further three volumes with the same title, the *Sedition Committee Report*, 1918, and in the relevant bibliographical references given in these works.

The names of India's heroic freedom fighters are a legion. Vasudev Balwant Phadke, Ashfaqullah Khan, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar; Aurobindo and Barindra Ghosh; Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru; Chandrashekhar Azad, Ramprasad Bismil and Mahavir Singh; Jatin Das; Khudiram Bose; Surya Sen; Kalpana Dutt; Pritilata Wodekar; Champaka Raman Pillai; Sayed Ahmad of Rai Bareilly; Dudhu Mian of Faridapur and Titu Mian of Chandpur; Maulvi Quasim; Rupa Naik alias Roop Singh of Panchmahals; the leaders of the Santhal rebellion of 1855 and the Bhil rebellion of 1845; Honya Koli; Hari and Taty Makaji; two Ramoshi brothers; Vaikkom Khader; and hundreds and thousands of revolutionaries and martyrs can be listed.

We have no space for all of them. These genuine freedom fighters have been maligned as "anarchists and terrorists".

B) In order to divert the Nationalist movement into safe channels, Viceroy Dufferin and his home secretary A.O. Hume formed the Indian National Congress in 1885.

The history of betrayals by this comprador organisation are well known to Indians and we have dealt with them in the preceding issues of *Mankind*. A convenient summary of our position may be found in the Executive Editor's reply to Sri

Kashinath, in *Mankind*, Nov'96, pp.42-44)

C) Gradually, a left radical and militant ideology began to emerge.

From within the INC, gradually a radical tendency separated itself. This was led by Subhash Chandra Bose who was twice elected Congress President, and who left India to form the Indian National Army and Azad Hind Government with Japanese help, during the Second World War.

Another tendency to emerge was that the Socialist elements led by Jayprakash Narayan and Dr. Rammanohar Lohia. These leaders took an active part in the August 1942 Movement.

III

AMBEDKAR AND HIS RESPONSE TO THE TIMES

What was Ambedkar's reaction to the momentous events that were unfolding around him?

What was his attitude towards the Drain of Wealth from India?

NOTHING ! Apparently he was not even aware of the problem !

What did he have to say about De-industrialisation, Ruralisation and Pauperisation of the nation ?

NOTHING ! He had not thought about these things.

How did Ambedkar react to British-made Famines of Purchasing Power, that carried off eight crores of our countrymen?

NOTHING ! He behaved exactly like the upper-caste *dwijas*, and was blind to the hunger and misery of the poor *dalits* living around him.

What about the Demographic NADIR reached by Indians in the decade 1911-1921?

NOTHING ! His attitude was that of a selfish careerist, who was accepting scholarships from native princelings and joining State Service. For the mess of pottage that was thrown at him !

What was Ambedkar's attitude to the National Resistance Movement that was mushrooming all around him?

NOTHING ! There was not a single Nationalist bone within his body ! He never felt any sense of National Outrage ! He had no notion of National Self-respect ! He just did not care !

Ambedkar was entitled not to sympathise with the hypocritical patriotism of the upper castes. But surely there was solid reason for nationalist protest ! British-made famines were selectively killing the poor of the country, and the average expectation of life had come down to twenty years ! Surely, the Drain of Wealth, the De-industrialisation, Ruralisation and Pauperisation drives were affecting the common people, whose

cries of pain and protests should have reached the ears of Ambedkar ! They never did !

He continued in his narrow groove of lower caste compradcrism as promoted by native princelings and foreign imperialists !

IV

LIFE AND CAREER

We pick up the relevant data from W.N. Kuber, *B.R. Ambedkar*, Builders of Modern India Series, Publications Division, 1978, pp. 9-10 :

"Maloji Sakpal, Ambedkar's grandfather, came of a good *Mahar* family from Ratnagari district. He was a retired military man. His son Ramji, who also was a retired military man, had 14 children. The last child Bhimrao was born at Mhow in Central India on April 14, 1891. Ramji rose to the rank of Subedar-Major and was a head instructor in a military school for about 14 years. After retirement in 1891 on a pension of Rs. 50 per month he settled in Dapoli in Ratnagari district. In 1894 he was re-employed as a store-keeper in the Public Works Department, Ratnagari, and was later transferred to Satara.

"Bhimrao entered the Government High School, Satara, in 1900 in the first standard. His name in the school was Bhiva Ramji Ambavadekar. Original name of his family was Sankpal. But his ancestors preferred to call

themselves after their ancestral village Ambavade which is in Khed taluka in Ratnagari district. One teacher named Ambedkar in the Satara High School loved Bhimrao very much and often fed him. He was obliging and kind. As a mark of love and respect to this teacher, Bhimrao began to call himself Ambedkar and throughout his life, remained grateful to this teacher who treated him so kindly

THE CA OF 1946-49 : THE FRAMEWORK

Ninety - five clauses of the colonial Constitution of 1935, were carried bodily into the New Dominion Status Constitution of 1946-49, which itself has been amended about ninety-five times!

Is it now being proposed that we, first of all, pass a hundred amendments to get rid of the Colonial Provisions, and further that we pass seven hundred more amendments to make the constitution fit the requirements of our people? It is absurd to suggest such a scenario.

The present constitution must be totally scrapped. It needs to be reworked from the roots upwards. A democratic nationalist philosophy must *de novo* inform the entire framework of the New Constitution. **It must be recast on entirely fresh thinking by a free people electing for the first time a Constitution making body, that is based on Universal Equal Adult Direct Franchise exercised by all citizens of India above the age of 18.**

Madhu Dandavate has recently suggested that the present Constitution be accepted. This is sheer treachery, for the Socialist Party had itself published an alternative Draft Constitution, way back in 1948! Indira Jaisingh suggests that Directive Principles be made enforceable, and that we should thereafter carry on.

This is simply foolish! No amount of piecemeal tinkering will suffice! The Directive Principles do not deal with the Right of Information, do not refer to Accountability and Ministerial and Bureaucratic Corruption, Legal Built-in Delays, which are the prime concerns of today! Centre State Relations are basically awry!

Many countries of the World have had several Constitutions in the last fifty years, both in the First World and in the Third World; apart from the fundamental changes that have taken place in the Second, or Stalinist, World.

There is no shame, or novelty, in concluding our experiment and experience with the 1946-49 Constitution, which is totally out of date and redundant.

As a free people, let us boldly march forward and give to ourselves a New Constitution, which truly and really guarantees to all of us "Justice..... Liberty.... Equality..... Fraternity.....etc."

Why are we afraid ? What are we afraid of ? Are we all cowardly compradors and *naukarshahs* ?

Why do we not trust the people of India ?

That is what Democracy means! To trust the collective wisdom of the adult citizens of India, to fashion for themselves a socio-legal instrument that will serve the needs of the Indian people marching into the 21st century!

during his school days." (See also Dhananjay Keer, *Dr. Ambedkar : Life and Mission*, 1991, where the same facts are reiterated.)

In other words, *Bhakti* not only towards Kabir, the family *Panth*, but also towards British imperialism was a long standing family tradition with the Sankpal-Ambavadekar-Ambedkars.

It is not exactly a matter of heredity. No generation inherits imperialist ideology, like the birds who inherit typical nest-building and migratory instincts.

Imperialism is an ideological construct. It is not inheritable. At same time, the family atmosphere of loyalty and identification with the British Raj must have been a factor in Bhimrao's upbringing, like the chosen villagers in Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali*, who identify themselves with British war-planes flying overhead; and like the village boy in Ray's *Shatranj-ke-Khiladi*, who loved the "lal vardi" of the Britishers. Similar, habitual familial identification and love with things British must have come naturally to Bhimrao.

I am not knocking Ambedkar's pro-empire nurture. I am merely saying that they came naturally to him, just as anti-imperialist attitudes became ingrained in me, even before conscious thinking and ratiocination began. My father was a nationalist and both parents had become Khadder-wearers by the time I had become four. My father used to help financially the underground revolutionaries, who used to line-up every month outside my father's little officeroom in our residential bungalow. I used to sit in the laps of these "terrorists and anarchists" and once even picked up, or the youngman showed me and allowed me to play with, his pocket revolver, for which, my father appearing suddenly at the office door, sternly reprimanded the man. I cannot say whether they belonged to the *Anushilan* or the *Yugantar* group. Such distinctions were beyond my grasp then, but I have clear childhood impressions of the nationalist ambience that prevailed in my home.

Ambedkar's perceptions were obviously different and diametrically opposite. The caste discriminations practised against him turned him into a porcupine like ball of resentment.

From infancy, Ambedkar was made aware of his scheduled caste origins. He was not allowed to drink from the common

water pot of the classroom. He was made to open his mouth and someone would pour water into it. There was a strange encounter with the upper-caste cartman of the village, who refused to transport Bhimrao and his brother, as soon as he came to know that the boys were Mahars. The cartman got off and walked beside the cart which Bhimrao's elder brother had to drive. Bhimrao could not play the normal school games, since the upper-caste boys would not play with him. Till he migrated to Bombay and to a Government-run school, he missed out on a "playful childhood."

Even in later life, after he had returned from USA and UK with high degrees, and when he was in government service in a high post, the caste-discriminations continued. Illiterate peons used to throw files on his table instead of handing them over, since the *Mahar's* touch was supposedly polluting. In courtrooms and lawyers' libraries, hotels and restaurants, and in railways and buses he found the same idiotic discriminations.

But here is the rub ! Bhimrao belonged to the lowly and the poor, who were the hardest hit by imperialist policies. It was the poor who were dying in the British-made Famines. It was the lowly who were most fiercely exploited by the Britishers, who were simultaneously pampering a thin layer of upper-caste brown *sahibs*, who facilitated the imperialist oppression of India.

Instead of turning into a "rebel with a cause", Bhimrao Ambedkar took the selfish and easy way out, by feathering his own nest and becoming a careerist. This is the tragedy of Ambedkar's life. At every point in his life, instead of joining hands with the masses, and organising them to throw off their oppressors, political, economic and social, Ambedkar chose the path of collaboration and of colluding with the suited, booted,

polished upper-caste and imperialist masters.

One can sympathise with Spartacus, who had led the slave revolt in Rome. One's heart goes out to the Negroes in America and in Apartheid South Africa. But all the tales of caste discriminations visited upon Ambedkar leave us cold, because the man was not a fighter, he was just a smooth operator. He just took money from the Gaikwad of Baroda and the Kolhapur Raja and made a career for himself, flippant and clever in speech,

MUHAJIRISTAN

Mankind has earlier proposed and now reiterate the demand for a separate Muhajiristan. The Muhajirs estimated to number about 1.5 crores, have been fighting for an autonomous state of their own for the last few years. Thousands of them have been killed by the Pakistan Army, Police and Intelligence Agencies. **The plight of the Muhajirs who are the refugees that migrated from India proves that religion cannot make a nation.** Just as the Muhajirs could not be absorbed by West Pakistan, similarly, the Biharis, who sided with the Pakistan Army during the Liberation War of 1971, and the Chakmas, who were Buddhists living in the Chittagong Hill District, could not be absorbed by Bangladesh, the successor state to East Pakistan. **We propose that Muhajiristan should extend from the East bank of the Indus to the borders of Rajasthan and Kutch. And from the Arabian Sea to the Sindh-Punjab border in the North.** Karachi could continue to be used by both Sindh and the new State of Muhajiristan. It should be declared a Free-Trade Zone and recognised as such by both India and Pakistan. Both NRI and NRP from all over the world, especially from UK, USA, Singapore and Hongkong, should be invited to invest in the Muhajiristan FTZ. Genuine manufacturers of this FTZ, and not shells assembled by screwdriver technology, should be allowed to enter custom-free by India and Pakistan. This will satisfy a persistent demand by Indians and Pakistanis of the development of a FTZ within their countries (Mumbai, Kandla, Karachi and other centres have been repeatedly proposed).

With their immense pools of skilled labour, both Pakistan and India will benefit from the creation of the Muhajiristan FTZ, which will open the way for further collaboration between the peoples of India and Pakistan.

spineless and compromising in action.

We may even wonder in amazement that the person and the community that he represented, who had the most to lose under continuation of imperialist rule, actually turned into such a fawning *enfant terrible*, who cared not a jot for the plight of his people and who, when the time came for making concrete constitutional proposals for the betterment of the people, actually had the temerity to discriminate against the tribals.

"The most prominent feature of Ambedkar's plan was that the Depressed Classes were to hold the Balance of Power; and the aboriginals were not to get any representations, as, according

to Ambedkar, they were devoid of political sense. The plan regarded the proposal for a Constituent Assembly as absolutely superfluous, as act of supererogation and a dangerous proposition that might involve the country in a civil war. Much of the Constitution was ready under the 1935 Act The plan was severely criticized by the Press... Thakkar Bapa attacked Ambedkar for denying representation to the aboriginals, and Ambedkar said in reply: 'I have never claimed to be a universal leader of suffering humanity. The problem of Untouchables is quite enough for my slender strength ... I don't say that other causes are not equally noble. But knowing that life is short, one can only serve one cause and I have never aspired to do more than serve the Untouchables.' He added that he did not include the aboriginals in the scheme because they had not yet developed the political capacity which was necessary to exercise political power for one's own good. These very arguments were used by the higher classes when they opposed the enfranchisement of the lower and specially the Depressed classes !" (D.Keer, *Dr. Ambedkar Life And Mission*, pp. 369-370).

Consider the man and his self-centredness ! Just because he has voluntarily decided to limit his advocacy to Scheduled Castes, does it entitle him to make uncharitable and false statements about the interests of the tribals?

What is the meaning of his arrogance?

Does he think that just because he does not advocate the tribals' cause, that it is going to remain unheard for ever?

If the tribals have suffered discrimination, especially the tribals who were condemned and called Criminal Tribes, then their just demands must be projected whatever be their own retarded level of consciousness. How dare Ambedkar suggest that they have not attained a certain arbitrary level of consciousness or "Political Sense" and therefore their interests should be neglected and bypassed ? What kind of an authoritarian mind did Ambedkar possess?

As a member of the suffering Scheduled Castes; as a man who had been forced to tolerate all sorts of discriminations throughout his life, Ambedkar should have been extremely sensitive to the plight of those who were even lower down the

social ladder than the Scheduled Castes! Ambedkar was behaving in the same rotten way towards those lower down, as the so-called higher-ups were behaving towards him and his Mahar community.

Indian Castes

We shall now make a small diversion and make a few remarks about the overall situation with regard to Indian Castes, and we shall return to the allegedly great Constitution—making prowesses of this Chhota and bogus Manu at a later stage.

An immense number of books have been written about Indian castes, roughly three thousand in number, and a lot of ink and paper has been wasted in the production of this descriptive and trite literature.

The term caste etymologically is derived from the Portuguese term *castos* and means three things:

1) A regional hierarchical arrangement

There is no sense in belonging to any caste if it is not supposedly higher or lower than some other! The essence is to pretend to be Superior to some other group of men by calling oneself a member of a fictitious upper or higher caste group! Everything is fictitious, arbitrary and ideological. The truth is that: All Men and Women are Equal. No one has a right to call himself superior or higher than anyone else, be it a SC, and OBC or a ST.

This is a self evident truth and I will not waste my time to enter into any argument about it!

2) Caste is a self perpetuating group. Rules are framed to ensure that by endogamy, or by any similar device, a group of people manage to retain their group identity and presume themselves to be superior to some other group that is discriminated against.

This is a typical feudal situation, where the king or the priest stands at the top of the social hierarchy, and all sorts of concentric circles are made to surround him.

India experienced the highest and richest development of wealthy, strong, powerful feudalism in the entire world, stretching from the rise of Buddhism in the 7/6th century BC to 1765 AD, when British imperialism overthrew Indian feudalism after the Battle of Plassey (1757) and acquired the *diwani* or revenue collecting rights of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. During these 2500 years, India had the longest time available to perfect its instrument of feudal exploitation. Through this device certain groups were excluded from land ownership totally (See Girish Kasarvalli's film *Chomana Dudi* for a vivid portrayal of the everlasting unfulfilled urge of a lower caste man to acquire just a small plot of land to till.)

By the same token, some Brahmins in the Agrahara villages acquired exemptions from land revenue and received other privileges. Even interest rates were dependent upon the castes

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

India should agitate, in every international forum, three demands:

1. The Constitution of an International Human Rights Commission on Indo-Pak Partition of 1947, which resulted in the largest single migratory movement in human history of over 17 million human beings. This Commission should include Jewish experts who have forced Germany to pay billions of marks as reparations to Israel against the Holocaust, and East and South-East Asian experts who have made similar demands against the Japanese.
2. Britain must be made to pay for inflicting this enormous tragedy upon the peoples of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.
3. Pakistan must be compelled to pay India billions of dollars, for the crimes against the minorities and for the ethnic cleansing carried out by Pakistan since 1947, reducing its minority population of nearly 33% in 1947 to just 2 or 3% today, and as the bulk of the expelled minorities from Pakistan had to be absorbed by India in the last five decades.

of the giver and the receiver. Higher castes got loans at lower rates of interest, and the lower castes had to pay more interest for their borrowings.

All in all, the caste arrangement enabled the feudal lords and their hangers-on to more fiercely exploit the masses.

3) In order to perpetuate such an iniquitous system, all sorts of measures of psychological terror were employed. Certain OBCs were excluded from communal meals and feasts. Certain groups were called "Untouchables", e.g., washermen, barbers, sanitary workers and sweepers, cobblers, butchers, hunters and such others whose touch was supposed to be polluting.

There were further levels of discriminations. There were certain groups of human beings, who were not allowed to approach the Brahmin or Rajput, to a distance of eight paces or sixteen paces or twenty-four paces. There was even a group found near Madurai by the Census Enumerators in 1931, who were supposed to be "invisible". They were not supposed to emerge out of their houses during daylight hours. Their duty was to enter the Brahmin and upper-caste village only at night, and sweep the streets, clean the latrines and carry away the dead carcasses.

All these psychological terror devices helped the Brahmins and the Dwijas to brain-wash the mass of the people and strengthen their hold over the exploited peasants and craftsmen.

The terror and divisive tactics of the dwijas went so far as to split the craftsmen into two factions, one "left-hand-side" group or *Vedakalai* and the other the "right-hand-side" or *Tenkalai*. The latter was a little more favoured.

Similarly, a dress code was imposed. Whether the bridegroom should approach the bride's residence on horseback and with a music-party or not was also prescribed. The minutest detail of diet, divorce, re-marriage, inheritance, legacy, gift, will, mortgage, ritual, degree of approachability to the temple and its *sanctum sanctorum*, and so on and so forth, were all laid down.

It was all prescribed, ruthless and barbaric.

It was also extremely stupid and idiotic.

But it was all socially very useful as it enabled the ruling classes of the feudal times to screw the maximum out of the hapless ryots.

All caste regulations in all the regions of the country will be found to fall in one of the three categories mentioned above:

* Those that established internal hierarchy.

* Those that sought to perpetuate this social hierarchy by marriage and *sanskara* regulations.

* Those that psychologically terrorised the people into submission, that insulted them, that made them feel small, that brainwashed them into believing that they were inferior.

The extremely rigid, self-perpetuating, hierarchised brainwashing / terrorising caste system was inherently self-destructive. It was self-defeating and unviable over any length of time. Society cannot be bound so hard and fast, and so barbarically. Such a culture would die.

Therefore in order to live long the Hindu civilisation adopted certain self-correcting devices. These have taken so far in our history, three major forms : The Feudal Way-out, the Bourgeois Way-out and the Socialist Way-out.

1) The Feudal Way-Out

There are several sub-paths within the broad Feudal Way of liberation from the rigidities of the caste system. They may be briefly summarised as

- a) Bhakti Cult/ Sect Formation
- b) Religious Conversion to Islam
- c) Assumed Alienation
- d) Self-Elevation by Collective Group Action.

a) Bhakti Cult / Sect Formation

Various Devotional Cults and Sects were formed in order to restore social mobility and upward mobility to various social strata. Various Cults/Sects were evolved, like Kabir *Panthis*, Ramanandis, Nath *Sampradai*, Satnamis, Lingayats, Chaitanyas, Swaminarayanists, Tantriks, Mahanubhavs, Aghoris, Naga

Bawas, Kapaliks and so on and so forth. Scores and scores in different sub-regions of India. Generally all these Cults-Sects did not accept the rigidities of the caste system. Sometimes they evolved their own separate priesthoods, e.g. Jangams and the Ragis (among Sikhs, about whom see further below). Sometimes all the Hindus visiting a pilgrimage centre like Jagannath Puri, and for the duration of the pilgrimage (*Jatra* or *Yatra*) they were placed outside the caste system and mixed freely with each other. Sometimes one child from each family was dedicated to a martial cult, as in the case of Sikhs. Both Sikhs and Hindus hailed from

REUNIFICATION OF SUBCONTINENT DEMANDED BY INDIAN MUSLIMS

It may be just a straw in the wind, but it is significant that the *United Muslim Forum* of Bombay has demanded the immediate reunification of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. This demand and the launch of a non-violent movement to realise this aim were announced by Sayed Basharat Shikohe of the *Forum* on 8.8.1995 (*Samakalin*, 9.8.95). Shikohe has asked for

1. Right to free movement by the peoples of the three countries, without passports and visas.
2. Right to free choice by citizens of the sub-continent, of residence and jobs in the three countries.
3. A single president, parliament and supreme court for all the three countries.

the same families and bloodlines in the Punjab. Each family was supposed to sacrifice one son to the militarist order. It is only British imperialism which, *post facto*, between 1919 and 1935 made the Sikhs into a separate religious community. Prior to 1919, the Sikhs used to vote with the Hindus in separate non-Muslim electoral constituencies. But in order to meet the rising tide of nationalism amongst the Hindus and the Sikhs, British imperialism divided the Sikhs from the Hindus, so as to consolidate communal elements in both sections. The Sikhs had already demonstrated their militancy and extremism by throwing up the Kuka Movement, the Akalis, the Nirankaris and the Ghadar. The Britishers were in dire need of controlling the Sikhs and therefore resorted to the well-tried method of divide and rule and of bribing the Sikhs. That is how the Sikhs became from a Hindu Sect a Separate Religious Community between 1919 to 1935.

In fact, in all probability, Ambedkar got the idea of Conversion to Buddhism from the pattern followed by British imperialism in relation to the Sikhs. The 1935 Constitution for the first time identified the Scheduled Castes as a distinct Hindu sect and had British imperialism lasted a decade longer as Ambedkar had hoped and striven for, the next Constitutional instalment in 1955, and thereabouts, might have seen the genesis of Kabir *Panthis*, *Ramanandi* and *Nath Panthis*, Mahars into one or more separate religious entities !

Ambedkar's assumption was not baseless. The Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909 had established separate electorates for Muslims. The Montague-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 had extended the separate electorate status to the Sikhs. The so-called Federal Constitution of 1935 had begun the process of dividing the Scheduled Castes from the main body of the Hindus, and this might have culminated in an arrangement beneficial to B.R. Ambedkar, who was negotiating till the end with the Sikhs. The Sikh Central Organisation had been induced to open the Khalsa College in Bombay with Ambedkar's support. But Ambedkar's offer of conversion to Sikhism, was naturally conditional upon his bargaining for Supreme Position with established Sikh leaders like Tara Singh, Sant Fateh Singh, Baldev Singh (who was already entrenched as Defence Minister in Nehru's Cabinet) and other prominent Sikh leaders.

Ultimately, Ambedkar opted for Buddhism, though he knew precious little about the tenets and philosophy of Buddhism. He had no need to go into such abstruse religious minutiae. For him conversion was a political ploy that would be entitled to receive imperialist support.

Unfortunately for Ambedkar and his career as the "Saviour of the Mahars", British imperialism could not last out. Four series of events precipitated the abrupt British retreat from India.

(i) Hitler had battered British Imperialism to near collapse. At the end of Second World War in 1945, Britain was in no position to spare the manpower and money to sustain its rule over the Indian Sub-continent. According to Sir Stafford Cripps, speaking in the House of Commons, it would have needed five million British Soldiers and five hundred million pounds annually to retain its hold over the Indian sub-continent. This "sacrifice" the British people were loath to make. Had the Dutch been in power here, they might have tried, as they attempted in Indonesia till 1949. Had the French been in power, they too might have tried as they attempted in the case of Indo-China till 1954. Had the Portuguese been in power here they might have also attempted, as they did in all their overseas colonies till 1975. But the Britishers were cowardly bullies, and ran away at the first chance.

(ii) Subhash Bose had formed his Indian National army in 1942-43, in Burma & Malaya, out of the prisoners of war captured from the British Indian Army, which was thus proved to be disloyal.

(iii) The trial of the "traitors" - Sehgal, Dhillon, and Shah Nawaz Khan - which was held in the Red Fort, Delhi, at the end of 1945, caused a tremendous uproar all over the country. The hundreds of demonstrations and public outcry forced the Court Martial judges to merely remove the trio from the Indian army. They could not be punished with either the death penalty or even imprisonment.

(iv) In February 1946, the RIN Mutineers surrendered, not to the CNC of the Navy but only to Sardar Patel who was flown in

from Delhi.

It is a different story that Sardar Patel comprehensively betrayed the Naval Ratings. But the shift in authority was obvious.

Thus the Britishers let down Ambedkar. They could not wait until Ambedkar had matured his plans.

(b) Religious Conversion to Islam

This path was availed of by millions of Indians, under Islamic domination from the time of Delhi Sultanate (thirteenth century to advent of the British as a territorial power from 1765 A.D.)

Theoretically, Islam did not recognise any caste, but in practice in India, the lower castes remained distinct. In effect, the converted local rich either began to call themselves as separate sects, like the Memons, the Bohras, or the Aga Khanis, or elevated themselves into Sayyids or Sheikhs, and in effect reproduced the Indian Caste system within Islam. As the common saying goes among the Muslims "I have had only two years of prosperity and therefore, I am just an ordinary Muslim, but who knows, with a few more years of good times, I might become a Sayyid or a Sheikh!"

At the same time, syncretic castes developed which sought to distinguish their tenets from both Hinduism and Islam. For example, the Kabir Panthis and Sikhs sought to fuse Sufi Islam with Bhakti Hinduism and build bridges between the two religions.

All in all, Sect Formation and Religious Conversion as feudal strategies of combating caste rigidities, overlapped and merged with each other.

All in all, Sect Formation and Religious Conversion as feudal strategies of combating caste rigidities, overlapped and merged with each other.

(c) Assumed Alienation

Another device was to create a mythology of foreign origin for the caste or sub-caste. For instance, the Rajputs were assumed to be new arrivals from Central Asia or some vague "outside" region.

Since they were supposed to have hailed from some distant place outside India, it was propagated that they were outside the caste system. Thus, Bhihs became Rajputs as soon as they had acquired a small territory and a kingdom. In fact, the Rajputs themselves claimed to be of some vague foreign origin, who had been purified by fire. They began to call themselves as groups who had taken birth from Agni Kula. Some of the Rajputs also claimed to be Muslims.

The Jats claimed to have come from Central Asia, and the Kokanasth Chitpawan Brahmins, stranded on the Konkan coast after a ship-wreck, proclaimed themselves to be affiliated to the Jats! At the same time, Shahanav Kuli (96 families) Marathas, who were nothing but ordinary low caste cultivators, began to assert themselves as Rajputs, sanctifying their bogus genealogies with the help of bribed Brahmin priests, hailing from Jaipur and Varanasi. (See Vinayak Purohit, *Twenty-Five Essays in Indian History*, in press, and particularly the essay on Samanta Feudalism published in *Mankind*, Vol 1, No 2, Nov.1995, where

MY CREDO

I am a simple rationalist and atheist. I do not respect religion, which is "a sigh of the oppressed" and "the opium of the people."

I respect the religious feelings of my countrymen.

Mankind wants to patiently argue with all the militants.

Mankind stands for revolutionary nationalism.

Mankind believes that the future belongs to the Dalits who in their overwhelming majority are the OBCs, SCs and STs.

I hate my class enemies who are the local brown capitalists as well as the foreign white multinationals organised as G-7, WB, IMF and WTO.

But I hate even more the *agent-provocateurs*, the infiltrators, the collaborationists and the fifth columnists in our ranks.

I hate the horrible brahminical, feudal order. I also hate the horrible capitalist order. I stand for the destruction of both.

I know that both will fall together; as they are standing up together supportive of each other!

the bogus claims of the Rashtrakutas and the Chalukyas have been exposed)

d) Self-Elevation by Collective Group Action

The last of the four major feudal strategies for overcoming the negative effects of caste rigidity was the technique of self-elevation by Group Consensus.

For instance, right around my residence in Bombay, there are a number of Bungalows belonging to Choukalshi and Pachkalshi Wadvals, who were originally low-caste carpenters and boat-builders. They possessed small plots of land along the coast-line of the Salsette Island (which became Bombay, where they used to build the boats for the Koli fisher-folk). As land prices in Bombay soared, they became rich landlords holding prime urban land. Naturally, they aspired to higher caste rank, commensurate with the newly acquired wealth. They began to call themselves "Surya-vanshi" Kshatriyas, and built a marriage hall under the "Suryavanshi" Kshatriya label in order to seal their claim.

In the same manner, in hundreds of cases all over India, the lower castes (OBCs and SCs) began to assert their rights to higher social status by this device of becoming *Dwijas*. Sometimes, they would merely change their dress, say by abandoning the *koli rumal* for the usual cultivator's dhoti; or the women would leave behind their *nav vari sarees* (nine yards sarees) for the more popular urban middle class *saha vari* (six yards) sarees; or the Nayar women of Kerala would begin to wear blouses over their *vettus*, in place of the earlier topless nudity.

Or the lower caste group might begin to accept vegetarianism. Or they might begin to forbid easy divorce or widow remarriage.

Or they might begin to alter the marriage and funeral rites.

Or, in a thousand different ways, modify their group behavioural pattern along the line that MN Srinivas, the liberal bourgeois sociologist, has termed "Sanskritisation".

Srinivas does not have the common sense to grasp, that it is not a linguistic phenomenon at all, but a social status change effected within feudal limitations.

2. The Bourgeois Way-out

The bourgeoisification process in India occurred under imperialist aegis. Thus the process was botched up and compromised.

India had to undergo Forced Underdevelopment, i.e. it was De-industrialised, Ruralised and Pauperised. Therefore, true

partial liberation, under the Bourgeoisification process, was not possible. No "English Revolution of 1640-1660" could take place. Neither could the "French Revolution of 1789-1815" occur. The degree of liberation in India had to match the exigencies of imperialist rule.

First of all, forty percent of the territory and twenty-five percent of the population, had to remain under the continued feudal rule of the princelings, over whom the British merely established suzerainty.

Secondly, under the British land tenure system, all sorts of feudal relics were given a new lease of life, as Zamindars, Watandars, Khots, etc.

Thirdly, a bloated bureaucratic straitjacket was imposed, suited to the needs of an alien administration.

Within these semi-feudal over-arching limitations, a sort of semi-bourgeoisification process was carried through.

As such, liberation from caste restrictions was aborted. Three strategies were adopted.

a) Religious Conversion to Christianity.

b) Encouragement to *Gurugiri* and *Buwabaji* and to Cult/ Sect formations with foreign and NRI support.

c) Promotion of separate communal electorates supposedly to safeguard minority interests.

a) Religious Conversion to Christianity

Religious conversion to Christianity was supposed to Westernise and modernise the Depressed Classes, as they were known earlier, or the Scheduled Castes, as they became known later.

As a matter of fact, Christianity had reached the shores of India much earlier than it had reached the British

Isles. The British were converted to Christianity in the Anglo-Saxon period, in the 5th and 6th century AD, whilst Christianity had reached India via Syria, Iraq and Persia much earlier. The Syrian - Christian Church survives to this day in Kerala.

The Portuguese had attempted forcible conversion wherever they had established their outposts. They used to throw pieces of beef in the village well and then claim that all those who had partaken of the water were automatically Christianised. Further, St. Francis Xavier had been active in the proselytising movement. Francis Xavier had arrived in Goa in 1542, and made two further visits to India in 1548 and 1551. His activities were spread Asia-wide from India to Japan and he died in 1552, whilst awaiting clearance to visit the Chinese mainland.

However, these forays were of merely marginal interest. The

DOWN WITH RIGHTISTS FORWARD WITH LEFTISTS

During World War II, not only Ambedkar but also V. D. Savarkar and his Hindu Mahasabha, and the Stalinist-Communists had collaborated with British Imperialism.

Genuine leftists must separate themselves from this collaborationist chaff.

Amongst the genuine fighters for freedom of India, both Muslims and Dalits "OBCs and SCs and STs" were very well represented in the ranks of the so-called anarchists and terrorists of the Old Period as well as in the ranks of the Subhasist Forward Bloc and the INA, the Socialists and the RIN mutineers.

We must carry forward this fighting, non-communal and non-casteist militant tradition of Revolutionary Nationalism and Revolutionary Socialism.

We must sharply distinguish ourselves from collaborators with whites and browns of all shades and tints, whether they be Mahars in Maharashtra or Dusads in Bihar or Pariahs in Tamil Nadu.

We want a free India that truly elevates the down-trodden, the despised, the deprived, the exploited and the oppressed of the country, who in their overwhelming majority are Dalits, i.e., they are the OBCs, SCs, and STs of this country.

We want Socialism with Democratic Planning and Workers' Control! And, of course, a Free India, that ends Neo-Colonial control by the G7, OECD and NATO of the First World!

British E.I. Company introduced Anglican missionaries from 1813. This Ecclesiastical Department was taken over by the British Government in 1858, and till the end of the British rule in India, the Government officially supported the Anglican Church in India. The Queen of England, as Head of Church is till today interfering in the religious life of India, and appoints Anglican Bishops to carry out all sorts of nefarious subversive activities in the name of missionary effort.

However, as we have seen above, Indian feudalism was never completely destroyed and lingered on in a hundred different compromised forms. Therefore, the caste structure of society which was concomitant with Indian feudalism, remained active and influential. Ultimately, it prevailed over half-hearted and botched up attempts at bourgeoisification.

Just as Islam in India developed castes, similarly the Christians too were permeated by castes. In the recent period, we have seen the dispute, regarding the reservation policy for Dalit Christians, snowball into a major political controversy. The higher caste Christian converts in Goa have separate pews assigned to them, distinct from the pews allocated to "Untouchable Christians" in churches.

In general, the caste structure has triumphed over religious conversion, just as Ambedkarite Bauddhas remained basically Mahars enjoying all the privileges of the "Reservation Policy".

GANDHI, BJP AND COMMUNISTS, ALL STEEPED IN COMPRADOR POLITICS.

Mankind has been critical of Gandhi for the following weighty reasons :

1. Gandhi did not support any black liberation struggle whilst in Africa, though this was the main contradiction in the Republic of South Africa.
2. Gandhi supported White British imperialism in the Zulu wars of 1890s, as well as in the Boer War 1898-1901.
3. Gandhi supported British Imperialism in the First World War (1914-19), and for his activities as a recruiting sergeant for British imperialism, he received the Kaiser-e-Hind medal.
4. Gandhi launched the Khilafat movement in association with the Ali brothers (1921). Khilafat was a non-issue in India and Gandhi inflamed the communal spirit by lending his support to it.
5. Gandhi withdrew the 1921 Civil Disobedience Movement even before launching it, because of the minor Chauri-Chaura incident, which might have been the work of some British *agent provocateurs*.
6. Gandhi deliberately sacrificed Bhagat Singh and associates whilst negotiating the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931.
7. Gandhi advised the peasants of U.P. to pay rent to the Zamindars, even while withholding land revenue from the British Raj.
8. Even though Gandhi was not a member of the Congress, he interfered with the re-election of Subhash Bose as President of the Congress, and campaigned against Bose, ultimately forcing Bose's resignation.
9. Gandhi defended the action of K.M. Munshi in firing upon unarmed textile workers of Bombay during the rule of the Congress Ministry, 1937-39.
10. By his style of functioning, repeated fasts at the behest of an "inner voice", and by holding his daily Prayer Meetings, Gandhi gave a religious turn to political activities, and thus strengthened the forces of communalism and religious obscurantism.
11. Gandhi repudiated the 1942 Movement and blamed the people of India for their violent activities.
12. Gandhi accepted the Partition of 1947, and helped Nehru and Patel to overcome popular opposition to Partition. (Gandhi had accepted Partition from 1943, when he met Jinnah with Rajagopalachari in Bombay). Our criticism of both Ambedkar and Gandhi is from the point of view of consistent nationalism, logical rationalism and revolutionary socialist politics.
13. At the same time we have been totally opposed to the fundamentalist line of the Bharatiya Janata Party, which was earlier promoted by the Jan Sangh and the Hindu Mahasabha. We also believe that the BJP should be openly defeated in popular democratic elections, and its rotten deals like the Revived Enron Project in Maharashtra should be thoroughly exposed. Furthermore, the BJP does not stand for Reunification of India, which *Mankind* believes in, just as Dr. Lohia did. In fact, *Mankind's* approach to Muslims is a friendly one, parallel to its approach to the progressive wing of the Ambedkarites.
14. We are also anti-Stalinists, and consider their slogan of secularism to be a bogus one. The Communist Party of India had supported the Partition of the country in 1947 which gives a lie to its "secularism", and has committed innumerable crimes on the people of India at the behest of its Stalinist masters in Moscow. Even whilst they admit to many errors like opposition to Subhash Bose, support to Partition, support to Indira's Internal Emergency and so on, they have failed to make a genuine confession about the sources and reasons for their blunders of the past. *Mankind* has repeatedly attacked the Stalinist policy towards Kashmir and towards many other policies of the day.
15. *Mankind* is making its position clear so that no misunderstanding can arise. *Mankind* stands squarely by its credo of Nationalism, Socialism and Revolutionism.

b) Encouragemnet to Gurugiri and Buwabaji and to Cult/ Sect Formation with Foreign and NRI Support.

Scores, if not hundreds, of *gurus* and *buwas* have sprung up in all the regions of the country, like Hare Ram Hare Krishna movement, the Rajneesh Cult, the Maharshi Yogi University, Sai Baba, Anand Margi, Bal Yogi and so on and so forth. It will take a volume to name all of them.

All these *gurus* and *buwas* are financed by huge foreign funds, especially the off-shore funds channelised through the NRIs. All of these Cults/Sects have thousands of white-skinned foreign followers, together with hundreds of thousands of brown-skinned ones (See Geeta Mehta, *Karma Kola*, 1980, for a laboured and boring proof of the phenomenon)

All these newfangled Cults/ Sects are collectively having an impact, and are loosening the bonds of castes within Indian society. However, it is a very slow creeping process, and would probably take several centuries to make a significant impact. After all, there are ninety-three crore Indians, and at fifteen percent, even the Scheduled Castes number is no less than fourteen crores. Only a grand socio-economic programme of upliftment can touch and transform the lives of hundreds of millions!

c) Promotion of separate communal electorates supposedly to safeguard minority interests

The British strategy of *Divide and Rule* was implemented through Limited Franchise with Separate Electorates. This merely perpetuated minute

divisions within society without solving any problem. We must here understand that Separate Electorates are different from reservations. Under Separate Electorates, voters in the same Constituency vote in distinct communal blocs. Under a system of Reservation of seats, all the people in a Constituency vote for one of the candidates belonging to the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes. The voters may belong to any community. The winning candidate has to belong to the caste/tribe for which the seat has been reserved.

The British introduced Communal Electorates for local bodies and municipalities at the end of the nineteenth century, and extended the principle to the Legislative Assemblies formed under the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909. The Separate electorates were perpetuated under the Montague-Chelmsford reforms of 1919 and the Feudal Constitution of 1935. Ultimately, they resulted in the partition of country in 1947, and the communal riots of the entire period 1920-1948.

In short, Separate Electorates were a mirage and in fact resulted in the criminalisation of politics in India. The goondas gathered the votes and delivered them to the party that paid most, using communalist slogans to whip up religious frenzy.

3. The Socialist Way-out

The Socialists, particularly those led by Dr. Rammanohar Lohia have advocated a two-pronged approach to the caste problem.

As a short term measure, they suggested that, those who had been exploited and discriminated against for centuries, including not only Hindus but poor Sikhs, Christians, etc. should be provided with *Vishesh Avsar* or Special Opportunity for a Transitional Period. Those who have been hungry, ill-

educated and medically uncared for, should not be suddenly placed on an equal footing with the privileged English-speaking

Westernised Fat Cats. It is unfair, unjust and inhuman to do so. Let them have special facilities for a Transitional Period to overcome their backwardness and catch up with the hitherto privileged groups.

This was to be combined with a long term development programme which would uplift the whole mass of poor and down-trodden in India. Without such a mass development programme the strategy of *Vishesh Avsar* would itself become futile. The under-privileged would become chaotically and selectively "privileged", as has happened with those upper caste men and women, who are obtaining bogus OBC and SC certificates from District Collectors and are fraudulently entering educational institutions and obtaining jobs in the Reserved category. In other words, the Socialist solution of *Vishesh Avsar* for a Transitional Period is being transformed into a permanent racket!

In the foregoing paragraphs we have analysed the peculiarities of Indian caste, and discussed the Feudal, Bourgeois and Socialist solutions to the problem.

It appears that Ambedkar was largely unaware of the social roots of the problem. And he was uninterested in finding a solution to the caste crisis. All that he was interested in was the perpetuation of the caste rigidities and in exploiting to his own advantage as a Mahar political leader, the depressed conditions of the SC masses.

He was a pre-figuration of the present day Kanshi Ram line. Kanshi allied himself with Mulayam Singh's Samajwadi Party in 1993 to defeat BJP in Uttar Pradesh. He then joined hands with the BJP to overthrow Mulayam Singh and induct his protégé, Mayawati into the CM's

AMBEDKAR CRITICISED FROM THE LEFT

Our criticism of Ambedkar is from the Left. We are fully with Ambedkar in his criticism of upper caste Hindu society.

Mankind believes in the growth, prosperity and happiness of the *Dalits* of this country. In fact, *Mankind* believes that only when the *Dalits* rule the country, that India will become prosperous and happy.

I personally consider myself a *dalit* of the *dalits*, whatever may be the nature of the family into which I was born, and for which no one had asked my prior permission before my birth. Birth is an accident or a chance happening. By deeds, thoughts and writings or *Karma*, I am a *dalit*, and proud to be one.

We have criticised Ambedkar for his close identification with British Imperialism and for his pursuit of anti-labour policies of the Viceroy's Executive Council in 1942-46, and for his close association with Nehru's comprador Congress govt. as Cabinet Minister in 1947-1951.

Whatever may be his grievances against the upper castes, Ambedkar should not have allied himself with either British imperialism, or with its successor comprador Congress regime.

Mankind believes in principled politics and abhors the politics of compromises, opportunism and careerism.

We are not interested in the personal reasons which might have provoked Ambedkar to go astray.

Since we are atheists, we have nothing to say about Ambedkar as a neo-Buddhist religious cult leader. That is a non-political matter, entirely between Ambedkar and his cult followers.

We have written about Buddhism separately in *Mankind* (*MK*, Jan 1997 issue), and considered it therein as a religious philosophy that was iconoclastic, atheistic and dialectical.

Mankind believes in Revolutionary Nationalism (*MK*, Dec 1996).

Mankind's Credo has been fully explained in our Oct 1995 and Oct 1996 issues. *Mankind* fully adheres to the Lohiaite theory of *Vishesh Avsar* or Special Opportunity which must be accorded to the *Dalits* in order to help the *dalits* and *pidits* of this country to make the transition to an egalitarian social order.

Mankind desires that the anti-imperialist, nationalist, equality-aspiring, progressive, forward-looking elements from within the ranks of Ambedkarites should distinguish themselves from the reactionary, communalist, casteist, compradorist, religio-cultist, careerist and opportunistic elements within the same movement. Without this separation of the Left wing, Ambedkarite politics will remain condemned to sterility.

gaddi. Most recently he has aligned himself with Congress in UP, and in Punjab to serve his utterly selfish and self-defeating caste ends. The latest is that Kanshi has entered into an alliance with the BJP—and has formed a BJP-BSP coalition government in UP.

We shall now briefly examine Ambedkar's educational career.

V

NARROW-MINDED VISION

Ambedkar joined the Elphinstone College on a scholarship granted by Maharaja Sayaji Rao of Baroda. After his graduation in 1912, without any class in any subject, he joined the Baroda State Service. The Maharaja of Baroda then sent Ambedkar to the Columbia University in 1913. He was the first Mahar to study in a foreign university. In 1916, Ambedkar submitted his thesis for the degree of Ph.D. It was published eight years afterwards, under the title "*The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India*". Ambedkar left Columbia to join the London School of Economics, but had to return to India upon the termination of the scholarship grant by Sayaji Rao. In 1917, Ambedkar became Military Secretary to the Maharaja of Baroda. With the help of the Maharaja of Kolhapur, Shahu Chhatrapati, he rejoined the London School of Economics in 1920. In 1921, after a rehash of his Columbia University thesis, now entitled "*Provincial Decentralisation of Imperial Finance in British India*", he manoeuvred to obtain an M.Sc. (Econ.) degree. It is academically dishonourable and shameful, to seek to obtain a Ph.D. as well as a M.Sc. on the basis of more or less the same material. That is not all! (Kuber, *op.cit.*, pp.15,19)

It shows the extreme limitations of Ambedkar's vision. The subject that he chose had no lasting value. It was merely a narrow-minded careerist choice. British imperialism was ephemeral; the British Provinces were not going to last forever; the details of financial transactions between such temporary institutions, of what significance can they be?

To waste the best years of one's youth for petty careerist gains in Colonial India, does this show any breadth of vision? We will not elaborate further.

The whole of Ambedkar's life was frittered away in this manner running after short-term narrow-minded goals.

Like Kanshi Ram, he also made an opportunistic alliance with the Praja Socialist Party in 1951-52, and lost again in a by-election in 1954. Prior to that, he had joined hands with British Imperialism and served as a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council from 1942 to 1946. He also joined hands with the Congress to be a member of Nehru's cabinet from 1946 to 1951.

Kanshi Ram should have learnt from Ambedkar's life that reckless opportunism does not pay. Ultimately he may prove to be as big a loser as Ambedkar.

VI

THE 1946-49 CONSTITUTION AND AMBEDKAR

In our Open Letter to Anna Hazare and others in *Mankind's* last issue, Feb./Mar'97, we have shown that 1946-49 Constitution was a Dominion Status Constitution and was completely worthless. We had characterised it as a sham, as a joke, as a farce, as a travesty and as a betrayal.

We need not repeat the arguments here.

We had called for the formation, for the first time, of a new Constituent Assembly based on a Direct, Universal, Equal, Adult Franchise.

Much has been made of Ambedkar's contribution to the

formulation of this rotten Constitution.

First of all, it was a collective effort. He was merely the chairman of the Drafting Committee consisting of N.Gopala Swami Ayyangar, Sir Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar, K.M. Munshi, Sir Muhammad Sadulla, N. Madhava Menon and S.P. Khaitan. Sir B.N. Rau was the Constitutional Advisor.

It may be that as Chairman Ambedkar took a more active role in drafting. But this was a mere technical procedural matter.

Ambedkar's personal approach is completely exposed by his *Writings and Speeches* of which we quote from *Communal Deadlock and Way To Solve It*; 1945: "I must state that I am wholly opposed to the proposals of a Constitution Assembly. It is absolutely superfluous. I regard it as a most dangerous project, which may involve this country in a civil war. In the first place, I do not see why a Constituent Assembly is at all necessary. Indians are not in the same position as the fathers of the American Constitution of the United States. They had to evolve ideas, suitable for the Constitution for a free people. They had no constitutional patterns before them to draw upon. This cannot however be the case for Indians. Constitutional ideas and Constitutional forms are ready at hand. Again room for variety is very small. There is not more than two or three constitutional patterns to choose from. Thirdly, it is agreed that the future Indian Constitution should be federal. It is also more or less settled what subjects should go to the Centre and what to the Provinces. There is no quarrel over the division of revenues between the Centre and the Provinces, none on Franchise and none on the relation of the Judiciary to the Legislature and the Executive. The only point of dispute, which is outstanding, centres round the question of the Residual powers—whether they should be with the Centre or with the Provinces. But that is hardly a matter worth bothering about. Indeed, the provision contained in the present Government of India Act should be adopted as the best compromise". (Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, *Writings and Speeches*, Vol I, 1979, pp 360-361.) Many more quotes to the same effect can be given.

But the above long quotation will suffice.

Can one call a man with such a mind-set a Manu, unless Manu is himself thought to be a small fry!! The real embarrassment in the case of Ambedkar was that he had become a comprador, pampered by the Princes and Imperialism, though he belonged to the lower castes and classes.

But compradors have no castes. They have merely ideologies. They mediate between the foreign interests and the masses! Ambedkar was a mere *Kala Gumasta* (Black clerk) belonging to the Mahars, who was useful to both his white and brown masters (As aforesaid Ambedkar had been a member of Viceroy's Executive Council, 1942-46, and Nehru's Government, 1946-51).

Naturally, out of the mountainous labours of the Drafting Committee only a mouse could be produced. Ambedkar admits as much:

"That the Constitution has produced a good part of the provisions of the Government of India Act of 1935, I make no apologies. There is nothing to be ashamed of in borrowing. It involves no plagiarism. Nobody holds any patent rights in the fundamental ideas of a Constitution." (Keer, *Op.Cit.*, p 409).

For good measure, Ambedkar added: "People always keep on saying to me 'Oh you are the maker of the Constitution'. My answer is that I was a hack. What I was asked to do, I did much against my will..... Then he burst out explosively: 'Sir,

my friends tell me that I made the Constitution'. But I am quite prepared to say that I shall be the first person to burn it out. I do not want it. It does not suit anybody" (Keer, *Op.Cit.*, p.449.)

VII FLIPPANCY

Ambedkar had no deep understanding of Economics, unless devolution of provincial finance is assumed to be a serious enquiry!

Ambedkar had no understanding of the sources of law as is revealed by his remarks on the Constitution.

Ambedkar had no understanding of social history as is revealed by his contradictory statements about the origins of the Scheduled Castes. At one time, he called them degraded Kshatriyas (Ambedkar quoted by Keer, *op.cit.* p.386) and at other times as outcaste Buddhists (Ambedkar quoted by Keer, *op.cit.* p.407). He spoke and wrote without much thought. He defended himself by saying : "We lawyers defend many things." (as quoted by Keer, *op.cit.* p.449)

He reached a sort of climax of absurdity by disclaiming responsibility for his own statements! One wonders whether he thought himself to be crazy, or halfmad or just a megalomaniac, who is not to be taken seriously.

Look at the following:

"These are some of the proposals, I have had in mind for the solution of Communal Problem. They do not commit the All-India Scheduled Caste Federation. They do not even commit me". (Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, *Writings and Speeches*, Vol I, 1979, p 378)

What more can one say?

Ambedkar took a flippant attitude towards most serious things in life.

Flippancy is a *Sthayi Bhava* (basic proclivity) of the comprador mind. Most basics like foreign debt, exchange rate, technology, English in education, superiority of Western cultural values, etc., are to be taken care of by the foreigners. Indians are merely to concern themselves with clerical details and snigger at silly jokes made by office bosses.

Throughout his life, Ambedkar behaved in this fashion. He advocated the Partition of India and the Formation of Pakistan with utmost vigour. He wanted even Partition of Kashmir and complete exchange of populations between India and Pakistan.

Did he think that the matter was as easy as changing his fancy suits and boots?

The Partition of India was one of the greatest tragedies that befell humanity in the course of its entire history.

The 1947 Partition of India involved the killing of at least 600,000, and the forced migratory movement of 1.7 crores (17 millions or 17,000,000) of human beings, the largest single migratory movement known in human history

Let us all remember that the crime of supporting the Partition of India is NO ORDINARY CRIME! It is the greatest crime that a human being can commit in the middle of the 20th century!

It is comparable only with the imperialist crime of 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, of forcing man-made famines of purchasing power upon the people of India and killing about eight crores of Indians, from the Dastak Famine of 1770 to the Bengal Famine of 1943, as part of the drive of De-industrialisation, Ruralisation and Pauperisation of India.

Comparable only to the genocidal massacres of the Amerindians carried out by the Spanish, English and the French

imperialists in the two Americas in the 16th to 20th centuries. Comparable only to the trade-enforced narcotics drive imposed through the Opium Wars in China of 1839-42 and 1856-60.

The 1947 Partition of India, was one of the four or five greatest crimes against humanity committed by imperialism.

Who could support such a crime except a true comprador?

Ambedkar was often flippant!

At a rally of thousands of women of Kolhapur, Ambedkar stated that "If they wanted to have their Hindu Code Bill passed, they should find two fat women to fast!" (Quoted by Keer, *Op.Cit.*, p 446)

"As regards Goa, Ambedkar said that it could be annexed or purchased, or India could take Goa on lease" (*Ibid*, p 456).

Hundreds of such irresponsible and flippant statements and actions can be cited from Ambedkar's life.

"At this juncture in 1952, Ambedkar appeared in the Supreme Court on behalf of Zamindars of U.P. in connection with the UP Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Act. Ambedkar's argument was that there was lack of legislative competence and public purpose in enacting the law. The Supreme Court, however rejected the appeal." (*Ibid*, p.442)

"Dealing with the suggestions for village Governments, Ambedkar said that the village was a sink of Localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-minded communalism and added that the village republics had been the ruination of India" (p.410)

VIII SOPHISTRY AND PERVERSITY

We have seen that Ambedkar could go to any length in order to defend his own prevarications and legal legerdemain. If he contradicted himself, he would come out with the glib excuse :

"We lawyers say many things." (Source given above) If he had earlier made a commitment, he would come out with the excuse that this was his personal opinion and :

"this does not commit the Scheduled Caste Federation" (Source given above)

Ambedkar went to the fantastic length of stating that what he had just said :

"did not even commit me" (Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, *Writings and Speeches*, Vol I, 1979, p 378)

This kind of sophistry reached almost schizophrenic levels ! Ambedkar came from the ranks of the poor and from those discriminated against. And yet he defended the indefensible. He not only supported British imperialism in every way, but supported American imperialist and neo-colonialist machinations. He supported the formation of SEATO, and attacked the Nehru Government FROM THE RIGHT. Ambedkar stood for the infinite vivisection of India and stated in July 1947 :

"that Berar would revert to the Nizam as the treaty by which it was ceded to the British would lapse." (Ambedkar quoted by Keer, *Op.Cit.* p. 394).

"Ambedkar had proposed Partition with the complete transfer of populations of Hindus and Muslims from their respective zones" (Ambedkar quoted by Keer, *Op.Cit.*, p. 398)

Now persistent sophistry had become real perversity ! The Partition of India in 1947 was NO ORDINARY CRIME as we have stated earlier. The 1947 Partition resulted in the massacre of 6 lakhs and the forced migration of 1.7 crores, the largest single such event in World History ! How light-minded and glib it was, on the part of Ambedkar, to suggest such a horrible thing at imperialist behest !

Let us remind our readers that no "leader" of India whose hands have been bloodied by such a horrible deed, as the Partition of the country, can ever escape the judgement of history. He cannot hope to lead the Dalit masses of the country. The Ambedkarites and the general body of intellectuals belonging to the lower castes of India, should ponder over this matter very seriously. The Progressive Dalits of our country must distinguish themselves from Ambedkar, who was a stooge of the British, as Viceroy's Executive Council member from 1942-46, and was Congress Party's comprador stooge from 1946-51.

Ambedkar was the Kanshiram of the 40's and 50's. As we all know, Kanshiram was the ally of the Samajwadi Party, to oust the B.J.P. government of U.P. He then became an ally of the B.J.P., to oust Mulayam Singh. And now he is an ally of the Congress in U.P. and in Punjab. And now (27.3.97) he has formed a coalition government in UP with BJP ! Kanshiram swears by Ambedkar in every major speech that he makes. Does this kind of opportunism and ulter selfishness deserve any support from the thinking and concerned intellectuals of India?

Ambedkar reached heights of sophistry on the issue of Linguistic Provinces.

"A Linguistic Province produces what Democracy needs, namely, social homogeneity, and makes Democracy work better than it would in a mixed Province. **There is no danger in creating Linguistic Provinces. Danger lies in creating Linguistic Provinces with the language of each province as its official language.**" (Ambedkar quoted by Keer *Op.Cit.* p.406)

What he meant by this piece of sophistry, nobody knows ! Did he mean that Gujarat should have Marathi as its official language, and the Hindi provinces should have Bengali, Oriya and Assamese as their official languages? Did he mean that Tamil Nadu should have Telugu, that Andhra should have Kannada, that Karnataka should have Malayalam, and that Kerala should have Tamil, as their official languages?

Ambedkar suddenly became a Red-baiter after U.S.A. gave the signal. He opposed an alliance with the Peasants and Workers Party in Maharashtra, because Shankarrao More was allied to the Russian ideology, though both Ambedkar and the Communists were supporting British imperialism in 1942-45. (Ambedkar quoted by Keer *Op. Cit.*, p. 438)

At the same time he declared at an election rally in Bombay :

"that it was Subhash Bose who won independence for India and not the Congress party." (Keer, p. 439)

He was such a staunch Cold War warrior against Russia that he felt :

"It was the duty of USA and Britain to liberate the ten countries of Eastern Europe that Russia had swallowed " (*Ibid.* 454-5)

Ambedkar's support to the Colonial Government was beyond limit and beyond sense :

"My submission to the House is this : that you cannot devise a better form of government than the one we have" speaking in the Central Assembly, 18.9. 1942.(Ambedkar-*Writings & Speeches*, Vol X, 1993 p. 26)

Now look at this piece of marvellous sophistry :

"Labour's Conception of liberty is very positive. It involves the idea of Government by the people. Government by the people, in the opinion of Labour, does not mean Parliamentary Democracy." (*Ibid.* p. 37)

Also, consider this extraordinary praise of the aristocracy.

"But neither idealism nor free thought is possible for the

middle-class. The middle-class does not possess the liberality of the Aristocracy, which is necessary to welcome and nourish an idea." (*Ibid.* p. 43)

A poor Mahar boy who had been insulted and humiliated at every turn, suddenly decides to praise the Aristocracy, because he wants to defend the British against the people of India !

One rubs one's eyes in wonder ! What kind of a 'freak was this man? How can a sensitive and intelligent *Dalit* defend, such anti-people statements of Ambedkar?

Ambedkar defended every draconian anti-labour measure of the war-time Colonial Government. For instance, he defended the lifting of ban on employment of women in underground work in coal mines. (Ambedkar, *Writings & Speeches*, Vol X p.p. 139-44)

He considered Labour Organisations and Trade Unions as forms of "organised loot." He defended the absolute right of the employers to hire and fire the worker. (Ambedkar, *Writings & Speeches*, Vol X, p.p. 245,249.)

It is not necessary to go on !

Almost every page of his *Writings & Speeches* is full of sophistry rising to the heights of perversity.

Ambedkar hailed from a poor Mahar family which was disadvantaged in many respects, but instead of becoming a champion of the poor and downtrodden of the country, he chose to side with the rulers - the White Sahibs upto 1946 and the Brown Sahibs thereafter upto 1951. He opposed Village Panchayats, Parliamentary Democracy, "Linguistic State With Its Own Single Official Language," Integration of states within the Indian Union, and so on. He favoured Repressive Legislation against the working class and American Policy in Asia. He attacked Russia and the Indian Communists most bitterly.

Ambedkar has acquired a high reputation after his death, especially during the last two decades. We can only say that Greatness Has Been Thrust Upon Him !

ANTI-LABOUR POSITION OF AMBEDKAR

All the war time repressive measures of the colonial administration were enthusiastically welcomed by Ambedkar. All the workers' strikes in support of the 1942 Freedom Struggle were denounced by Ambedkar, and the arrest of labour leaders was condoned on the ground that the labour leaders were also nationalists and occasionally they were socialists belonging to the Revolutionary Socialist party, the Congress Socialist Party and the Hindustan Republican Socialist Association (*Writings and Speeches*, Vol.10, p.244). Ambedkar singled out the notes seized from Jayaprakash Narayan, whilst Narayan was in Deoli Prison Camp, for particular mention. As a freedom fighter, I distinctly remember the abhorrence we felt for Ambedkar and his pro-imperialist stance when we were in jail. Ambedkar went so far as to say "If Indians are wanting a government which is democratic, then my submission to the House is this: that you cannot devise a better form of government than the one we have." (*Writings and Speeches*, Vol 10, p.26)

At the same time , he had the temerity to state that

"This House is almost in a diseased state. It was elected for three years, but it has been sitting for almost nearly nine years... Until we get a communal settlement, it is quite impossible to refashion this House." (*Writings & Speeches*, Vol.10, pp. 28-29)

Ambedkar suffered from such delusions of grandeur that whilst discussing the repressive policies of the government, "That every member of the Executive Council is a colleague of the Governor General." (*Writings & Speeches*, Vol 10, p.25)

Ambedkar was so blinded by his *bhakti* to British imperialism that in the year of the Bengal Famine which carried away over 6 million poor Indians, that is in 1943, he was quite oblivious of the responsibility of the Government of India for the rampant hoarding of and speculation in food-grains, and the destruction of the river crafts in the Bengal-Assam region for fear of Japanese seizure, which led to total destruction of the grain movement in the North East!

It was the careerist streak in Ambedkar which led him astray. He stuck to his seat in the Viceroy's Executive Council till the last. He did not resign even when reactionaries like M.S.Aney, Homi Modi and N.R. Sarkar resigned.

It was the Viceroy who finally removed him in order to form a new Council headed by Jawaharlal Nehru.

And he was so pliable that very soon he was back in the Nehru-led Council, without any remembrance of things past.

Ambedkar had no social conscience or ideological vision. The war years were fateful years. They were the last years of direct British rule. The 1942 Movement occurred led by the Socialists. The INA was formed by Subhash Bose in 1942 and in 1943 the Bengal famine occurred. There were terrible food shortages and an excruciating inflationary spiral was unleashed upon the economy. Thousands of Freedom Fighters were jailed (when Labour leaders were jailed, Ambedkar facetiously defended their jailing by saying "They were not jailed because they were labour leaders, but because they were nationalists, Socialists and radicals!")

At the end of 1945, a trial of leading INA officers was conducted by the foreign government on grounds of "treachery"! Ambedkar did nothing. He did not resign his seat from the Viceroy's Executive Council. The RIN rebellion occurred in Feb 1946. That didn't move him! Nothing could!

The most draconian anti-labour measures were enforced by the Viceroy throughout the period when Ambedkar was the Labour Member.

As for the trade union movement of the country, Ambedkar had the following opinion.

"The policy followed by most of these labour organisations is nothing else but a policy of organised loot... In the way in which our industry is organised, it is the employer who has, rightly or wrongly, the right to dismiss a worker whom he thinks is of no service to him." (*Writings & Speeches*, Vol 10, p.245-49)

His admiration for the white man and the Britishers went to almost unbelievable lengths. When the ban on employment of women underground in mines was lifted, he came out with the

strangest defence of the indefensible.

"In our own country is it not a fact that up to 1937 women did work in coal mines? Is it not a fact that women in this country were working in coal mines till eight years ago? Can anybody in India say as people in England say that our women have ceased to work underground for a century and that therefore this is a new departure?" (*Writings & Speeches*, Vol.10, p.257)

If the British colonial administration did not extend the safety and health protection measures to Indian women coal miners, which they had extended 100 years earlier to English women coal miners, is that racist delay to be made a ground for lifting of the ban on underground work by women, in 1945, in India?

Mankind is simply aghast!

Mankind calls upon the sensitive and forward-looking Dalits to differentiate between Ambedkar as a religious leader of the Neo-Buddhist cult and Ambedkar the pro-imperialist and anti-labour and anti-nationalist political figure.

We should also remember that Ambedkar collaborated with the fundamentalist Hindus, in that his cabinet colleague in the Nehru govt. was Shyama Prasad Mookerji, a founder of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Jan Sangh.

Ambedkar's behaviour was exactly like that of Kanshi Ram. Kanshi Ram joined up in turn with the Samajwadi party, the BJP, and the Congress. He had won 3 parliamentary seats from Punjab in the 11th Lok Sabha elections of mid-1996, and now in Feb 1997, he has won exactly one seat in the Punjab Assembly. From May 1996 to Feb 1997, Kanshi Ram came down from three Parliamentary seats to one Assembly in 9 months! And now Kanshi has formed a coalition government with the BJP in UP (end-March 1997)! Exactly similar was Ambedkar's fate. From Viceroy's Executive Council member (1942-46) and Nehru's Cabinet Minister (1947-1951), he lost in the first Lok Sabha election and even in the By-election. Opportunism and careerism do not pay, even in the relatively short runs!

LONG LIVE THE UNITY OF THE MASSES OF THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT !

FORWARD TO A NEW FEDERATION OF THE SOCIALIST STATES OF INDIA, PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH !

LONG LIVE THE UNITY OF THE DALITS & PIDITS OF INDIA!

DOWN WITH ALL COLLABORATORS OF WHITE IMPERIALISM AND BROWN COMPRAADORISM !

LONG LIVE THE TRIPLE UNITY OF NATIONALISM, SOCIALISM AND REVOLUTIONISM !

WESTERN BRAIN-WASHING EXPOSED

THE WESTERN TECHNIQUE IS QUITE WELL-ESTABLISHED.

- 1. GENOCIDALLY MASSACRE THE AMERINDIANS.**
- 2. DE-POPULATE AFRICA AND PROMOTE SLAVE TRADE TO REPLACE THE MASSACRED AMERINDIANS.**
- 3. WHEN SLAVERY BECOMES UNTENABLE, REPLACE THE SLAVES WITH INDENTURED LABOURERS FROM INDIA AND ASIA.**
- 4. WHEN INDENTURED LABOURERS BECOME IMPOSSIBLE TO RECRUIT, UNLEASH RACIALISM (HOLOCAUST, APARTHEID, ZIONISM), LIMITED WARS, NARCOTICS TRAFFIC, ANTIQUES SMUGGLING, INDIAN LOOT, DEVALUATIONS, AND OTHER DEVICES UPON THE THIRD WORLD !**

SOCIAL CHANGE IN NINETEENTH CENTURY MAHARASHTRA

PERIOD OF CLOSE CO-OPERATION : 1830s-1875

Dr. Sharayu Mahatre

From the point of view of the overturn of production relations in India, this may be considered to be the decisive phase (Gazetteer of India, Vol. 2, 1973, p.612). In the earlier period which we have termed that of Initial Adjustment, British administration and judicial system had spread out over the Maratha territories, but by and large, the old feudal land system had been taken over and preserved. Even the *dakshina* representing the feudal privileges of the Brahmins was continued though fresh grants had ceased from 1836. This relic of the past was finally done away with when in 1859 the '*dakshina*' fund was taken over and converted into a scholarship fund available to all castes. (R. Kumar, *Western India in the Nineteenth Century*, 1968, pp. 268, 274).

LAND SETTLEMENT

The most significant developments concerned land, which was the principal source of income for the Indian people then as now. The burden of the costly wars fought in the first period, as well as the more extensive and costlier wars of this period and the widespread mopping-up operations carried out through the length and breadth of the country, as well as the fearful costs of the 1857 mutiny and the pacification campaign which was its aftermath, all together threw an unprecedented burden on the revenue of the Presidencies. The British Crown naturally wanted the burden to be shifted to the shoulders of the Indian 'rayat' (Marx and Engels - *On Colonialism*, undated, p. 83;

Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 357). Military campaigns elsewhere in Africa, Middle East, the Far East and China were also loaded on to the Indian masses on the plea that these were fought in the interests of preserving the security of "the brightest jewel of the British Crown" (The Congress Select Committee, *Report on the Financial Obligations between Great Britain and India*, 1931, para 11, 16-18). The upshot was that the Permanent Settlement of Lord Cornwallis was found to be unduly onerous by the bureaucracy led by Bentinck and a new 'Rayatwari' Settlement was enforced in the Bombay presidency. Thus arose, what Marx has termed, 'a caricature of French peasant - proprietorship' (Marx & Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 80).

Though imperialist propagandists have assiduously attempted to characterise the 'Rayatwari' settlement as a continuation of the ancient system (Vincent Smith, *the Oxford History of India*, 1922, p. 562), and though, they have tried to make out that the settlement was made between a benevolent state and the direct cultivator, in reality, a lower category of non-cultivating proprietors was recognised and all that happened was that the share of the British administration from the total agricultural produce pool was enhanced (*Land Revenue Policy of the Indian Government*, published by Order of the Governor-General of India in Council, 1902, pp. 30, 62 and 261). This enhancement of the British share was made out into a great benefit to the Indian agriculturists by imperialist propagandists and their victims. Hence the fanciful theory of Rayatwari

being a settlement with 'actual' cultivators.

If we look behind the facade of self-serving pronouncements of the minions of imperialism, we find the same land settlement policies at work within the nine districts of our study as in the rest of the country. This overall policy had three essential aspects : (1) To the extent that political expediency demanded, antiquated feudal rights were to be preserved in the Native States, and a stratum of old exploiters was to be integrated with the British Crown as a social prop for the colonial administration; (2) to the extent that enhanced land revenue was necessary in order to meet ever-increasing imperial expenditure, subordinate rights like those of revenue farmers turned bourgeois landed proprietors were to be admitted and a heavier total burden thrown on the hapless rayat; and (3) wherever it was politically feasible and advisable, land was to be converted from feudal property into bourgeois property in such a manner as to create a stratum of native exploiters who would be assisted to concentrate land in their hands with the help of administrative and legal-judicial machinery. This new native social stratum was to be naturally tied to British apron strings.

We can see all these three modes of operation put into effect in our nine districts. The broad picture, which we shall examine in detail further on, is given in the table immediately below.]

The total area of our nine districts was;	
Table 5 A	
	Sq. miles
(a) Konkan	
(i) Bombay City and Island	22
(ii) Thana (Tanna)	4052
(iii) Kolaba	1482
(iv) Ratnagiri	3789
(b) Deccan	
(v) Nasik	8140
(vi) Poona	5099
(vii) Satara	5378
(viii) Sholapur	3925
(ix) Ahmadnagar	6647
38534	

Adjoining these British districts, and often forming enclaves within them the following subordinate native states, under British paramountcy, were recognised:

Thus, out of a total 54,560 sq. miles, around 16,000 sq. miles was segregated as Native State Territories, where the feu-

	Sq. miles
(i) Kolhapur	3,184
(ii) Savantwadi (Sawant Wari)	900
(iii) Janjira	325
(iv) Southern Maratha Jagirs (8)	2,734
(v) Satara Jagirs	3,508
(vi) Jawahar (Jawar)	535
(vii) Peint	960
(viii) Khandesh Petty States (23)	3,840
	15,986

(W. W. Hunter, *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1881, Vol. 2, pp. 184-85)

dal land system was preserved almost intact. In other words, in 29.3 per cent of the area, the land settlement was not even in name carried out with the cultivators. (W. W. Hunter, *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1881, Vol. 2, pp. 184-85. The figures relate to the year 1872, i.e., they pertain to a situation which, despite numerous administrative alterations of district boundaries, remained roughly valid till the merger of the Native States into the Indian Union was carried through in 1948-50.)

Apart from the above mentioned feudal relics, large landed proprietorship, like jagirs, zamindaris, khotis, inamdaris, were legalised under bourgeois property laws. In the older series of Bombay Presidency Gazetteers, these converted feudal rights were termed either "alienated villages" or "alienated lands within government villages". An accurate estimate of the area, the population affected and the precise changes that took place during the ninety-year period of our study, in respect of every such alienated estate is well-nigh impossible, since such details would occupy another volume almost as large as the present dissertation. However, a generalised picture can be suggested :

Approximate proportion of alienated villages and alienated lands in government villages :

(a) Konkan	
(i) Bombay City and Island	(negligible)
(ii) Thana	14 per cent
(iii) Kolaba	44 per cent
(iv) Ratnagiri	40 per cent
(b) Deccan	
(v) Nasik	18 per cent
(vi) Poona	23 per cent
(vii) Satara	37 per cent
(viii) Sholapur	15 per cent
(ix) Ahmadnagar	16 per cent
Total for 9 districts :	24 per cent

Bombay Gazetteers - Vol. 13, 1882, *Thana* pp. 2, 280, Vol. 10, 1883, *Kolaba* pp. 90, 211, Vol. 11, 1880, *Ratnagiri* pp. 2, 203, Vol. 16, 1883, *Nasik* pp. 2, 490, Vol. 18, 1885, *Poona* part 1, p. 17 and part 2, p. 5, *Bombay Gazetteers* - Vol. 19, 1885, *Satara*, pp. 1, 149, Vol. 20, 1884, *Sholapur*, pp. 1, 218, Vol. 17, 1884, *Ahmadnagar*, pp. 1, 245.

We have taken the proportion of alienated villages to total villages, assuming all villages as averagely of similar size, and added the percentage of alienated lands in government villages to arrive at the rough percentage aggregate shown against each district.

British administrative and juridical system was extended almost immediately after the collapse of the Peshwa power in 1817. As far as the period 1830s to 1870s is concerned, beginning with 1836 and generally extending into the 50s, an initial settlement, usually called the First Survey Settlement, was carried through. This was followed by a Revised Survey Settlement beginning in the late '60s and extending well into the '70s and sometimes into '80s. This was again followed by a Third Survey Settlement from the '90s to the first decade of this century. The basic assumption underlying all these settlements was that whoever was recognised as responsible for payment of revenue to the government was *ipso facto* the absolute owner of the property in question and he had the right to mortgage, divide, will and in every way alienate his property. Simultaneously, three or four other processes were at work :

(i) Since the old feudal machinery was largely taken over, *ab initio*, the earlier vested interests including the village 'patils', 'kulkarnis', 'deshmukhs', 'sardesais' and other exploiter elements stretching upto the village watchmen, were firmly entrenched and they managed to obtain revenue-paying rights or '*pattas*' to the exclusion of actual cultivators.

(ii) Extraordinarily onerous revenue demands were imposed and these were exacted in cash on fixed dates without the slightest regard for the ability of the payer, or the incidence of natural calamities, or the failure to provide irrigation facilities, or the current market prices of the crops.

(iii) Literally, lakhs of ruined handicraftsmen were pushed back on land, thereby raising land prices and compelling the actual cultivators to accept whatever share-cropping terms that the '*patta-holders*' cared to name (Government of India, 1902 *Resolution on Land Revenue Policy*, already cited, pp. 264-5).

(iv) The alien administrative-judicial machinery rigorously enforced bourgeois property rights, facilitated the usurious operations of the village rich and ground down the semistarved tillers of the soil (*Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. II, 1881, p. 193). The upshot of all the foregoing was that even apart from the vast areas placed under native feudal relics, and those classified as "alienated villages" and "alienated lands", even where an exceptional lower-caste cultivator had managed to obtain a '*patta*', he was very swiftly and systematically deprived of his holding. The 'rayatwari' system in reality was a bitter and cruel joke perpetrated by a set of the most hypocritical imperialists that the world has known (The 1902 Resolution is a masterpiece of depraved hypocrisy, see particularly, pp. 7,8,32,33, etc.).

DECCAN RIOTS

Confronted with this stark reality, dying of starvation and the diseases of semi-starvation and malnutrition, deprived of all opportunities to practise craft skills, burdened by incessant and perpetually rising revenue demands, forced to accept the worst share-cropping terms, crushed by debts impossible to discharge, the Maharashtra peasant staged a magnificent drama of elemental defiance in the shape of the Deccan Riots of 1875.

The Deccan Riots mark a watershed in the history of the area of our study, as well as for the country as a whole. This was the first struggle that took place on the basis of a restructured socio-economic reality, and whose aims were to modify the new

bourgeois relations of production. The objective that the Deccan peasants set before themselves was not one of restoring the old order, as was the case with the leaders of the 1857 revolt, nor that of re-establishing a tribal chieftain, as was the case with numerous Santhal, Khond and other similar tribal uprisings. The Deccan peasants fought for the first time against the inequities of the capitalist system as such, though their "programmatic" visualisation may have been of an anarchist nature.

LANDLESS LABOUR

The sustaining power in this struggle, even if limited, was provided by the new class that made its debut on the Indian historical platform. This was the landless labourer whose appearance portended the eventual doom of the imperialist system and envisaged an ultimate revolutionary transformation of Indian society.

The process of gestation of this new class and its physiology, we may briefly outline its profile :

a) The bulk of the members of this class consisted of the 'adivasis', the 'pariahs' and the outcastes who had been ruined by the forces that were bourgeoisifying Indian agriculture.

b) The deindustrialisation that was being carried out under British aegis and its concomitant de-urbanisation threw the artisans into the ranks of the rural proletariat.

c) As the moneylenders turned more and more *mirasdars* into share-croppers and tenants into debt-slaves, the ranks of the agrarian working-class swelled.

DEINDUSTRIALISATION

Let us look a little more closely at the second of the three processes mentioned above. The Charter Act of 1833 had ended the East India Company's direct participation in Indian trade as well as its monopoly of China trade. In all but the name, the former commercial and trading company had become an administrative organ of the British Crown, though its marginal interest in commerce with China remained, to be extinguished finally in 1853. Thus its need for application of the surplus from Indian revenues for 'investment' in Indian exportable commodities was rapidly declining. Of course, at the same time, its need for generating surpluses to meet local and imperial military expenditure and exorbitant Home Charges was steeply rising. The Free Trade lobby in Britain was increasingly bending the erstwhile mercantilist regime in India to its will, so that India was fast becoming a dumping ground for the cheap and shoddy products of British industries.

The import of cotton piece-goods from Lancashire and Manchester destroyed the basis of the Indian handloom textile weaving. Imports of kerosene cut into the market for illuminants and even heating fuels, and many an Indian oil presser was driven out of business.

The severely restrictive Forest Act of 1865 not only drove away the charcoal-maker from the reservations but made this essential fuel so expensive that the iron-ore smelter was crushed. The liquidation of the native armies and the disarming of the populace made the recovery of the metal-working trades impossible. The same invidious Arms Act extinguished the demand for local salt-petre, whilst the British Indian army's requirements were met by imported, synthetic explosives. The salt monopoly discriminated against the *agaris* of Konkan. The magnificent ship-building industry of Bombay was closed down to satisfy the voracious demands of native English ship-builders. Increasing imports of sugar from Mauritius and Java ruined the local manu-

facturers of sugar, *gur*, and *khandsari*.

In these and many other ways, the glorious handicrafts of India were swept away by the tidal wave of foreign importations. This process seems to have continued unabated and on a phenomenal scale right through the phase (1830s to 1870s) which we are describing here. The Indian landless proletariat had definitely emerged by the middle of the century (Tara Chand, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 1971, pp. 296, 301-4), and its ranks were being continuously augmented by the fall-out from the artisan sector. Fairly soon, at the turn of the century, a small trickle was to leave its ranks to join those of the incipient industrial army of wage-slaves and machine-tenders.

Railway construction began in our region in 1853 and this led to the hiring of substantial numbers of construction workers. The development of Bombay port and urban house-building in the new towns had already created a small core of such workers. The commercialisation of agriculture had spread the cultivation of crops like cotton, and here and there the desolate countryside began to be spotted with an occasional ginning press. Undoubtedly, the lakhs of displaced artisans outnumbered many times the insignificant openings in the class of industrial workers and such a disproportion was to remain a permanent feature throughout the British period of our history.

INDIAN ELITE

Whilst the new class forces at the bottom of the social ladder were being crystallised, certain momentous developments were occurring at the top of the pyramid. The commercial integration of India into the world economy was the main stimulant of the changes taking place at top. We will highlight the essential developments. In the words of the new gazetteer series "a commercial revolution in India may be said to have started near about 1860." (*Gaz. Of India - Indian Union*, Vol. 2, 1973, pp. 617-18)

Several developmental trends merged together and reached a climax. The internal customs barriers which were being gradually dismantled were finally done away with around this time. Railway construction was speeded up. The Suez canal was opened to traffic in 1869. The American Civil War (1861-65) resulted in an acute shortage of cotton for British textile mills.

Bombay experienced the grand "Cotton Boom" to be followed by an equally grand "Bust" in 1865-6. Millions were made by dealers, brokers, and other *nouveau riche* in the first half of the decade, and some of these gains were lost in that fateful year 1865-6.

There was an extraordinary spurt in prices (Tara Chand, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 288), and the masses suffered from an unprecedented inflationary pressure. The bursting of the cotton bubble caused the collapse of the State Bank, and led to middle class distress in the city of Bombay.

"During the five years ending with 1853-54, the export of cotton from Bombay had averaged 180 million lbs., valued at 2 1/2 millions sterling; in the five years ending 1868-69, the average quantity had risen to 424 million lbs., and the average value to nearly 20 millions sterling. In the single year 1864-65, the value was as high as £ 30, 370, 482. This period of extraordinary prosperity led to much wild speculation. The collapse came in 1865, on the termination of the American War. The bubble schemes and financial companies in Bombay city burst one after the other, and brought down in the general ruin the State Bank.... Prices have fallen very heavily, but the quantity of cotton grown is maintained. In 1875-76, the amount exported was 3,772,436 cwts., valued at £10,209,389, or nearly as large a quantity as when

speculation was at its height, though the value is diminished to one third." (W.W. Hunter - *Imp. Gaz. of India*, Vol. 2, 1881, p. 191)

Most of the profits of this commercial revolution had been garnered by foreign export and import houses and only to a smaller extent by their Indian agents. When the cotton prices fell, the imperialists and the native partners still managed to collect the same

DRAIN OF WEALTH FROM INDIA TO ENGLAND

Most of the profits of this commercial revolution had been garnered by foreign export and import houses and only to a smaller extent by their Indian agents. When the cotton prices fell, the imperialists and the native partners still managed to collect the same quantity of produce, made the same quantity of extraordinary profits by squeezing the cultivator still harder.

In the forty-three years from April 1862 to March 1905, the excess of exports over imports was 780 crores or over Rs. 18 crores per year. This surplus was used to discharge India's obligations to Great Britain arising from her political and economic dependence which were called "unrequited exports" by bureaucrats and "annual drain of wealth from India" by Indian nationalist economists.

quantity of produce, made the same quantity of extraordinary profits by squeezing the cultivator still harder. We would like to reproduce the words of R.C. Dutt :

"It is instructive, if somewhat painful to watch how this process works. The annual economic drain to Great Britain is met directly from the revenues of India. A great part of the revenues of India is derived from the soil in the shape of the land revenue. Cultivators pay their revenue or their rents by selling a large portion of the produce of their fields, keeping an insufficient stock for their own use. Exporting merchants have their agents all over the country to buy what the cultivators are compelled to sell; and railways rapidly transport these purchases to sea-ports whence they are exported to Europe. India presents a busy scene to the winter globetrotter when these transactions take place in every large town and market; but under the cheering appearance of a brisk trade lies concealed the fact that the homes and villages of a cultivating nation are denuded of their food to a fatal extent, in order to meet that annual tribute which England demands from India." (R.C. Dutt-*Economic History of India, The Victorian Age*, 1906, pp. 348-9)

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"The grain collector and the commission agent, the broker and village moneylender, the landlord, the shopkeeper and the distributor of imported goods, all benefited from the increase in foreign trade and grew rich." (Tara Chand, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 324) Only the miserable Indian peasant grew poorer and poorer. Daniel Thorner, known for his cautious conclusions, has summed up the position : "In retrospect, the net effect of British rule was to change drastically the social fabric of Indian agriculture, but to

leave virtually unaffected the basic process of production and the level of technique. The upper strata of the new agrarian society benefited handsomely. The position of the cultivators deteriorated. Capital needed for the development of agriculture was siphoned off, and the level of total output tended toward stagnation." [D. Thorner, in Simon Kuznets, etc., (ed.) *Economic Growth; Brazil, India, Japan*, 1955, p. 127]

Thus we had fierce capitalist exploitation grafted on to a feudal technological base. The drain of economic surplus from India whilst benefiting the imperialist-native elite combination, at the same time subjected the common man in India to the fury of famines. However, as this was a cumulative process whose evils visited Indians with greater and greater ferocity as the century advanced, we shall leave further discussion of this topic to our next section dealing with the period 1870s to 1905.

In the meantime, to continue with the cold statistical analysis. "The drain kept down the rate of capital formation, while concentration on agricultural products in the export trade prevented reallocation of labour and capital between agriculture and industry." (Tara Chand, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 323) This enforced backwardness of India for the greater glory of British enterprise remained a permanent feature of the Indian economic scene.

All the accumulated misery of the masses had to result in splendour for the elite. Shipping, banking and insurance grew mainly in foreign hands, but a razor-thin layer of Indians who acted as collecting and distributing agents for the alliance also prospered. The development of Bombay port, though at the expense of the older ports of Gujarat and Konkan, did benefit a few contractors and suppliers. The spread of the railway network from Bombay resulted in the setting up of small engineering workshops. Karjat grew into a railway town after 1856 (*Maharashtra State Gazetteers, Kolaba District*, 1964, p. 440). A flow of British capital to India began, first as a trickle.

"With the passing of the Charter Act of 1833, Indian colo-

BACKWARDNESS OF INDIA ENFORCED FOR THE GREATER GLORY OF BRITISH ENTERPRISE

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nial economy entered the second phase of its career. By 1833, the East India Company had reached the stage of mature capitalism which, apart from markets for industrial products, had begun to seek profitable investments of surplus funds abroad. The

Act of 1833 threw open the door to expansion of trade and investment of British capital in India. The settlement of Europeans in the interior of the country, which at first was not looked upon with favour by the East India Company was now permitted and flow of private capital from England into trade and industry of India was encouraged

"The actual flow of British capital into India till the revolt of 1857 remained very small ... The revolt of 1857 was a landmark in the flow of British capital into India The major movement of British capital between 1857 and 1865 was towards India. Railways received special attention, because their extension served the imperial interest in more than one way. They facilitated the rapid movement of troops from one place to another. They also provided profitable investment for British capital, promoted export of locomotives, rolling stock, steel, machinery and other equipment from England, brought about extension of market for British manufactures in the interior of India and facilitated collection of foodgrains, raw cotton and other agricultural produce from the markets of India for export to Great Britain ... The total British investment in India between 1854 (when the first railway line was opened between Bombay and Thana) and 1869 is estimated

at £150 millions The total investment of British capital made in India upto 1910, were estimated at 547 crores of rupees as against 441 crores in 1896 and 225 crores in 1870." (*Gazetteer of India, Indian Union, vol. 2, 1973, pp. 616-17*)

The flow of capital into India was largely illusory though some small amounts which could be spared from the demands of the racially more congenial directions of U.S.A. and the 'white dominions' might have entered India. As Leyland Jenks phrased it, the new British capital "interests represented simply portions of Indian spoil and revenue reinvested in India. They did not constitute an export of British capital." (quoted, *ibid.*, p. 616) The same Jenks makes the following remark regarding the spoils extracted from India :

"The burden that it was found convenient to charge to India seemed preposterous. The cost of the mutiny, the price of the transfer of the Company's rights to the Crown, the expense of

simultaneous wars against China and Abyssinia (in which recruits from the Konkan and the Deccan were prominent), every governmental item in London that remotely related to India down to fees of the charwoman in India House and expenses of the ships that sailed but did not participate in the hostilities, and the cost of Indian regiments for six months' training at home before they sailed - all were charged to the account of the unrepresented ryot." (quoted by Tara Chand, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 318)

To this infamous list, Tara Chand adds : "The Sultan of Turkey visited London in 1868 in state and his official ball was arranged at the India Office and the bill charged to India" (*ibid.*, pp. 318-19). It is with reference to these fantastic charges that Ramsay

Macdonald wrote : "And these dead charges under a foreign government are doubly serious for they are not only drawn from Indian production, but are withdrawn from India itself." (The Government of India' p. 148 quoted by Tara Chand, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 318)

Helen Lamb is of the same opinion as L. Jenks :

"There was apparent no appreciable movement of British capital to India during the early years of British rule ... Rather, money was made in India and remitted to England... There is no reliable estimate of how much British capital was infact reinvested in India... Actually, it is impossible to measure British investment in

NEW CLASSES APPEAR ON THE INDIAN SOCIAL SCENE

The principal base of the native industrial capitalist class was cotton mills whose development belongs to our next period; though a start was made by Mr. Davar near Bombay City as early as 1854. We have already noted the crystallisation of the new class of the agricultural proletariat and the development of a section of it further into the industrial proletariat. Corresponding to these classes, there arose the native bourgeoisie of the countryside and the urban areas.

"Both the cultivation and collection of cotton from the interior remained in Indian hands. This helped to bring into existence a body of middle men, more particularly in the Deccan districts of the Bombay Presidency, in the Central Provinces, and in Berar, who specialised in financing the cultivation of cotton and in its trade. People with small capital entered into the cotton business and made fortunes for themselves both from the cultivation and from trade." (Tara Chand, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 161).

Thus the new bourgeois class arose partly from land, partly from commerce, and partly from small industry. This class was entirely different from the medieval merchant class.

"The Indian *nouveau riche* imitated the example of the foreigners whom they assisted and served. So the Indian manner of the old merchant class disappeared, and instead of the humble, fearful merchant of the Middle Ages who lived in constant dread of the king and his officials and was therefore obliged to hide his substance, his successor made an ostentatious display of his wealth He had few scruples in business. For him the end-amassing of wealth - justified all means. He had shaken off the traditional restraints on his occupation and acquired the agility to transfer his activity to any business which promised large and speedy profit."

India because of the difficulty in calculating the amount of reinvestment of profits made in India. Estimates for the end of the 1920s and the beginnings of the 1930s range anywhere from £354 million to £1 billion depending on the methods used and the bias of the estimators." (*op. cit.*, pp. 471, 475)

Much of the capital reinvested out of Indian loot went into tea plantations, coal mining and jute textiles manufacturing and this did not concern the area of our study. However, investments in railways did affect our area and so did the investment, both foreign and indigenous, in extension of telegraph lines, and other communications, saw mills, leather-working and tanning establishments and printing presses (For investments in telegraph line see Tara Chand, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 309). Printing presses were started in Bombay in the 18th century itself, but Marzban's Bombay Samachar Press of 1822 was a landmark (S. Natarajan, *op. cit.*, pp. 19, 28). Similar printing establishments came up in Satara

in 1867 (*Maharashtra State Gazetteers, Satara District, 1963, p. 397*), and in Kolaba in 1907 (*Ibid., Kolaba District, 1964, p. 355*).

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Simultaneously with the crystallisation of the small capitalist class, there grew up a much bigger, modern urban middle class. This urban middle class consisted in the main of two segments, that of the subordinate services and of the professionals. Both of them were an outgrowth of western education which began at the school level as a result of a directive issued by Charles Wood, the then President of the East India Company and at the collegiate level as a consequence of the so-called 'Observations' of Charles Grant, another President of the Company.

British commentators have sought to make out that English or Western education was a great boon conferred by them upon

India. It was nothing of the sort. It was a matter of pounds, shillings and pence. Given the irreducible minimum amount which had to be drained from India in order to justify the whole imperialist operation in the eyes of the ruling capitalist class of Britain, it was absolutely necessary to take the following steps :

(i) To extend and deepen the Indian market as an absorber of British industrial products (see B.D. Basu, *op. cit.*, pp. 625-6, and 795).

(ii) To organise the Indian market as a supplier of raw materials for British industry, as well as of such products, raw, semi-finished and finished, to third countries, to the extent necessary to balance British deficits in the trade with those third countries.

(iii) To develop India as a field for surplus British capital which could yield higher levels of profit than similar enterprises at home

(see *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, in Lenin, *Collected Works*, Volume 22, 1964, p. 240 ff).

(iv) To manage the entire colonial economy of India both in the administrative and business sectors at the lowest possible cost.

It was thus incumbent on the colonial administration to institute an educational system which would feed a sufficient number of clerks, a sufficient number of lawyers, a sufficient number of doctors, and so on, who could man their governmental and commercial-industrial enterprises at attractively low salaries and emoluments. Thus, for instance, medical education in India

ENGLISH EDUCATION TO PROVIDE CHEAP CLERKS FOR COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION

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grew as an offshoot of :

(a) The demand for veterinary staff to attend to cavalry regiments of the army, and

(b) To control epidemics in those cities and towns where Englishmen were resident or likely to be resident, particularly as viruses and bacteria were not known to possess any racialist bias (Nurullah and Naik - *History of Education in India, 1943, p. 563*). In the same manner, to develop communications, in order to extend and deepen the Indian market, it was necessary to recruit low-paid civil engineers. That is exactly what the Roorkee Engineering School (later College) set out to do (*Ibid.*, pp. 557 ff) In order to help the moneylenders and other rural rich to collect grains, oilseeds, fibres, tobacco, leather, and such other agricultural produce or agro-linked commodities, it was necessary to strengthen their hands and tighten their stranglehold over the masses by judicial processes. Thus lawyers were needed to help

them expropriate the peasantry through peaceful and orderly methods.

Once having become dominant over the sub-continent, i.e. after the General Settlement of 1818, it was necessary to inspire awe amongst the masses. One of the most effective weapons in so distancing the administration from its victims was to conduct all the business of the government in English. But this required thousands of English-knowing subordinates or literally "dubashes" (etymology : from 'dubhashia' meaning "those who know two languages"). Thus English education spread in ever-widening circles through the length and the breadth of the country. Every one of those early graduates who came out of the universities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay was sure of a government job and in fact became quite prominent in public life. (The problem of the educated unemployed did not appear in an acute form in India till after the first world war.) For instance, amongst the earliest B.As and L.L.Bs of the Bombay University were M.G. Ranade, R.G. Bhandarkar, B.M. Wagle and V.B. Modak, who achieved public eminence in diverse fields.

From the moment of their birth, these middle classes belonging to the services, professions, and private commercial, banking, shipping and insurance work were Janus-headed: one of their faces was turned towards the west since they had been bought over body and soul by their alien masters. The other face was turned towards their countrymen from whose ranks they had risen and whose material and moral pressure they constantly needed in order to improve their own careers. It is this double-facedness which was to characterise all the political and social currents of the period we are discussing and in which the middle class either participated or predominated.

THE FIRST WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

On a national scale, the most important political movement of the period was the first war of independence which the British historians and bureaucrats have designated as the Indian Mutiny of 1857. However, for the area we have chosen (Konkan and Deccan), the events of 1857 made little or no impact.

Some minor conspiratorial confabulations amongst a few dissatisfied and lowly retainers of feudalists do seem to have occurred. Such possibly was the alleged attempt by Rango Bapuji Gupte, the agent of the Satara King, Pratapsingh and of his successor, Shahu. Rango Bapuji seems to have been an extraordinary man who lived in England for 14 years from 1839 to 1854, pleading his clients' case till he became literally penniless and had to be assisted to return by the British government. His intrigues were nipped in the bud. (For Rango Bapuji's career see *Maharashtra State Gazetteers, Satara District, 1963*, pp. 169, 175-78; and *Source Material for A History of the Freedom Movement of India*, vol. 1, 1957, pp. 179-193. Also see *Bombay Gazetteer old series, 1885*, vol. 19, *Satara*, pp. 318-19.)

There were some minor disturbances at the other end of Western Maharashtra involving the Kolis of Khandesh, a few soldiers stationed in Bombay town, and in the little state of Peint in Nasik district (see respectively pp. 297-319, 292-297, 327-347 in *A Source Material, etc.*, referred to above).

(Source : *Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Bombay University, 1976*)

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BHOPAL TRAGEDY: A LEGAL DEBACLE

T.R.Chauhan & Others

After 12 1/2 years of the disaster in Bhopal on December 2-3, 1984, the victims of the tragedy have been completely forgotten by our legal system. It is necessary to document and examine the legal history of the Bhopal litigation in order to identify the major milestones on the road to legal disaster.

There is no denying the fact that the objective situation was laid out in the form of the choice of technology, the trade secrecy surrounding the manufacture of the chemical MIC; the storage of large quantities in an unsafe place, the location of the plant in the heart of a human settlement and refusal to heed warnings from previous accidents. These factors ensured that the disaster would take place sooner or later.

Union Carbide started producing pesticides in India, in 1969, but by 1984, its profits started dwindling and its capacity was underutilised. The plant was neglected and rundown. Despite warnings given by the local journalists, nobody took note as the people at risk were poor slum dwellers who lived in the vicinity of the Plant.

When the actual disaster took place, the company officials gave a misleading picture of the tragedy. The toxic nature of MIC was not confirmed, albeit 2500 people perished in the streets within hours of the leak. NO efforts were made by them to rush medical assistance or to prescribe a line of treatment. Union Carbide neither confirmed the nature of toxic gases nor the extent of injury as both these factors could cause them to pay heavy amount of compensations to the victims of the tragedy.

The state of Madhya Pradesh set up a Commission of Enquiry into the tragedy, in order to delay matters! Union Carbide the parent company, refused to participate in the Enquiry. Union Carbide of India, Ltd. the local outfit refused to disclose the data relating to MIC and its toxic effects claiming trade secrecy, i.e. capitalist privilege. Nobody took the work of the Commission seriously and it was wound

up before it could complete its work.

American lawyers seeing this as an opportunity to fight the world's biggest law suit flew to Bhopal in a desperate attempt to sign the surviving victims as clients. Equipped with thumb impressions on powers of attorney, they flew back and filed several suits in different District Courts in the US claiming billions of dollars as compensation. Their sole aim may have been to make a fast buck by entering into deals with Union Carbide, whereupon they could claim 33% of settled amount as contingency fees. But, objectively, the victims of the Bhopal tragedy could have received 67% of the billions of dollars of compensatory settlements from Union Carbide had the GOI supervised the American lawyers and had the claims of victims been pursued vigorously!

Instead of doing this simple thing, the GOI, in March 1985, passed the Bhopal Gas Leak Disaster (Processing of Claims) Act. Ostensibly, the Act was intended to wrest control of the proposed litigation from the hands of the American lawyers. In reality, the Act was intended to bail out Union Carbide through a private settlement with corrupt GOI bureaucrats! The Act gave the GOI the statutory right to represent all victims in or outside (sic!) India. It also authorised the GOI to bring an action in the US.

Secondly, and again ostensibly, the Act was intended to be a measure of public support to the victims who were in need of an agency to justify their claims against a multinational corporation. Actually, it was planned to scuttle the interests of the victims, as it turned out!

Thirdly, Indian law contained no provisions for class actions in personal injury cases, and Indian courts would not be able to cope with adjudicating several lakhs of individual cases. The question is, if a special Bhopal Relief Act could be passed, why could an Act not be passed to facilitate class action by victims, in all future industrial disaster cases? Why should 'class action' be confined to Bhopal Un-

ion Carbide matter only?

The Bhopal Act consolidated the claims and constituted the victims into a class. However one major drawback of the Act was, it did not authorise the victims to participate in the adjudication process. The drawback paved the way ultimately for Union Carbide to settle with the Government without the consent of the individual victims!

Armed with this Act, GOI joined the litigation in April 1985. The judicial panel on multidistrict litigation in the US, had ruled in 1985, that the cases would be heard by Judge J.F. Keenan.

At this stage, Union Carbide moved an application, to dismiss the suit on grounds of 'forum non conveniens'. The premise of the application was that Union Carbide would be willing to face proceedings in India which would be the only available forum in which it could be sued. Government of India however insisted that the US was a more convenient forum.

The GOI argued that the disaster was mainly connected with US as i) the defective plant was designed in US; ii) all decisions regarding safety were taken by Union Carbide; iii) the disaster should be of great concern to US as it was American Corporation which had exported the toxic material to the third world; iv) US ought to have an interest in ensuring that the US Multinational Corporations are disciplined in their relationships with the third world countries; which were unequal and exploitative relationships.

In the Bhopal proceedings, Union Carbide engaged the services of NA Palkhivala eminent Senior Lawyer in India in support of Union Carbide claim that the suit should be tried in India.

Relying on the affidavit filed by NA Palkhivala and J B Dadachanji. Judge Keenan decided in 1986, that the case be heard in India. It is for Palkhivala's conscience to consider the dirty role he played in the Bhopal tragedy.

He dismissed the victims' suit on the condition that Union Carbide consent and submit to the Jurisdiction of the Indian Courts; agree to satisfy any judgement of the Indian Courts; satisfy minimal "due process"; and be subject to "discovery" under US Federal Rules. It was not legal, but extra-legal considerations that helped Judge Keenan to dismiss the suit.

Had the suit been tried in the USA, not only on the question of safety standards, but also on compensations, the story would have been different. For American Courts to award low levels of compensa-

MANKIND DEMANDS JUSTICE FOR BHOPAL VICTIMS

Twelve and a half years after the tragic events of Dec 3rd 1984 at the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, the victims of the tragedy are still crying out for justice.

Mankind demands a reopening of the case.

Murder is never time-barred.

Secondly, the tardiness of the legal process itself is a ground for a revision application.

The legal process was *ab initio* vitiated by a shameful surrender on the part of our Supreme Court and it is in the fitness of things that with a change in the Government at the Centre, a new look may be given to the situation and the original demand of the GOI, made in 1986, for damages of \$ 3.3 billion against Union Carbide may be reinstated. (Unless this claim is itself to be enhanced, due to new medical facts, inflation, etc.)

It was on the shameful day of Feb 14th 1989 that the Supreme Court allowed the Union Carbide to get away with murder, with a payment of just US \$ 470 millions in full and final settlement of its Civil and Criminal liabilities.

The same Supreme Court, which is presently claiming to be judicially active in the interests of the people of India and which has recently fined Satish Sharma and Sheela Kaul, ex-ministers, Rs 50 and 60 lakhs respectively, should immediately apprehend Warren Anderson, Chairman of Union Carbide, and extract from him and his Company full payment, at American yardstick of damages, for the victims of the Bhopal tragedy. **Indian citizens are not second class citizens in the world and they must get what is due to them by the highest international standards. Just because the Bhopal victims were poor and slum dwellers, probably belonging to the minority community and lower castes, that is no reason to humiliate them and discriminate against them.** The Bhopal Gas Leak Disaster (Processing of Claims) Act, 1985, is unconstitutional and invalid. Since it did not provide for participation of the victims in the adjudication process. This goes against all tenets of due process and fair play. Neither the government of India nor any of its administrative wings, including the judiciary, has the right to arrogate to itself the power to decide the destiny of any section of the Indian people, in any case of civil and criminal liability, without consultation with the victimised citizens.

Why did the Supreme Court allow the Union Carbide Company to stand before it and allow it to argue its case when its hands were **not clean**?

1. Union Carbide had attacked our Judicial System and held in contempt individual judges and challenged openly the authority of our courts, whilst all the time pleading in American courts that they would comply with the jurisdiction of the Indian Courts.

2. Union Carbide had disclaimed all responsibility for the misdeeds committed by its Indian subsidiary and pleaded that they had entered into a private agreement with the subsidiary absolving the parent multinational of all liability in case of personal injuries. This is a case of the right hand being not responsible for the crimes committed by the left hand, though the directing brain is the same!

3. At a crucial stage, to escape the jurisdiction of Indian Courts, the Union Carbide Corporation transferred millions of dollars out of India. This itself demonstrates malafides and deserves severe chastisement. Why was the doctrine of "clean hands" not applied to Union Carbide and to Warren Anderson by the Supreme Court?

Mankind demands that whatever maybe the mistakes of the past, the Supreme Court is an organ of the sovereign Government of India. It has inherent unchallengeable rights to review its errors of the past. It is constitutionally enjoined upon the Supreme Court to preserve the self-respect and dignity of the Indian people. If a lapse has happened in 1989, so what? It can be, and should be, righted! All MNCs and TNCs of the world should be warned that they cannot play with the lives of Indians.

4. At the time of the Supreme Court miscarriage of justice in 1989, sufficient knowledge of poisonous chemicals like MIC, the medical treatment of such poisoning, long term effects, and other scientific details were not available, and only after years of research that the ill-consequences of such tragedies have become known, so that it is fit and proper that the old judgement should be revised with the help of the latest available scientific and medical data.

5. The old bribes paid to Congress rulers and their *naukarshahs* cannot forever prevent reconsideration. Therefore, reconsideration is inevitable in the new political and administrative context. The lapse of 12 ½ years from the date of the tragedy, and 8 ½ years from the Supreme Court sell-out, once again comes into play and strengthens the case for urgent reconsideration.

The present situation in Bhopal is a shameful blot on the sovereign rights of the people of India! It is also a blot on our judicial system!

tion on the basis of lower standard of living prevalent in the Third World, would obviously have been discriminatory and might have been challenged by the lobby of other 'industrial class action' lawyers ! Judge Keenan accepted the UC plea that Indian Courts had often been forced to become "creative" in enforcing fundamental rights; the major portion of the evidence was in India, the plant was in India and witnesses were more readily available in India.

He declined to accept the argument that keeping the case in the US would force US multinationals to accept responsibilities for the wrongs committed by their subsidiaries overseas, force them to accept responsibility for double standards, and be a deterrent against future accidents.

During the forum hearing Union Carbide made an offer of US \$ 350 million to the private plaintiffs, lawyers, which was readily agreed to by them, and they demanded "fairness" hearing. Perhaps, this was an American legal ploy to get Interim Relief and then go on ! As GOI refused to accept this offer, the motion fell through. (Ultimately, see below, the GOI settled for \$ 470 mln. But \$ 370 mln, in mid-eighties, was perhaps more than \$ 470 mln. in 1989 !)

GOI did not appeal against Judge Keenan's decision, through private plaintiffs' lawyers as well as Union Carbide did. Union Carbide appealed against the conditions imposed by Judge Keenan. They argued that Indian Courts could not be trusted to observe "due process".

The court of appeal upheld Keenan's decision but modified Keenan's conditions. **The conditions of "minimal due process" and complying with "discovery rules" were deleted.**

In September 1986, the GOI filed a suit in the District Court at Bhopal. The Judge in this case on application of GOI, passed an order restraining Union Carbide from disposing off its assets worldwide.

India had claimed \$ 3.3 billion in damages. India's suit was against Union Carbide and not against UCIL, as India had claimed that Union Carbide was sought to be held liable in Tort for negligence, strict liability and absolute liability. Union Carbide had designed a faulty plant, was aware of the ultra-hazardous nature of MIC, yet failed to maintain safety standards. GOI further argued that Union Carbide had permitted the storage of large quantities of hazardous MIC, but did not share this information with GOI. **Union Carbide had relied on agreement with UCIL,** under which Union Carbide was absolved of all responsibility for personal injury. Apparently, the Left hand did not know what the Right was doing, and whilst the Brain was located in the USA ! GOI however, argued that the agreement was not binding on it. In short, GOI has based its claim on negligence and strict liability.

While refuting all the charges, Union Carbide argued that the plant was managed and controlled only by Indians acting under head office instructions ! And also maintained that the disaster was due to an act of sabotage without naming the saboteur. They filed a counter-claim against the Union of India and state of MP on the ground that both knew about the toxic nature of MIC, but took no steps to see that there were no human settlements in the vicinity, (though the US company had voluntarily located its plant in the heart of a major Indian city !) The counter-claim was to disown liability.

Justice Deo, before whom the suit was pending, made efforts to get the parties to agree to an out of court settlement. While the negotiations were underway, certain social organisations came forward and made application for interim relief as Government had not granted any worthwhile relief to the victims nor

programmed health services.

It is a mystery why the GOI had not granted any Interim Relief for several years ! In December 1987, Judge Deo awarded US \$ 270 million as interim compensation. As Indian law does not contain a provision empowering judges to grant interim damages in personal injury cases, why this law was not changed, when a new Bhopal Relief Act could be passed, is another puzzle ! Union Carbide appealed to High Court making it clear that the judgement was perverse and therefore they would not pay up and they also demanded that Judge Deo should 'recuse' himself from the case as his judgement was prejudged and biased. GOI took contempt of court action against Union Carbide Counsel for this strategy in the case.

In April 1988, Justice S.K. Seth of the M.P. High Court asked Union Carbide to pay interim damages of US \$ 170 million. Based on theory of absolute liability, he held Union Carbide *prima facie* liable to compensate the victims. He also held that Union Carbide had major control over UCIL and interim compensation should be paid on grounds of 'Justice, Equity and Good Conscience.' However the amount of interim compensation could not be exactly quantified as no figures of actual extent of injury had been presented to him.

In February 1989, when the case came to be settled, Justice Seth went by figures of 2500 dead and 30,000 seriously injured as stated by Union of India. Estimating the total that would be payable on final hearing, he ordered payment of half, amounting to US \$ 170 million.

Union Carbide filed an appeal against the judgement and simply refused to pay in utter defiance of the High Court Order. **In spite of this the Indian Supreme Court heard Union Carbide appeals with all the patience and respect.** After all, Union Carbide was a multinational and the GOI under the policy of "globalisation" was bound to pay attention to multinationals especially from the USA.

Union Carbide characterised Justice Seth's order as perverse, and condemned the Shriram Judgement relied on by Justice Seth as motivated by the Bhopal disaster and written for it. They questioned the validity of absolute liability theory as being part of the Indian law. Supreme Court had to decide on three issues through this appeal of Union Carbide.

1) Do Courts have power to grant interim relief in personal injury cases?

2) Was Shriram Judgement good law?

3) Could Union Carbide be held liable at all for the disaster which occurred through the Indian Subsidiary UCIL? **In the end, the Supreme Court neither called upon the Union Carbide to comply with the interim order nor did the GOI apply to hold Union Carbide liable for contempt of Court.** After all, good relations had to be preserved with the mighty dollar!

While denying liability, Union Carbide at every step persisted in trying to arrive at a full and final settlement. Negotiations were held with the Union of India as the sole representative of the victims. The case was being heard in Supreme Court from day to day. On February 14, 1989, Union Carbide agreed to pay **US \$ 470 million in full and final settlement of its Civil and Criminal liabilities.**

There was unanimous condemnation of the settlement by victim groups and they announced that they were going to challenge the settlement. **Union Carbide as a reaction to this quickly transferred the money from India to US** in order to evade the Jurisdiction of the Indian Courts. Once this was done there was no need to submit to the Jurisdiction of the Indian Courts. The

Supreme Court however directed Union Carbide to continue to submit to the Jurisdiction of the Indian Courts until the challenge to the validity of settlement was decided. Faced with national criticism the Court felt compelled to justify the settlement as fair. In its May 4, 1989 order, the Court justified the amount as being based on the number of deaths at 2660 and injuries at 30,000 to 40,000. It also promised that all those who evoked corrective process in accordance with laws shall be heard. There was another group of petitioners however who challenged the Act itself. The Court upheld the validity of the Act on the ground that Government of India was acting in a 'parens patriae' capacity which, of course, was a joke! **The judge agreed that the victims had not been heard before the settlement but at the same time refused to strike down the Act on the ground that it violated 'due process' i.e., the right to be heard.**

The challenge to the settlement was heard in 1990. The new government of V.P. Singh announced an interim relief programme. It also announced that it would support the challenge to the Settlement. Attorney General concentrated his attack on the grant of criminal immunity and quashing of criminal proceedings. The debate was entirely on the power of the court to quash the criminal proceedings.

In late 1991, the Supreme Court announced the judgement upholding the Settlement. The Court asserted that it had power to quash criminal proceedings in appropriate cases, but that in this case there were no public interest grounds for merely 2660 had died and only 30/40,000 had been injured and all of them were poor slum dwellers !. In doing so the petitioners argued that Union Carbide and GOI had agreed to a composite indivisible settlement and the dropping of the criminal proceedings was part of the consideration for the agreement to pay damages and hence the entire settlement was bad. The Court counter-argued that it might have been the motive but not the consideration for the settlement. **It ultimately agreed to restore the criminal proceedings.**

To the claim for medical surveillance, the Court directed that Union Carbide will pay Rs 50 crore towards construction of well-equipped hospital. Union Carbide applied to the Supreme Court for permission to sell its share holding in UCIL. So that the sale proceeds could go towards the hospital building, since, 50 crores, according to Union Carbide, was the sum of its entire international assets ! The shares were attached by the criminal court as both Union Carbide and Warren Anderson had been declared

absconders and had refused to stand trial. **The Supreme Court permitted the attachment to be lifted and the shares to be sold, since Union Carbide was in financial difficulties !**

The greatest victory for Union Carbide came when the Supreme Court accepted the settlement as full and final meaning that Union Carbide was no longer subject to the jurisdiction of Indian Courts. The conditions of Judge Keenan's judgement had been fulfilled and Union Carbide was discharged of any obligation to continue to be subject to the jurisdiction of Indian Courts.

The question comes to mind as to what did this long drawn out legal battle culminate in ? Criminal proceedings were restored and US \$ 470 millions were placed in the hands of the Claims Commissioners. An arrest warrant was issued against Warren Anderson but no efforts were made for his extradition to India. Union Carbide was restrained from disposing off its US \$ 7 million share holding in UCIL. The case against the Indian officials of Union Carbide has been ordered for hearing.

As for the compensation, each claimant is required to submit an individual claim. The Claim Commissioner is relying on the medical exercise conducted by the state of M.P. Only fraction of the claims have been adjudicated.

After a lapse of 12 ½ years a sizeable number of cases to the extent of 2,25,000 have not even been scrutinised ! On the one hand, Union Carbide and Warren Anderson have been declared

as absconders as they have refused to appear before the Court. While on the other hand, the Court has entertained the request of UCIL & Warren Anderson to sell these very shares for the construction of a hospital for the victims.

By order of February 14, 1994, the Supreme Court lifted the attachment and permitted the sale of Union Carbide shares in UCIL. The negotiations for sale of shares are still underway and **what we have after 12 ½ years is that the victims are forgotten, the Civil Suit is finished and the Criminal proceedings reduced to meaningless exercises.**

What does one learn from this legal drama enacted in our country ? **It reveals that both Government and Supreme Court had from time to time aided Union Carbide covertly to wriggle out of the legal tangle. This is evident from the fact that when**

FINAL COMPENSATION PAYMENTS TO VICTIMS

(as of August 31, 1994)

Deaths :

• Cases heard	11,171
• Cases cleared	6,708
• Rs. 59.47 crore disbursed	

Personal Injury :

• Partial Disability	
• Cases disposed of	1,083
• Rs. 6.64 crore disbursed	

• Temporary Partial Disability (reduced economic activity)	
• Cases disposed of	15,467
• Rs. 76.75 crore disbursed	

• Injury of Utmost Severity	
• Cases disposed of	8
• Rs. 0.15 crore disbursed	

• Minor Injury	
• Cases admitted	66,709
• Cases disposed of	65,965
• Rs. 162.80 crore disbursed	

Total Cases	82,523
Crores disbursed	Rs. 246.35
Settlement Fund in crores	Rs. 1482

Union Carbide had refused to pay up, Supreme Court had consciously allowed its petition to be admitted and heard the case thereby undermining its own authority.

Even after hearing the case, the Supreme Court had not resolved any of the issues involved, viz.

1. Do courts have power to grant interim relief in personal injury cases ?

2. Was Shiram Judgement good law ?

3. Could Union Carbide be held liable at all for the disaster which occurred through its Indian Subsidiary ?

GOI on the other hand could have guaranteed the repayment of the amount of interim relief to take care of 'due process' objections that Union Carbide could possibly raise in American Courts at the stage of enforcement of the interim judgement. Neither Supreme Court asked Union Carbide to comply with the interim order nor did GOI apply to hold Union Carbide liable for contempt of court !

Keeping aside the main issues, the lower courts, GOI and Supreme Court arrived at a settlement which was not at all acceptable to the victims of the tragedy. When there was a hue and cry against the settlement by victim groups, the only explanation offered was that it was necessary to provide immediate relief. This was the weakest possible argument when it was the duty of GOI to provide 'immediate relief' under the Constitution and the Bhopal Act. Besides this was one case, which could have withstood the hurdles of delays as the entire case was underwritten by Government of India. All these parties i.e. GOI, Supreme Court and Union Carbide knew that the victims had not been consulted before the settlement was signed and this itself consti-

tuted gross violation of 'due process' rights to the victims. The settlement when arrived at between two parties i.e. GOI and Union Carbide, could have been publicly announced and filed in District Court at Bhopal for fairness hearing. This was not done, but on the contrary, the criminal proceedings were quashed and Union Carbide was allowed to get away with murder !

The role of the court was to see that the settlement was not collusive; that it was fair; that it was not opposed to any public policy or to any provision of law; and that it was acceptable to the vast majority of the victims. **THE COURT HAD FAILED ON ALL THESE COUNTS.** This clearly goes to show that the failure of the Bhopal litigation is mainly a failure of the Indian judiciary to hold the multinationals accountable for their actions on Indian soil. Further, while justifying the amount of settlement on the number of deaths at 2660 and injuries at 30,000-40,000, when these figures were taken in 1989, the medical exercise was nowhere near completion and the number of claimants were actually 5 lakhs, the nature of their injuries were not ascertained, and the measure of damages were not known.

As far as the challenge to the Act itself was concerned the Judgement delivered on this issue goes into the question of validity of the settlement itself ! Some comprador elements have questioned the strategy of challenging the Act as unconstitutional. **Yet this issue is central to an understanding of what went wrong in the Bhopal case. Monopolising and total appropriation of the disaster claims by the Government led to the ultimate sellout.**

[Retrospect based on T.R. Chauhan and Others : *Bhopal, The Inside Story*, 1994]

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HINDU-MUSLIM FERTILITY DIFFERENTIALS IN INDIA

Malika B. Mistry

Introduction

Hindu-Muslim differentials in fertility and consequently in population growth have not been discussed in public fora and have become politically and socially sensitive issues. Therefore an objective assessment of this problem is necessary.

Objectives

The objectives of this paper are : To study the Hindu-Muslim growth differentials on a scientific basis; to find whether Muslims can become a majority at the country level; to identify and measure Hindu-Muslim fertility differentials; to examine the proximate determinants such as nuptiality and contraception that account for fertility differentials; to assess future prospects for the narrowing down of Hindu-Muslim fertility differentials.

Hindu-Muslim population growth rate differentials

During the last several decades the proportion of Muslims in India's population has been steadily increasing while the proportion of Hindus is steadily falling. Taking the subcontinent as a whole (undivided India) the Muslim share increased from 20 per cent in 1881 to 24 per cent in 1941 while the share of Hindus declined from 75 per cent to about 69 per cent. During the period 1951-91, in India itself, the Muslim proportion increased from a little less than 10 per cent to more than 11 per cent while the Hindu proportion declined from 85 per cent to less than 83 per cent (Table 1).

To have a clearer picture we need to consider growth rate differentials between two populations rather than absolute growth rates. So Hindu-Muslim population growth differentials by decade (HMGD) are

calculated (Table 1). The HMGD for the decades 1881-91 to 1931-41 shows no consistent trend. For the period 1951-91, HMGD shows a declining trend except for the decade 1981-91. The decade 1951-61 has the highest value of HMGD at 0.95. This figure cannot be depended upon as during the decade 1950-60, unsettled conditions existed in the aftermath of Partition. In the 1981 Census, Assam was excluded and so the rate for the decade 1971-81 is smaller (0.35) compared to the decade 1961-71. Therefore the rate for the Indian Republic, excluding the State of Assam was calculated to yield comparable figures (not given here). Here too HMGD showed a declining trend. Even though the HMGD for the decade 1981-91 has unexpectedly increased, the Hindu-Muslim growth differential may be expected to narrow down in future.

Even if the present growth rate differentials continue over a long period, the question arises whether Muslims can ever become a numerically dominant community in a reasonable time span, in the country as a whole. According to the 1991 census, Muslims form only 11.7 per cent of the total population of India. But in certain urban centres where they constitute more than 25 per cent, such as Lucknow Urban Agglomeration (UA), Hyderabad UA and Miraj Municipality (from Maharashtra), if the annual geometric growth rates observed for 1981-91 for Muslims (2.0 per cent) and Hindus (2.1 per cent) continue, then the Muslims could numerically exceed the Hindus in the long run. For cities, migration is an important component of growth. In future if Muslim migration decreases or remains at the same level while Hindu

migration increases, the proportion of Muslims in that particular city may fall.

To illustrate how long it takes for a minority group with a higher growth rate than the rest of the population to attain numerical majority, Table 2 has been constructed. The table shows for the two parameters, initial percentage of the minority group and the difference in the annual exponential growth rates between the minority group and the rest of the population, what percentage the minority group constitutes after 50, 100, 150 and 200 years. The formula used is :

$$q_t = 1/[1 + (P_1/P_2) \cdot e^{(r_1 - r_2)t}]$$

where P_1 = initial percentage of the rest of the population.

P_2 = initial percentage in the minority group with $P_1 + P_2 = 1$.

q_t = percentage in minority group after 't' years.

r_1 = annual exponential rate of growth for the rest of the population, and

r_2 = annual exponential rate of growth for the minority group.

It is assumed that r_1 and r_2 remain constant over the projection period of 200 years. Thus the model can only determine the percentage in the minority group in future years on the assumption that the rates of growth do not change. The model shows that the difference in growth rates ($r_1 - r_2$), and not the actual levels of r_1 and r_2 , determine the future population composition. The initial ratio for the two groups (P_1/P_2) is also needed for this.

Depending upon the initial percentage of the minority group we consider three situations : when the percentage is 10, 25 and 50. Where the initial percentage P_2 is 10 and the annual growth rate differential ($r_1 - r_2$) is 0.002, after 50 years q_t becomes 10.9 per cent, after 100 years 12 per cent, after 150 years 13 per cent and after 200 years 14.2 per cent. As against this, when ($r_1 - r_2$) is 0.006, q_t becomes 13 per cent, 16.8 per cent, 21.5 per cent and 27 per cent after 50, 100, 150 and 200 years.

Where the initial population percentage (P_2) is at the highest level of 50, with ($r_1 - r_2$) 0.002, q_t becomes 52.5 per cent, 55 per cent, 57.4 per cent and 59.9 per cent after 50, 100, 150 and 200 years respectively. When ($r_1 - r_2$) 0.006, q_t becomes 57.4 per cent, 64.6 per cent, 71.1 per cent and 76.8 per cent after 50, 100, 150 and 200 years respectively.

The model shows that a minority can

Table 1 : Hindu-Muslim Mean Annual Growth Rate Differential for India for Decades 1881-91 to 1981-91

Census Year	Percentage Hindus	Percentage Muslims	Percentage Hindu-Muslim mean annual growth rate differential by decade
Undivided India			
1881	75.09	19.97	-
1891	74.24	20.41	0.34
1901	72.87	21.88	0.88
1911	71.68	22.39	0.39
1921	70.73	23.23	0.50
1931	70.67	23.49	0.12
1941	69.46	24.28	0.51
1881-1941			0.46
Indian Republic			
1951	84.98	9.91	-
1961	83.51	10.69	0.95
1971	82.72	11.21	0.58
1981*	82.64	11.35	0.35
1991**	82.41	11.67	0.80
1951-1991+			0.49

* Excludes the state of Assam where the census of 1981 could not be conducted.
 ** Excludes the states of Assam and Jammu and Kashmir (where 1991 census could not be conducted).
 + Excludes the state of Assam in 1981 and Assam and Jammu and Kashmir in 1991.
 See text for explanation.
 Source : Population percentage figures of Hindus and Muslims for the years 1881-1994 are taken from Davis, K., 1951, p. 178. For the period 1951-1991, the figures from the respective censuses were used.

become a majority, only when three conditions are jointly met : (i) the minority constitutes a significant proportion (above 25 per cent) of the total population, (ii) the population growth differential ($r_1 - r_2$) is large (more than 0.005) and (iii) the time period involved is long (over 200 years). An observation of Indian scene reveals that even though differential annual growth rate of Muslims and Hindus is around 0.008 currently (vide Table 1), at national level Muslims constitute only 11.7 % (according to 1991 Census). With the exception of the Kashmir valley, the pockets in which Muslims constitute 25% or more, whether rural or urban, are few. Following the method explained earlier, one can say that, at national level, Muslims cannot attain a majority in the near or far future. But in certain places, as mentioned earlier, they may constitute equal numbers with Hindus after 200 years if the present growth differential persists. Further, 200 years is a long period of time during which changes are bound to take place in the society leading to a reduction in the difference between Hindu and Muslim growth rates.

The above model can't be used to project the population of a group backwards into the past. At present if the Muslim population (P_2) is assumed to be 13% and the annual growth rate differential is assumed to be 0.0006 over the last 50 years then the Muslim population may be placed at 10% 50 years back. The Indian census figures for the period 1881 to 1941 (vide Table 1) show that in 1941, Muslims constituted 24.3% of total population of India, whereas in 1881, they constituted 20%. Thus, over a period of 50 years, the proportion of Muslims in undivided

India increased by 4.3%. We further note that the average annual Hindu-Muslim growth differential was 0.0046 over the period of 60 years. In post-partition India, Muslims constituted 11.7% of the total population in 1991 whereas in 1951 they constituted 9.9%. During these 30 years, the percentage of Muslim population has increased by 1.8 and the growth differential has been 0.0049. This trend shows that Muslims cannot become a majority at the national level in the foreseeable future.

Hindu - Muslim fertility differentials

The observed differences in growth rates between Hindus and Muslims are to be explained in terms of differences in migration, mortality and fertility. In modern India, the volume of international migration is not significant. The available evidence (although scanty) seems to suggest that whatever may be the differences in mortality between Hindus and Muslims, they are not so great as to account for the differential growth rate between them (Balasubramanian, 1984 : 193). Therefore one must explain the difference in growth rate in terms of differences in fertility between Muslims and Hindus.

Previous to 1872 we have no data on fertility as censuses were not conducted earlier. So we have examined the norms regarding marriage, divorce, family, child bearing, son preference, contraception and status of woman and reached the conclusion that historically there might have existed no significant fertility differentials between these two communities.

Since 1872, censuses in India have been regularly

Table 2 : Percentage of Minority Group in Total Population (q_t) by Mean Annual Differential Growth Rate and by Duration

Initial percentage of population in minority group (P_2)	Duration in years (t)	Mean annual exponential growth rate differential ($r_1 - r_2$)		
		-0.02	-0.04	-0.06
$P_2 - 10.0$	0	10.0	10.0	10.0
	50	10.9	12.0	13.0
	100	12.0	14.2	16.8
	150	13.0	16.8	21.5
	200	14.2	19.8	27.0
$P_2 - 25.0$	0	25.0	25.0	25.0
	50	26.9	28.9	31.0
	100	28.9	33.2	37.8
	150	31.0	37.8	45.1
	200	33.2	42.6	52.5
$P_2 - 50.0$	0	50.0	50.0	50.0
	50	52.5	55.0	57.4
	100	55.0	59.9	64.6
	150	57.4	64.6	71.1
	200	59.9	69.0	76.8

Formula : $(1/q_t) = 1 + (P_1/P_2) \text{ Exp. } [(r_1 - r_2)t]$. See text for explanation.

conducted. But no information on fertility was collected. Kingsley Davis examined Hindu-Muslim fertility differentials for the period 1891-1941 using child-woman ratio. This was the only study based on census data which showed that Muslim fertility was somewhat higher than Hindu fertility. In post-Independence period only from 1971, information on fertility is being collected. Both 1971 and 1981 census data showed that Muslims exhibited higher fertility than Hindus.

In 1971, Muslim fertility exceeded Hindu fertility by 11% in rural areas (total marital fertility rate (TMFR) for Muslims 6.26 and for Hindus 5.63) and by 20% in urban areas (TMFR for Muslims 5.63 and for Hindus 4.70) (RG, 1978). Even after controlling for education Muslims showed higher fertility than Hindus. The 1981 census also showed that Muslims exhibited higher fertility than Hindus. In rural areas, TMFR was higher for Muslims by 16% (Muslims 5.1; Hindus 4.4). In urban areas TMFR was higher by 25% (Muslims 4.5; Hindus 3.6) (RG, 1983). It is important to note that although Muslim fertility was higher as compared to Hindus, a decline in fertility of Muslims has been noticed during 1971-81.)

The fertility tables of 1991 census are yet to be released. However data on fertility by religion is available from *National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 1992-93* conducted all over India and in different states. According to this survey, the Muslim fertility exceeded Hindu fertility by 25% at all India level. The total fertility rate for Muslims was 4.41 and for Hindus 3.30 (IIPS : 1995). NFHS does not give data by religion by rural and urban residence. Hence separately no fertility estimates from this survey by religion are available.

A review of fertility surveys conducted from 1950 onwards in different parts of the country shows that religious differentials in fertility were not strong upto 1960s as Indian fertility remained at a stable but high level. Hindu-Muslim fertility differential is a contemporary phenomenon which has arisen with the onset of fertility decline in India as Hindus have entered demographic

transition earlier than Muslims.

Proximate determinants of fertility

Two major proximate determinants of fertility are nuptiality and contraception. Contraception has an impact on marital fertility only whereas nuptiality has an impact on the overall fertility level of the population. Socio-economic factors such as education, income and status of woman affect fertility directly and indirectly by affecting nuptiality patterns and contraception.

Hindu-Muslim differences in nuptiality patterns

Child and adolescent marriages are present among Muslims but less prevalent than for Hindus. Divorce and remarriage of widows and divorcees are present but the extent is not known. The marriage patterns for Muslims and Hindus are similar except for polyandry and sororate. The similarity arises because the majority of Indian Muslims are descendants of converts to Islam and their ethnicity is mainly Indian. In the past converted Indian Muslims adopted many of the social customs and nuptiality practices of Hindus.

One particular marriage institution that needs to be discussed here is polygyny among Hindus and Muslims. Available evidence indicates that during the intercensal periods 1931-41, 1941-51 and 1951-61 the percentages of polygamous marriages among Hindus were 6.79, 7.15 and 5.06 and the corresponding figures for Muslims were 7.29, 7.06, 4.31 respectively. Among Tribals the percentages were 9.53, 17.53 and 17.98 (*Towards Equality*, 1975:66-67). The incidence of polygamous marriages had been declining among Muslims and Hindus. A survey was conducted by the Census authorities in 1961 on a sample of nearly one lakh marriages. Among these 5, 911 marriages were found to be polygynous. The incidence of polygynous marriages was found to be the highest among the tribal communities (15.25%) followed by Buddhists (7.97%), Jains (6.72%), Hindus (5.8%) and Muslims (5.7%). This too shows

Table 3 : Attitude and Practice of Family Planning by Religion, India, 1970-71 to 1988.

Attitudes / Practice of family planning	First Survey (1970-71)		Second Survey (1980-81)		Third Survey (1988)	
	Muslims (%)	Hindus (%)	Muslims (%)	Hindus (%)	Muslims (%)	Hindus (%)
Attitudes						
% approving family planning	40.0	41.2	65.5	83.0	75.0	92.0
% dis-approving family planning	47.3	40.3	33.0	16.0	13.0	3.0
Practice of family Planning						
Ever use	12.7	18.5	27.1	40.4	40.7	50.3
Current use	8.8	13.8	22.5	36.1	33.8	45.5
Current use of family planning by method						
Permanent/terminal						
Sterilization	2.8	6.4	11.2	23.3	19.4	32.6
Spacing						
Traditional	2.4	4.1	5.2	7.4	4.9	5.9
Modern	3.9	3.0	6.1	5.4	9.6	8.0
Sources : ORG, 1971. Khan and Prasad, 1983. ORG, 1990.						

that practice of polygyny was not more among Muslims and Hindus.

According to 1971 and 1981 census data the age at marriage did not differ much between Muslim and Hindu women (RG, 1983:38). So also the proportion of currently married women in reproductive ages did not differ much between Muslim and Hindu women. Also the latest *NFHS 1992-93 India* shows that age at marriage does not differ much between Hindu and Muslim women. Thus marriage patterns do not adequately account for the higher fertility of Muslims.

Hindu-Muslim differences in family planning behaviour

Differences in family planning use between Hindus and Muslims are important in explaining the marital fertility differentials between the two communities. A review of empirical studies to find out the contemporary Hindu and Muslim attitudes, knowledge and practice of family planning reveals the following : Data from the NSS 16th round (1960) on urban couples reveal that attitudes were slightly less favourable, knowledge and practice of family planning were slightly lower among Muslims (Visaria, 1974a:371). The Operation Research Group (ORG) conducted three national surveys on family planning practices in India, first in 1970-71, second in 1980-81 and the third in 1988. Data on attitudes towards and practice of family planning by religion were also collected in these surveys (Table 3). These data reveal that attitudes of Muslims to family planning were less favourable and family planning practice was lower than for Hindus. But over time disapproval has declined and family planning practice too has increased. The decrease in disapproval and increase in family planning practice has been less for Muslims. It is also observed

that Muslims favour spacing methods more than sterilization compared to Hindus.

Findings from local surveys regarding knowledge, awareness and practice of family planning are in general consistent with these observations at the national level.

The latest information on family planning practice among Muslims and Hindus is available from the *NFHS 1992-93*. At all India level ever use of contraception for Muslims was 38% and for Hindus 47%. The current use for Muslims was 28% and for Hindus 42%. Thus ever use as well as current use was significantly higher among Hindus than among Muslims. However the difference in current use is higher (14 percentage points) than that in ever use (9 percentage points) indicating that there are proportionately more Muslims than Hindus who discontinue use of contraception.

Current use of contraception among Muslims and Hindus for major states in India is given in Table 4. Contraceptive prevalence rates are higher among Hindus than among Muslims in all states except Madhya Pradesh and the size of difference varies considerably. The current use is higher among Hindus by 15 percentage points or more in Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Kerala. In the states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, the difference is the least (2 and 4 percentage points respectively). In Madhya Pradesh the use is higher among Muslims by 3 percentage points.

It is usually thought that Muslims oppose sterilization. From Table 4, it is also observed that a substantial percentage of Muslims do undergo sterilization. In the states of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, 24 % or more of the Muslims have undergone sterilization. In some states like Assam and West Bengal, Muslims prefer spacing

Table 4 : Current Use of Contraception Among Hindus and Muslims, India and some Major States, NFHS, 1992-93

State / India	Total current use (%)		Sterilization (%)		Spacing Methods (%)	
	Muslims	Hindus	Muslims	Hindus	Muslims	Hindus
Andhra Pradesh	44.7	47.0	38.3	45.1	6.4	1.9
Assam	32.3	48.3	6.6	18.0	25.7	30.3
Bihar	7.5	26.0	3.8	21.4	3.7	4.6
Gujrat	35.0	50.3	24.2	42.7	10.8	7.6
Karnataka	36.8	50.6	28.4	44.5	8.4	6.1
Kerala	37.8	72.5	27.6	57.2	10.2	15.3
Madhya Pradesh	38.6	36.1	29.7	31.6	8.9	4.5
Maharashtra	36.1	56.6	26.6	49.6	9.5	7.0
Rajasthan	18.4	32.3	13.1	28.5	5.3	3.8
Tamil Nadu	45.8	50.2	27.7	40.8	18.1	9.4
Utter Pradesh	10.5	21.2	4.3	14.6	6.2	6.6
West Bengal	43.0	61.4	16.9	34.4	26.1	27.0
India	27.7	41.6	16.0	32.7	11.7	8.9

Sources : NFHS 1992-93 reports for India and different states.

methods to sterilization.

A general observation is that wherever family planning acceptance is higher among Hindus, it is also higher among Muslims. Further where Hindus favour sterilization, Muslims too in general favour sterilization. It seems that recently Muslims like Hindus have started preferring sterilization to spacing methods.

Intersperse communication, education and socio-economic status are some of the factors that account for differences in family planning practice between Muslims and Hindus. It seems that intersperse communication is weaker and male dominance greater among Muslims. Though overall contraceptive practice is lower it increases with the level of education. Socio-economic status and family planning use are found to be positively related.

Low educational level, low socio-economic status and low status of woman besides some degree of opposition on the grounds of religion are the main factors that account for lower family planning acceptance of Muslims in India. Therefore some of the studies have suggested that the cooperation of Muslim religious leaders should be sought in propagating the family planning message, spacing methods should be popularized and general welfare programme to raise the socio-economic status of Muslims, should be undertaken.

Though the acceptance of family planning is low among Muslims, the resistance to family planning on grounds of religion is declining among the younger generation of Muslims. With increase in education of females and improvement in socio-economic status, contraceptive practice among Muslims is expected to increase.

Socio - economic backwardness of Muslims

The characteristics hypothesis maintains that the differences in fertility between religious groups are explained in terms of differences in socio-economic conditions among religious

groups (Day, 1984). According to this the socio-economic backwardness of Muslims is one of the main factors accounting for their higher fertility.

About two-thirds of the Muslims in India live in rural areas and are small/marginal farmers or self-employed artisans. Of the remaining one-third who live in the towns roughly 80 to 85 percent are skilled workers, tailors, petty businessmen, small manufacturers or are engaged in traditional industries like bidi-making, perfumery, block-making etc. (Saxena, 1983:120). Thus more than 90% of Muslims are small and marginal farmers, artisans and workers. The occupational structure of Muslims makes them poor. Educationally Muslims are three to four times behind other communities. Their educational backwardness and lack of modern skills do not allow them to enter high income occupations. In modern industry and trade, except for rare instances, Muslims have not owned large scale industry or business and generally lack high entrepreneurial traits. There is not a single Muslim house among the 50 top industrial groups, while at the lower end of the scale, most Muslims are poor and backward (Sanghi, 1984 : 28).

According to Shariff "Muslims are mostly self-employed and their share in regular paid jobs is low. Hindu population is relatively better employed in regular employment in urban areas. The work participation of Muslim females is extremely low. The land holding is better among the Hindus than the Muslims, and Muslims work on non-agricultural occupations in substantial proportions in rural parts of India. Muslims by far are the least educated when compared with Hindu and Christian population in India. The scenario is same if one studies the student population both in rural and urban areas as well. Muslim women are the least educated. Although the monthly per capita expenditure compares well between the Hindus and Muslims in rural areas, it is highly

lopsided favouring Hindus in the urban areas. On the whole Muslims are socio-economically worse off in all parts of the country." (Shariff, 1995 : 2953)

Status of Muslim woman

The status of woman is an important determinant of fertility level. Worldwide data reveal that high fertility prevails in areas where the status of woman is low and low fertility exists in areas where the status of woman is high.

When we compare the status of woman in Hinduism and Islam, we find that Muslim woman had at least in theory been holding a superior status to Hindu woman. However in practice, her status has been similar to that of a Hindu woman. The assimilation is due to two factors. Most of the Indian Muslims are the descendants of converts from Hinduism and secondly they live in a larger society of Hindus.

Today the Muslim woman has a lower status mainly due to her low educational level, consequent low participation in economic and social activities and observance of *pardah*. In a stratified survey of Muslim women conducted in nine major Indian cities in almost all major states (in 1973-74) the Muslim women invariably reported that education and employment were their major problems (Latif, 1990). With greater modernization and secularization, we may expect that the level of education, social and economic participation will increase and the observance of *pardah* will decline.

Future prospects of Hindu-Muslim population stabilization

During the last several decades the proportion of Muslims in India's population has been steadily increasing. The population growth rate has also been consistently higher for Muslims than for Hindus. But an examination of the data reveals that present Hindu-Muslim fertility and population growth rate differentials are not large and are likely to narrow down in future. Even if the present growth rate differentials continue over a long period, Muslims cannot become a majority at the national level in the foreseeable future.

It is mainly fertility differentials between Hindus and Muslims that account for the population growth differentials between these two communities. Two major proximate determinants of fertility are nuptiality and contraception. Marriage patterns do not adequately account for the higher fertility among Muslims. Family planning practice among Muslims is important in explaining their higher fertility. Muslims prefer spacing methods to sterilization. Still there is some resistance to family planning on the grounds of religion in the younger generation of Muslims. Therefore spacing methods should be promoted and cooperation of religious leaders may be sought to increase family planning use among Muslims.

Socio-economic backwardness of Muslims and low status of Muslim woman are the other variables that account for their fertility. Unless the socio-economic conditions and the status of woman improve among Muslims their family planning practice will not increase and their marital fertility will not fall.

In adopting to a modern industrial society, ultimately all communities have to complete the demographic transition. However changes in associated proximate variables relating to nuptiality and contraception have not taken place synchronously for all religious groups. In India, Parsis with low death and birth rates are already in the final stage of demographic transition (Visaria, 1974b). Christians are entering this stage (Roland, 1988). Fertility of urban Hindus has fallen significantly (RG, 1983).

Likewise Muslims too would reach the final regime of demographic transition with low levels of fertility, mortality and population growth so as to adopt themselves to a modern industrial society.

The family planning programme alone cannot bring about a decline in fertility. Socio-economic conditions especially of women among Muslims and other communities have to be improved in rural areas and backward states. Changes in social institutions such as marriage and the status of woman have to be brought about in a sustained and cumulative manner. Then only will all the communities of this pluralistic society complete the demographic transition, attain population stabilization and adapt themselves to technological changes.

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Masterpieces of World Literature : 3 Honore de Balzac : Cousin Bette

Introductory Remarks by Dr. Vinayak Purohit

We continue our series Masterpieces of World Literature with the opening pages from *Cousin Bette* by Honore de Balzac.

Before we plunge into the excerpts from *Cousin Bette*, we shall place Honore de Balzac and his famous novel, in the international context of World Literature and in the national context of French Literature.

WORLD LITERATURE

As Gyorgy Lukacz (1885-1971) was perceptive enough to point out in his *History and Class Consciousness* (1923), "a unique reevaluation of Marx stating that through the self-awareness of the proletariat, theory is translated into revolutionary practice, and consciousness transforms, not merely reflects, the historical situation. This work also provided an impetus for the development of a sociology of knowledge. It was denounced however, for deviating from Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy, and Lukacz soon repudiated it; his later works adhered more strictly to the accepted Soviet (i.e. Stalinist) view" (*Ency. Brit., Micro, Vol 6, p 384*).

It is the inveterate tendency of bourgeois thinking to create narrower and narrower specialisations; thus causing the gestation of more and more specialised and learned fools who claim to know less and less about the world surrounding them.

It was the opposite with feudalism. The feudal tendency in all fields of knowledge and cultural endeavour, was to engross more and more of the surrounding areas of a subject, and to make larger and larger statements about them. For instance, in India where feudalism is still a living entity, though in a relic form, the ordinary Masala

Social Film produced in Bombay and Madras, endeavours to include all other genres of films within a complex whole, like Crime, Adventure, Travel, Mythological-Devotional and so on, so that the final product becomes all embracing, that is encyclopedic-Puranic, so that all segments of an average audience are catered to.

Similarly, a bourgeois landlord and mixed-up Indian writer like Tagore would not be satisfied by writing merely poetry, or novel, or short story or songs, or dance-drama, or any such specialised form. He must endeavour to combine everything.

This happened in India, since in this country feudalism was "a living fossil". In Europe, however, it was not always a relic situation. In the 19th century, especially in Russia and in France, the society itself was in transition and mixed-up world-view projections were the norm, e.g., Leo Tolstoy, whom we have represented in an earlier issue of *Mankind* (Vol 2, No. 4, Jan. 1997).

Often the European social reality was itself botched up. In 1789, after the French Revolution, social history was rolled back, first by Napoleon who from a revolutionary leader became a Bonapartist Emperor; and still later when the Bourbons were restored in 1815, removed in 1830, and then once again Louis Napoleon, nephew of the Thermidorian Emperor, once again came to occupy the throne.

However, one great benefit of the social turmoil and the transitory telescoping of social phases, was that the best and the greatest writers of France became used to looking at things from multiple points of view. That is how Honore de Balzac's mind was formed, and that is

how he conceived of an extremely wide canvas series like the *Comedie Humaine* of which *Cousin Bette* is a part.

BOURGEOIS COMMERCIALISATION

We must reiterate that originally world literature had assumed an oral form. Much later, it was written down and for centuries it had assumed a manuscript character, laboriously copied by hand, generation after generation.

More recently, world literature assumed the printed form with movable type and mechanical printing processes beginning with China and Korea, and later in Europe.

With the advent of such mass production methods and the entry of private publishing houses into the book trade, the whole scene has been transformed. Private commercial interests have taken over the book business and vast amounts of capital investments are involved in the publishing, printing and distribution of books. Prizes and awards are manipulated in order to build up and destroy literary reputations. From the Nobel Prizes for Literature, and Booker and Goncourt and such other smaller recognitions of merit, everything is up for grabs. The publishers who hold copyrights, translation rights, broadcasting rights, television serial rights, and so on, are like a bunch of vultures swooping down on every possible intellectual property in the literary field. In this melee and turmoil, not only do business sharks cannibalise their own tribe, but very often devour and maim their own tails, namely the authors and writers of all descriptions (textbook writers, translators, script-writers, illustrators, comic strip devisors, doll-makers, etc. *ad infinitum*).

Fierce competition rages between literateurs, their agents, and innumerable kinds and types of publishers who are handling Intellectual Property Rights.

We must understand that within the overarching context of the European need to hide and cover-up their crimes of genocide, slavery, piracy, loot, narcotics traffic, imperialist wars, theft and smuggling of Third World art objects and so on, a miasma of false values, media hype, hypocritical postures, false pretensions, and outright lies has been evolved. The commercial interests conduct their raids, promotions and balloon-bursts within the overarching context of bourgeois barbarism.

First of all, within the world stream,

European culture and literature are minor eddies. Within the European rivulets, there are innumerable bourgeois cess-pools, silt-ponds, and swamps. Finally, within each national European channel, there are politico-military waves and ebb-tides.

It is impossible even to offer an outline of such developments within the limits of these Introductory Remarks. All that we can say is that, bourgeois commercial interests are supreme, and that they have vitiated, in every possible way, the overall context of Continental European and National European literatures. Furthermore, copyright sales and purchases have become a *modus operandi* for bribing prominent politicians (Speakers, Presidents, Ministers, Members of Parliament, Socialites, etc.). Multinational and Trans-national corporations merge and enmesh billion dollar media empires, which in turn indulge in all sorts of malpractices in every conceivable direction. The tentacles of bourgeois commercialisation have penetrated every nook and cranny, and like the suckers on the limbs of the octopus, they sting whoever comes into contact.

FRENCH LITERATURE OF THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES

In our earlier Introductory Remarks to Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (MK, Vol 2, No. 4, Jan. 1997), we had identified Russian and French literatures of the 19th and 20th centuries as the most significant currents within the limited European context.

The Spanish *Oro di Siglo* (Golden Age) occurred a little earlier in the 16th and 17th centuries coinciding with the climax of the Spanish Colonial Empire. The Italian peak was reached even earlier in the 12th to 15th centuries, parallel with the rise and growth of Communes.

The other literatures of Europe, like the Dutch, the Belgian, the English, the Irish, the Scandinavian, the German, the Swiss, the Central and East European Slavic and Baltic, the Greek, etc., were still more minor affairs. (Just because we Indians fell into the British imperialist trap or clutches, our intellectuals have got an exaggerated notion of the value and worth of English literature, which is, all said and done, merely of passing interest).

Among the leading lights of French literature of the last two centuries or so, we may mention :

Le Sage (1668-1747, who translated from the Spanish *Gil Blas*); Marivaux (1688-1763) Montesquieu (1689-1755); Voltaire (1694-1778, who as the *EB* mentions, regretted having introduced Shakespeare to the French); Rousseau (1712-1778); Diderot (1713-1784, and the Encyclopaedists like D'Alembert, Condillac, de Buffon, Condorcet, Holbach, etc.); Beaumarchais (1732-1799); Marquis de Sade (1740-1814); Saint Simon (1760-1825, also Fourier and Proudhon); Chenier (1762-1794); Chateaubriand (1768-1848); Stendhal (1783-1842); Michelet (1798-1894); Victor Hugo (1802-1885); Dumas Pere (1802-1870); Saint Beuve (1804-1869); George Sand (1804-1876); Gautier (1811-1872); Baudelaire (1821-1867); Flaubert (1821-1880); Renan (1823-1892); Dumas Fils (1824-1895); Taine (1828-1893); Zola (1840-1902); Mallarme (1842-1898); Verlaine (1844-1896); France (1844-1924); Maupassant (1850-1893); Rimbaud (1854-1891); Rolland (1866-1944); Gide (1869-1951); Proust (1871-1922); Apollinaire (1880-1918); Cocteau (1889-1963); Breton (1896-1966); Simonon (1903-1989); Sartre (1905-1980); Beckett (1906-1989); Beauvoir (1908-1986); Camus (1913-1960); Genet (b.1910); Robbe-Grillet (b. 1922)

There is a stench of sickness and decadence emanating from French Literature from very early on. Even from a limited liberal bourgeois point of view, one can feel this. This horrible

stink passes for boldness, chic, sexual freedom and so on, but it is in reality just anti-humanitarian, neurotic, frenetic and hysterical.

We cannot refer to each of "the great guys" listed above, but a few illustrative instances may be adduced :

- Beaumarchais (1732-99) : A secret service agent of Louis XV and XVI, addicted to financial speculation, imprisoned during the French Revolution as a reactionary, managed to get released due to the intervention of a former mistress, this cad gets his reputation from two trite little plays of court intrigue, *The Barber of Seville*, 1775, and *The Marriage of Figaro*, 1784. These plays were set to music by Rossini and Mozart, and made into popular operas. Later of course, into films, hard discs and video tapes, TV serials and so on, were made under the same titles and achieved European acclaim. This is the general pattern in the West. They operate on the gang principle. One literateur working in some corner of Euro-America does some little thing, it is immediately picked up by scholars and academicians on the payroll of the various petty governments, and built up into an "earth-shaking genius"! It has happened time and again. Shakespeare was lauded by Goethe, Voltaire (a matter of later regret by Voltaire), and scores of "shining lights", who have also been similarly applauded by other "brilliant pens", who in turn have been built up by and so on, *ad infinitum*. What is the evidence that "X" was great ? "Y" and "Z" have said so and written 13 books of literary criticism on "X"! Who are "Y and Z" ? Why, of course, their writings have been approved as school and college textbooks; they have received the Nobel, the Booker, the Goncourt and other Prizes and Awards; their books have been filmatised, broadcast, TV serialised, etc. etc. Ultimately, when each layer has been peeled off the European onion, one is left with nothing but a dirty smell !

Let us take a few more instances :

- Marquis de Sade (1740-1814) : A man who was so depraved, that the word "sadism" originates from his pervert activities, and writings that described and eulogised such activities. "Sade was used to consort with prostitutes and developed a taste for sexual perversions. For his flagrant maltreatment of a young prostitute, Rou Keller, he was sentenced to imprisonment In 1792, he embarked on a career of gross licentiousness ... His wife was his accomplice ... Sade fled to Italy Soon after his return, he was imprisoned at Vincennes ... transferred to Bastille ... began to write novels in which he allowed his sexual fantasies full reign After Bastille was stormed in 1789, Sade was transferred to a lunatic asylum at Charanton where he passed his last years ... and where he persuaded his fellow inmates to perform his plays" (*EB*, Micro, '83 edn., Vol VIII, p.759).

- Jean Genet (1910 -) "... spent part of his adolescence at a notorious reform school. His autobiography (*The Thief's Journal*, 1949), gave an uninhibited account of his life as a tramp, pickpocket and male prostitute at Barcelona, Antwerp, and various other cities (1930-39); the work also reveals him as an aesthete, an Existentialist and a pioneer of the Absurd His talent was brought to the attention of Jean Cocteau, Jean Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir ... After writing two other novels ... he began to write dramas ... strong influence of Sartre (who, incidentally, wrote *Saint Genet*, 1952, a biography spread over some 700 pages)... similarly with works of Eugene Ionesco and Samuel Beckett His prison-world thematic play, *The Maids*, 1949, established Genet as an outstanding figure in the 'Theatre of the Absurd'..... His subsequent plays were designed to shock an audience by playing upon its political, social and religious

prejudices. This 'Theatre of Hatred'..... did not endorse either the Right or the Left" (EB, '83 edn., Micro, Vol IV,p. 464).

• Jean Cocteau (1889-1963) : ".... experienced a period of opium addiction which brought on a brief return to religious practice ... His play *Children of the Game* and the novel *The Enfants Terribles*, 1929, explored the inviolability of the character of a brother and sister." Being a practising homosexual, Cocteau gravitated towards Diaghilev's *Ballet Russe* for which he wrote the libretto for the ballet *Parade* (1917). "Cocteau explored his own private mythology." Cocteau's admirers were Picasso (who did the stage designs for *Parade*), Modigliani, Max Jacob, Apollinaire, Maritain, etc. etc. (See EB, '83 edn., Macro, Vol 4, p. 815-6; and Merriam-Webster's *Ency. of Literature*, 1995, p. 254).

• Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980) : We are sorry for the length of our next quotation, but this is the last of the individual French cases that we will give. All the quotations are from Paul Johnson, *Intellectuals*, 1988.

"Sartre was a supreme egoist ... the classic case of a spoiled only child Sartre was notorious for never taking a bath and being disgustingly dirty ... He was in effect politicised by the German guards who despised their French prisoners, especially when they were dirty, and kicked Sartre repeatedly on his broad bottom.

"Sartre was lucky. Having taken no part in pre-war politics, not even the 1936 Popular Front, he did not figure on any Nazi records or lists ... Sartre never actively collaborated with the regime. The nearest he came to it was to write for a collaborationist weekly, *Comœdia*, agreeing at one stage to contribute a regular column. But he had no difficulty in getting his work published and his plays presented. As Andre Malraux put it, 'I was facing the Gestapo while Sartre in Paris had his plays produced with the authorisation of the German censors.'

"He talked. He wrote. He was Resistance-minded in theory, mind and spirit, but not in fact. He helped to form a clandestine group, *Socialism and Freedom*, which held meetings and debated But Gide and Malraux, whom he approached, turned him down ... Sartre, in so far as he was anything, followed Proudhon ... there were plenty of words but no deeds In the end the group died of inanition.

"Sartre, then, did nothing of consequence for the Resistance. He did not lift a finger, or write a word, to save the Jews. He concentrated relentlessly on promoting his own career... He would drink down a glass of milky tea, set out his inkpot and pen, then scribble relentlessly for four hours, scarcely lifting his eyes from the paper, 'a little ball of fur and ink'. Simone de Beauvoir, who described him thus, noted that he was enlivening the tract, which was eventually 722 pages, (*Being and Nothingness*) with 'spicy passages'. One 'concerns holes in general and the other focuses on the anus and love- making Italian style'. It was published in June 1943.

" 'Existentialism,' said Sartre, 'defines man by his actions ... It tells him that hope lies only in action, and that the only thing that allows man to live is action.... This is what I mean when I say we are condemned to be free.' The Frankfurt School, which hated Brecht, hated Sartre still more. Max Horkheimer called him a 'crook and a racketeer of the philosophic world.' Moreover, existentialism was not just a philosophy to be read, it was a craze to be enjoyed. *An Existentialist Catechism* insisted. 'Existentialism, like faith, cannot be explained : it can only be lived,' and told readers where to live it. For St-Germain-des-Pres

to become the centre of intellectual fashion was not new. Sartre was in fact treading in the footsteps of Voltaire, Diderot and Rousseau, who had patronised the old Cafe. Procope stood further down the boulevard. It had again been lively under the Second Empire, in the age of Gautier, George Sand, Balzac and Zola; that was when the Cafe Flore had first opened, with Huysmans and Apollinaire among its patrons..... The shift to St Germain, which was social and sexual as well as intellectual, was therefore dramatic, for Sartre's St Germain was leftist, committed, strongly heterosexual, ultra-french.

"Sartre was a convivial soul, loving whisky, jazz, girls and cabaret ... He was described, by Jacques Audiberti, as 'a truck parking everywhere with great commotion, in the library, in the theatre, in the movies.' But at night he played, and by the end of the evening, he was usually drunk and often aggressive. Once he gave Camus a black eye... With the end of the war he suddenly found himself rich and surrounded by women, who were after his intellectual glamour as much as his money. The year 1946 was his best for sexual conquests and it marked the virtual end of his sexual relationship with de Beauvoir ... as Sartre grew older, his girls became younger — seventeen or eighteen year olds, whom he spoke of 'adopting' in a legal sense, meaning they would inherit his copyrights... there was Arlette, who was only seventeen when Sartre picked her up — she was the one de Beauvoir hated most ... At one time in the late 1950s he was running four mistresses at once, Michelle, Arlette, Evelyn and Wanda, as well as de Beauvoir, and deceiving all of them in one way or another his daily intake of stimulants at this time included two packets of cigarettes, several pipes of black tobacco, a quart of alcohol (chiefly wine, vodka, whisky and beer), 200 milligrams of amphetanures, fifteen grams of aspirin, several grams of barbiturates, plus coffee and tea he quarrelled with all the rest : Raymond Aron (1947), Arthur Koestler (1948), Merleau - Ponty (1951), Camus (1952), to mention only the prominent.

"Even in the late 1940s, he could not bring himself to condemn the Communist Party or Stalinism — one reason why he quarrelled with Aron and Koestler Sartre's only positive move was to help organize an anti-Cold War movement of the non-communist left, called the *Rassemblement Democratique Revolutionnaire*, in February 1948 ... As it was his fellow organizer of the RDR, David Rousset who found him quite useless: 'despite his lucidity, he lived in a world which was totally isolated from reality'. He was, said Rousset, 'very much involved in the play and movement of ideas' but took little interest in actual events : 'Sartre lives' in a bubble.' When the party's first national Congress took place, in June 1949, Sartre was nowhere to be found : he was in Mexico with Dolores, trying to persuade her to marry him.

"Sartre took up the case of the homosexual thief Jean Genet, a cunning fraud who appealed strongly to the credulous side of Sartre's nature — the side which wanted some substitute for religious faith. He wrote an enormous and absurd book about Genet, nearly 700 pages long, which was really a celebration of anarchy and sexual incoherence.

"In 1952 Sartre resolved his dilemma about the Communist Party and decided to back it He observed an uneasy silence about Stalin's camps He likewise forced himself to keep silent about the appalling trials in Prague of Slansky and other Czech Jewish communists Some of the things Sartre did and said during the four years when he consistently backed the Communist Party line almost defy belief ... In July 1954, after a visit to Russia, he gave a two-hour interview to a reporter from the fellow-travelling *Liberation*. It ranks as the most grovelling account of the Soviet state by a major Western intellectual since the notorious expedition by George Bernard Shaw in the early 1930s ... Many years later he admitted his mendacity : 'After my

first visit to the USSR in 1954, I lied...' He fell upon the Soviet Hungarian invasion of 1956, with relief as a reason, or at any rate an excuse, for breaking with Moscow.

"Much of Sartre's time in the 1960s was spent travelling in China and the Third World, a term invented by the geographer Alfred Sauvy in 1952 but which Sartre popularized. He was particularly warm in praise of Mao's China. He noisily condemned American 'war crimes' in Vietnam and compared America to the Nazis (but then he had compared de Gaulle to the Nazis, forgetting the General was fighting them when he himself was having his plays staged in occupied Paris).

"The book he eventually produced on Flaubert ran to three volumes and 2802 pages, many of them almost unreadable ... Sartre always preferred to write nonsense rather than write nothing This verbal diarrhoea eventually destroyed his magic as a lecturer. When his disastrous book on dialectic appeared, Jean Wahl nonetheless invited him to give a lecture on it at the College de Philosophie. Sartre started at 6 pm, reading from a manuscript taken from a huge folder, 'in a mechanical, hurried tone of voice'. He never raised his eyes from the text. He appeared to be completely absorbed in his own writing. After an hour, the audience was restless. The hall was packed and some had to stand. After an hour and three quarters, the audience was exhausted and some were lying on the floor. ... In 1965 he had secretly adopted Arlette as his daughter. So she inherited everything, including his literary property, and presided over the posthumous publication of his manuscripts. For de Beauvoir it was the final betrayal : the 'centre eclipsed by one of the peripheries' ". (The long quote is from Paul Johnson, *Intellectuals*, 1988, pp. 225-51. Paul Johnson was editor of *The New Statesman*, London, from 1965 to 1970. The factual basis for his essay on Sartre has never been challenged or controverted.)

We may as well write here that Sartre was sailing in the same luxury boat down the Seine River, Paris, as Picasso, during the years of Nazi occupation (1940-44). As Sartre was staging his plays to the applause of crowds, unprecedented for him, during these fateful years, so was Picasso, dining and winning famously, with SS generals, Nazi riff-raff and collaboratorist Vichyites, in the same black years !

European intellectuals are so hollow, so pretentious, so viciously arrogant, so hypocritically showing off, and generally so deceitful, comical and hard-hearted, that it is a pain to write about them !

The fundamental fact is that they have never confronted the reality of murder-rape-arson-theft of the Third World, which racist-imperialist loot lies at the bottom of all the "intellectual palaces and ivory towers" that they have built for themselves !

Let us now proceed from the "House of Cards" that is French literature, to Honore de Balzac.

HONORE DE BALZAC (1799-1850)

Balzac was a Royalist. He favoured a benevolent aristocracy and eventually proclaimed his support for the Catholic Church. He adopted for his own use the armourial bearings of an ancient noble family with which he had no connection, and assumed the honorific particle "de". He pursued Eveline Hanska, a Polish countess, for 17 years from 1833, and eventually succeeded in marrying her in the year of his death in 1850. This made Balzac a great dandy. He always wanted to set himself up as a dazzling figure in society. He wore resplendent waistcoats and carried a turquoise studded cane, and his tillbury and two horses made him the talk of the town as he intended.

Balzac's times were very turbulent. French society had taken a giant leap forward with the French Revolution of 1789, but Napoleon I had made two quarter-turns backwards by becoming dictator (1799) and then quickly Emperor (1804). In 1815 the Bourbons had been restored, and in 1830 the July Monarchy had

taken over. In 1848, the Second Republic was inaugurated. Finally Louis Napoleon staged his *coup d'etat* in December 1851.

Balzac was a witness to most of these events, and this gave him the ability to examine events from differing points of view.

Balzac had a wonderful sense of reality and he wanted to depict the entire French society of his times. His *La Comedie Humaine*, probably inspired by that of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, underwent many changes and was illustrated by Gavarni, Daumier, H. Monnier and other leading artists. It had begun to appear in 1842. By 1845, Balzac's grandiose plans had brought the total of works to be comprised in the *Comedie Humaine* to 91.

Balzac had divided *La Comedie Humaine* into 3 main compartments : *Etudes de moeurs*, *Etudes philosophiques* and *Etudes analytiques*. The first, 14 volume edition of 1842-48, is subdivided into scenes of private life, provincial life, Parisian life, political life, military life and country life.

These divisions were somewhat artificial, and Balzac often regrouped them without finding an entirely satisfactory arrangement. It became increasingly difficult as his design grew more far-reaching and its ramifications more intricate.

His "human comedy", as he explained in his famous preface of 1842, was intended to include 2,000 to 3,000 outstanding characters. This number, he believed, would serve to represent contemporary life in all its complexity. In the end, the total number of named characters in the *Comedie Humaine* is estimated to have reached 2,472, with a further 566 unnamed characters. In addition, a number of historical personages appear under their real names.

The individual in Balzac's stories does not live in a world remote from material difficulties, but is continually affected by the pressure of outward circumstances.

They are the victims and the embodiment of some ruling passion : avarice, excessive paternal affection, feminine jealousy, vindictiveness, the mania of the collector, the curiosity of the scientist, the artist's desire for perfection.

An inescapable relationship existed between external circumstances and the ways in which individual lives might be expected to develop. A man's antecedents, environment, upbringing and profession would all shape his destiny.

For these reasons, Balzac gave much space in his novels to a minute description of all the physical factors by which his characters found themselves surrounded — the town and streets in which they lived, the houses which both expressed and formed their personality, the clothes which were so much a part of themselves, the signs and gestures by which they gave themselves away and the furniture and furnishings that enveloped them.

For further information, please consult *Ency. Brit.*, 1973 ed., Vol III, pp. 64-68, Merriam Webster's *Encyclopedia of Literature* 1995, and *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, 1985.

COUSIN BETTE (1846)

Novel by Honore de Balzac, published in 1846 as *La Cousine Bette*. The novel, part of Balzac's epic series *La Comedie Humaine* (The Human Comedy), is considered one of his two final masterpieces.

Thematically a testament to female vindictiveness, *Cousin Bette* recounts the story of Lisbeth Fischer, an embittered, unmarried peasant woman who hides her envy and hatred behind a mask of kindness as she attempts to ruin the Hulot family. She succeeds up to a point, but eventually the family regains its wealth through judicious and fortuitous marital and business connections. Bette herself, bitterly disappointed, sickens and dies.

~~Towards the middle of July, in the year 1838, one of those~~

COUSIN BETTE

HONORE DE BALZAC

vehicles called *milords*, then appearing in the Paris squares for the first time, was driving along the rue de l'Universite, bearing a stout man of medium height in the uniform of a captain in the National Guard.

Our Paris citizens are credited with plenty of mother wit; yet there are some among them who fancy themselves infinitely more attractive in uniform, and think women so simple as to be easily impressed by a bearskin cap and military trappings.

The rubicund and rather chubby face of this Captain of the Second Company fairly radiated self-satisfaction. He wore the aureole of complacency achieved by wealthy, self-made, retired shopkeepers, that marked him as one of the Paris elect, an ex-Deputy Mayor of his district at least. The ribbon of the Legion of Honour, naturally, was conspicuous upon his chest, which was valorously puffed out in the Prussian manner. Proudly ensconced in a corner of the *milord*, this decorated gentleman allowed his glances to rove among the passers-by, who are often, in Paris, the recipients in this fashion of pleasant smiles intended for bright eyes that are far away.

The *milord* stopped in the part of the street that lies between the rue de Bellechasse and the rue de Bourgogne, at the door of a large house recently built on part of the court of an old mansion set in a garden. The mansion still stood in its original state beyond the court, whose size had been reduced by half.

As the Captain alighted from the *milord*, accepting a helping hand from the driver, it was evident that he was a man in his fifties. Certain movements, by their undisguised heaviness, are as indiscreet as a birth certificate. He replaced his yellow glove on the hand that he had bared, and, making no inquiry of the concierge, walked towards the steps leading to the mansion's ground floor, with an air that declared 'She is mine!' Paris porters know how to use their eyes. They never dream of stopping gentlemen with decorations on their chests who are dressed in National Guard blue and walk like men of weight. In other words, they know money when they see it.

This whole ground floor was occupied by Monsieur le Baron Hulot d'Ervy, Commissary general under the Republic, lately senior officer controlling the Army Commissariat, and now head of one of the most important departments of the War Ministry, Councillor of State, Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour, etc., etc.

Baron Hulot had taken the name of Ervy, his birthplace, in order to distinguish himself from his brother, the famous General Hulot, Colonel of the Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard, created Comte de Forzheim by the Emperor after the campaign of 1809. The elder brother, the Count, with a fatherly concern for the future of the younger, who had been committed to his charge, had found a place for him in military administration, in which, partly owing to his brother's services but also on his own merits, the Baron had won Napoleon's favour. From the year 1807, Baron Hulot had been Commissary general of the armies in Spain.

When he had rung, the bourgeois Captain exerted himself energetically to smooth down his coat, which had been wrinkled up both in front and behind by his complacency. Admitted on sight by a servant in livery, this important and imposing visitor followed

the man, who announced him as he opened the drawing room door: 'Monsieur Crevel!'

When she heard this name, admirably appropriate to the appearance of the man who bore it, a tall, fair, well-preserved woman started, and rose, as if she had received an electric shock.

'Hortense, my angel, go into the garden with your Cousin Bette,' she said hastily to her daughter, who sat at her embroidery not far away.

With a graceful bow to the Captain, Mademoiselle Hortense Hulot left the room by a french window, taking with her a desiccated spinster who looked older than the baroness, although she was five years younger.

'It's about your marriage,' Cousin Bette whispered in her young cousin Hortense's ear, apparently not at all offended by the way in which the Baroness had sent them off, as if she were of little account.

The appearance of this cousin would have afforded sufficient explanation, if explanation were needed, of such lack of ceremony.

The old maid wore a puce merino dress whose cut and narrow ribbon trimmings suggested Restoration fashion, an embroidered collar that had cost perhaps three francs, and a stitched straw hat with blue satin rosettes edged with straw, of the kind seen on the heads of old-clothes women in the market. A stranger, noticing her goatskin slippers, clumsily botched as if by a fifth rate cobbler, would have hesitated before greeting Cousin Bette as a relation of the family; she looked for all the world as a daily sewing-woman. Before she left the room, however, the spinster gave Monsieur Crevel an intimate little nod, a greeting which that personage answered with a look of friendly understanding.

'You are coming tomorrow, Mademoiselle Fischer, aren't you?' he said.

'There won't be company?' Cousin Bette asked.

'Just my children and you,' replied the visitor.

'Very well, then, you may count on me.'

'I am at your service, Madame,' said the bourgeois Captain of Militia, turning to bow again to Baroness Hulot. And he rolled his eyes at Madame Hulot, like Tartuffe casting sheep's eyes at Elmire, when a provincial actor, at Poitiers or Coutances, thinks it necessary to place heavy emphasis on Tartuffe's designs.

'If you will come this way, Monsieur, we can discuss our business more conveniently here than in the drawing room,' said Madame Hulot, leading the way to an adjoining room that in the lay-out of the suite was designed for a cardroom.

Only a thin partition divided this room from the boudoir, whose window opened on the garden, and Madame Hulot left Monsieur Crevel alone for a moment, considering it necessary to shut both the window and the boudoir door so that no one could eavesdrop on that side. She even took the precaution of closing the french window of the drawing room, smiling as she did so at her daughter and cousin, whom she saw installed in an old summer-house at the far end of the garden. Returning, she left the door of the card-room ajar, so that she might hear the drawing-room door open if anyone should come in. Moving about the apartment,

the Baroness, being unobserved, allowed her face to express what she was thinking, and anyone seeing her would have been quite alarmed by her agitation. But as she crossed the drawing-room to the card-room, she masked her face with that inscrutable reserve that all women, even the most candid, seem able to assume at will.

During these preparations, singular to say the least, the National Guardsman was examining the furnishings of the room in which he found himself. As he remarked the silk curtains, once red, but now faded to violet by the sun and frayed along the folds by long use, a carpet from which the colours had disappeared, chairs with their gilding rubbed off and their silk spotted with stains and worn threadbare in patches, his contemptuous expression was followed by satisfaction, and then by hope, in naive succession on his successful-shopkeeper's commonplace face. He was surveying himself, in a glass above an old Empire clock, taking stock of himself, when the rustle of the Baroness's silk dress warned him of her approach. He at once struck an attitude.

The Baroness sat down on a little sofa that must certainly have been very pretty about the year 1809, and motioned Crevel to an armchair decorated with bronzed sphinx heads, from which the paint was scaling off, leaving the bare wood exposed in places.

'These precautions of yours, Madame, would be a delightfully promising sign for a ...'

'A lover,' she interrupted him.

'The word is weak,' he said, placing his right hand on his heart, and rolling his eyes in a fashion that a woman nearly always finds comic when she meets them with no sympathy in her own. 'A lover! A lover! Say rather - a man bewitched!'

'Listen, Monsieur Crevel,' the Baroness went on, too much in earnest to feel like laughing. 'You are fifty - that's ten years younger than Monsieur Hulot, I know; but if a woman is to commit follies at my age she has to have something to justify her: good looks, youth, celebrity, distinction, brilliant gifts to dazzle her to the point of making her oblivious of everything, even of her age. You may have an income of fifty thousand francs, but your age must be weighed in the balance against your fortune; and you have nothing that a woman needs.'

'And love?' said the Captain, rising and coming towards her. 'A love that ...'

'No, Monsieur, infatuation!' said the Baroness, interrupting him to try to put an end to this ridiculous scene.

'Yes, infatuation and love,' he went on, 'but something more than that too, a right ...'

'A right!' exclaimed Madame Hulot, suddenly impressive in her scorn, defiance, and indignation. 'But if you go on in this strain, we shall never have done; and I did not ask you to come here to talk about something that has made you an unwelcome visitor in this house, in spite of the connection between our two families.'

'I thought you did ...'

'What-again?' she exclaimed. 'Do you not see, Monsieur, by the detached and unconcerned way in which I speak of a lover and love and everything that is most indecorous on a woman's lips, that I am perfectly certain of remaining virtuous? I am not afraid of anything, even of incurring suspicion by shutting myself in this room alone with you. Does a frail woman behave so? You know very well why I asked you to come!'

'No, Madame,' Crevel replied, with a sudden chill in his manner. He pursed his lips and struck his pose.

'Well, I'll be brief, and cut short the embarrassment this causes both of us,' said the Baroness, looking him in the face.

Crevel made an ironic bow, in which a man of his trade would have recognised the affected courtesy of a one-time commercial traveller.

'Our son has married your daughter...'

'And if that were to do again!...'

'The marriage would not take place,' rejoined the Baroness, with spirit. 'I have little doubt of it. All the same, you have no cause for complaint. My son is not only one of the leading lawyers in Paris, but a Deputy since last year, and he has made such a brilliant debut in the Chamber that it seems likely that he will be in the Government before long. My son has been consulted twice in the drafting of important Bills, and if he wanted the post he could be Solicitor-General, representing the Government in the Court of Appeal, tomorrow. So that if you mean to imply that you have a son-in-law with no fortune...'

'A son-in-law whom I am obliged to keep,' returned Crevel; 'which seems to me worse, Madame. Of the five hundred thousand francs settled on my daughter as her dowry, two hundred thousand have gone heaven knows where! In paying your fine son's debts, in buying high-class furniture for his house, a house worth five hundred thousand francs that brings in barely fifteen thousand because he occupies the best part of it himself, and on which he still owes two hundred and sixty thousand francs - the rent from it barely covers the interest on the debt. This year I had to give my daughter something like twenty thousand francs to enable her to make ends meet. And my son-in-law who, they say, was making thirty thousand francs in the law-courts is going to throw that up for the Chamber...'

'That, Monsieur Crevel, is a side issue, quite beside the point. But, to have done with it, if my son gets into office, if he has you made Officer of the Legion of Honour and Municipal Councillor of Paris, as a retired perfume-seller you will not have much to complain of.'

'Ah! now we have it, Madame! I am a tradesman, a shop-keeper, a former retailer of almond paste, eau-de-Portugal, cephalic oil for hair troubles. I must consider myself highly honoured to have married my only daughter to the son of Monsieur le Baron Hulot d'Ervy. My daughter will be a Baroness. That's Regency, that's Louis XV, that belongs to the Oeil-de-Boeuf ante-room at Versailles! All very fine ... I love Celestine as a man cannot help loving his only child. I love her so much that rather than give her brothers and sisters I have put up with all the inconveniences of being a widower in Paris - and in my prime, Madame! - but you may take it from me that although I may dote on my daughter I do not intend to make a hole in my capital for your son, whose expenses seem to an old businessman like myself to need some explanation.'

'Monsieur, you see that Monsieur Popinot, who was once a druggist in the rue des Lombards, is Minister of Commerce now, at this very moment...'

'A friend of mine, Madame!' said the ex-perfumer. 'For I, Celestin Crevel, once head salesman to old Cesar Birotteau, bought the business of the said Birotteau, Popinot's father-in-law, Popinot being just an ordinary assistant in the business; and he himself reminds me of the fact, for he is not stuck-up - I'll say that for him - with people in good positions, worth sixty thousand francs a year.'

'Well, Monsieur, so the ideas that you describe as *Regency* are not in fashion now, in times when people accept a man on his personal merits; which is what you did when you married your

daughter to my son.'

'And you don't know how the marriage came about!' exclaimed Crevel. 'Ah! confound this bachelor life! If it had not been for my libertine ways my Celestine would be the Vicomtesse Popinot today!'

'But let me repeat, let's have no recriminations over what is done!' the Baroness said, with emphasis. 'We have to talk of the reasons I have to protest about your strange conduct. My daughter Hortense had an opportunity to marry. The marriage depended entirely upon you, and I believed I could rely on your generosity. I thought you would be fair to a woman whose heart has never held any image but her husband's, that you would have realised how necessary it was for her not to receive a man who might compromise her, and that you would have been eager, out of regard for the family with which you have allied your own, to promote Hortense's marriage with Councillor Lebas... And you, Monsieur, have wrecked the marriage.'

'Madame,' replied the retired perfume-seller, 'I acted like an honest man. I was asked whether the two hundred thousand francs of Mademoiselle Hortense's dowry would be paid. I replied in these words precisely: "I would not answer for it. My son-in-law, on whom the Hulot family settled that sum on his marriage, had debts, and I believe that if Monsieur Hulot d'Ervy were to die tomorrow, his widow would be left to beg her bread." And that's how it is, my dear lady.'

'And would you have spoken in the same way, Monsieur,' asked Madame Hulot, looking Crevel steadily in the face, 'if I had been untrue to my vows for your sake?'

'I should have had no right to say it, dear Adeline,' exclaimed this singular lover, cutting the Baroness short, 'for you would have found the dowry in my note-case...'

And suiting action to words, stout Crevel dropped on one knee and kissed Madame Hulot's hand, attributing to hesitation her speechless horror at his words.'

Buy my daughter's happiness at the price of — get up at once, Monsieur, or I'll ring the bell.'

The retired perfumer got to his feet with considerable difficulty, a circumstance which made him so furious that he struck his pose again. Nearly all men cherish a fondness for some posture that they think shows off to best advantage the good points with which nature has endowed them. In Crevel's case this pose consisted in crossing his arms like Napoleon, turning his head to show a three-quarter profile, and gazing, as the artist painting his portrait had made him gaze, at the horizon. 'Faithful,' he said, with well-calculated rage, 'faithful to a libert—'

'To a husband, Monsieur, worthy of my fidelity,' Madame Hulot interrupted, before Crevel could get out a word that she had no wish to hear.

'Look here, Madame, you wrote asking me to come. You want to know the reasons for my conduct. You drive me out of patience with your airs, as if you were an empress, your disdain and your ... contempt! Anyone would think I was a black. I tell you again, and you may believe me! I have a right to ... to court you ... because... No, I love you well enough to hold my tongue.'

'Go on, Monsieur. In few days' time I shall be forty-eight years old. I am not unnecessarily prudish. I can hear anything you may have to say.'

'Well then, do you give me your word as a virtuous woman-since, unluckily for me, that's what you are - never to give me away, never to say that I told you this secret?'

'If that's the condition of your telling me, I swear not to reveal to anyone, not even to my husband, who it was that told me the

dreadful things I'm about to hear.'

'I may believe you, for it concerns only you and him.'

Madame Hulot turned pale.

'Ah! if you still love Hulot, this will hurt you! Would you rather I said nothing?'

'Go on, Monsieur, if it is true that what you say will justify the strange declarations you have made to me, and your persistence in annoying a woman of my age, who only wishes to see her daughter married, and then...die in peace!'

'You see, you are unhappy!'

'I, Monsieur?'

'Yes, lovely and noble creature!' cried Crevel. 'You have suffered only too much...'

'Monsieur, say nothing more, and go! Or speak to me in a proper way.'

'Are you aware, Madame, how our fine Monsieur Hulot and I became acquainted?... Through our mistresses, Madame.'

'Oh, Monsieur!'

'Through our mistresses, Madame,' repeated Crevel melodramatically, breaking his pose to raise his right hand.

'Well, what then, Monsieur?...!' said the Baroness calmly, to Crevel's great discomfiture.

Seducers, whose motives are mean, can never understand magnanimous minds.

'Having been a widower for five years,' Crevel went on, like a man who has a story to tell, 'not wishing to marry again, for the sake of my daughter whom I idolize, not wishing to have intrigues in my own establishment either, although at that time I had a very pretty cashier, I set up, as they call it, a little seamstress, fifteen years old, a miracle of beauty, whom I confess I fell head over in love with. And so, Madame, I even asked my own aunt, whom I brought from my old home in the country (my mother's sister!), to live with this charming creature and look after her and see that she remained as good as she could in her circumstances, which were what you might call ... *chocnoso?* ... improper?... no, compromising!...

'The little girl, who plainly had a vocation for music, had masters to teach her, was given an education (she had to be kept out of mischief somehow!). And besides I wanted to be three persons in one to her, at the same time a father, a benefactor, and, not to mince matters, a lover; to kill two birds with one stone, do a kind deed and make a kind friend.

'I had five years' happiness. The child has a singing voice of a quality that would make any theatre's fortune, and I can only say that she is a Duprez in petticoats. She cost me two thousand francs a year, only to develop her talent as a singer. She made me an enthusiast for music: I took a box at the Italian Opera for her and my daughter. I went there on alternate evenings with them, one night with Celestine, the next night with Josepha...'

'What, you mean the famous singer?'

'Yes, Madame,' Crevel continued proudly; the famous Josepha owes everything to me. Well, when she was twenty, in 1834 (I thought I had bound her to me for life and had become very soft with her), I wanted to give her some amusement and I let her meet a pretty little actress, Jenny Cadine, whose career had some similarity with her own. That actress too, owed everything to a protector who had brought her up as a cherished darling. Her protector was Baron Hulot.'

'I know, Monsieur,' said the Baroness calmly, without the slightest tremor in her voice.

'Ah bah!' exclaimed Crevel, more and more taken aback. 'All very well! But do you know that your monster of a husband was

protecting Jenny Cadine when she was thirteen years old?

'Well, Monsieur, what then?'

'As Jenny Cadine,' the retired shopkeeper went on, 'like Josepha, was twenty when they met, the Baron must have been playing Louis XV to her Mademoiselle de Romans since 1826, and you were twelve years younger then...'

'Monsieur, I had my reasons for leaving Monsieur Hulot free.'

'That lie, Madame, is enough to wipe out all your sins, no doubt, and will open the gate of Paradise to you,' Crevel replied, with a knowing air that made the Baroness turn crimson. 'Tell that story, sublime and adored woman, to others, but not to old Crevel, who, I may tell you, has roistered too often at two-couple parties with your rascal of a husband not to know your full worth! When he was half seas over, he sometimes used to reproach himself and enlarge on all your perfections to me. Oh, I know you very well: you are an angel. Between a girl of twenty and you, a rake might hesitate, but not me.'

'Monsieur!'

Very well, I'll stop. But you may as well know, saintly and worshipful woman, that husbands in their cups tell a great many things about wives while their mistresses are listening, and their mistresses split their sides at them.'

Tears of outraged modesty, appearing between Madame Hulot's fine lashes, stopped the National Guardsman short, and he quite forgot to strike his pose.

'To return to the point,' he said, 'there is a bond between the Baron and me, because of our mistresses. The Baron, like all rips, is a very good sort, really a genial type. Oh I enjoyed him, the rascal! No, really, the things he thought of... Well, no more of these reminiscences. We became like two brothers. The rogue, very Regency, did his best to lead me astray, to preach Saint-Simonism where women were concerned, to give me notions of behaving like a lord, like a blue jerked swashbuckler; but you see, I loved my little dear well enough to marry her, if I had not been afraid of having children. Between two old papas, such good friends as we were, naturally the idea couldn't but occur to us of marrying our children. Three months after the marriage of his son and my Celestine, Hulot...(I don't know how I can bear to utter his name, the scoundrel! For he has fooled us both, Madame!)...well, the scoundrel stole my little Josepha. The cunning devil knew that he had been supplanted by a young Councillor of State and by an artist (no less!) in Jenny Cadine's heart (because her successes were making more and more of a splash), and he took my poor little mistress from me, a love of a girl; but you surely must have seen her at the Italian Opera, where he got her in by influence.'

'Your man is not so careful as me. No one twists me around their fingers - I do everything methodically, according to rule. Jenny Cadine had already had a good cut out of him; she must have cost him pretty near thirty thousand francs a year. Well, you had better know that he has completely ruined himself now for Josepha. Josepha, Madame, is a Jewess; she is called Mirah, an anagram of Hiram, and that's a Jewish label to identify her, for she is a deserted child who was picked up in Germany. I have made some inquiries and found out that she's the natural child of a rich Jewish banker.'

'The theatre, and above all what Jenny Cadine, Madame Schontz, Malaga, and Carabine taught her about the right fashion to treat old men, developed in that little girl whom I was bringing up in a proper, decent way-not expensive either-the instinct that the ancient Hebrews had for gold and jewels, for the Golden Cal! The famous singer now has a keen eye for the main chance;

she wants to be rich, very rich. And she doesn't squander a sou of all the money that's squandered upon her. She tried her claws on Hulot, and she has plucked him clean-oh, plucked isn't the word, you can call it skinned!

'And now, poor wretch, after struggling to keep her against one of the Kellars, and the Marquis d'Esgrignon-both mad about Josepha-not to mention unknown worshippers at her shrine, he's about to see her carried off by that Duke who's rolling in money and patronise the arts-what's he called, now?... he's a dwarf-ah! the Duc d'Herouville. This grand lord wants to keep Josepha for himself alone. The whole courtesan world is talking about it, and the Baron knows nothing at all; for it's just the same in the Thirtieth District as in all the others: the lover, like the husband, is the last to learn the truth.'

'Now do you understand my right? Your husband, my dear lady, snatched my happiness from me, the only joy I have had since I lost my wife. Yes, if I had not had the bad luck to meet that old beau I should still possess Josepha, for, you know, I would never have let her go into the theatre; she would have stayed obscure, good, and my own.'

'Oh! if you had seen her eight years ago! Slight and highly-strung, a golden Andalusian, as they call it, with black hair shining like satin, an eye that could flash lightning, and long dark lashes, with the distinction of a duchess in every movement that she made, with a poor girl's modesty and an unassuming grace, as sweet and pretty in her ways as a wild deer. And now, because of Hulot, her charm and innocence have all become bird-lime, a trap set to catch five-franc pieces. The child is now the queen of demi-reps, as they say. She's up to all the artful dodges now, she who used to know nothing at all, hardly even the meaning of the expression!'

As he said this, the retired perfumer wiped away tears that had risen to his eyes. The sincerity of his grief had its effect on Madame Hulot, and she roused herself from the reverie into which she had fallen.

'Well, Madame, is a man likely to find a treasure like that again at fifty-two years of age? At fifty-two love costs thirty thousand francs per annum: I have the figures from your husband; and I love Celestine too well to ruin her. Seeing you on that first evening when you received us, I could not understand how that scoundrel Hulot could keep a Jenny Cadine. You looked like an empress. You were not thirty, Madame,' he went on; 'to me you seemed young; you were lovely.' Pon my word of honour, that day, I was stirred to the depths. I said to myself, "Old Hulot neglects his wife, and if I had not my Josepha she would suit me to a T." Ah! pardon me, that's an expression from my old trade. The perfumer breaks through now and again; that's what stands in the way of my aspiring to be a Deputy.'

'And so when I was done down in such a treacherous way by the Baron-for between old cronies like us our friends' mistresses should have been sacrosanct - I swore to myself that I would take his wife. It was only fair. The Baron would not be able to say a word, and there was nothing at all he could do. When I told you of the state of my heart, you showed me the door as if I were a dog with mange at the first words, and in doing that you made my love twice as strong-my infatuation if you like-and you shall be mine!'

'Indeed? How?'

'I do not know how, but that's the way it's going to be. You see, Madame, an idiot of a perfumer-retired! - who has only one idea in his head, is in a stronger position than a clever man with thousands. I am mad about you, and you are my revenge! That's as if I were in love twice over. I speak my mind to you, a man with

his mind made up. Just as bluntly as you say to me "I will not be yours", I tell you soberly what I think. I'm putting my cards on the table, as the saying is. Yes, you'll be mine, when the right moment comes. Oh! even if you were fifty, you should still be my mistress. and you shall, for I don't expect any difficulty with your husband....'

Madame Hulot cast a look of such frozen horror at this calculating businessman that he thought she had gone out of her mind, and stopped.

'You asked for it; you covered me with your contempt; you defied me, and now I have told you!' he said, feeling some need to justify the brutality of his last words.

'Oh! my daughter, my daughter!' cried the Baroness despairingly.

'Ah! there's nothing more I can say!' Crevel went on. 'The day Josepha was taken from me I was like a tigress robbed of her whelps ... In fact, I was just in the same state as I see you now. Your daughter! For me, she is the means of getting you. Yes, I wrecked your daughter's marriage! ... and you will not marry her without my help! However beautiful Mademoiselle Hortense may be, she needs a dowry.'

'Alas! yes,' said the Baroness, wiping her eyes.

'Well, try asking the Baron for ten thousand francs,' returned Crevel, striking his attitude again.

He held it for a moment, like an actor pausing to underline a point.

'If he had the money, he would give it to the girl who will take Josepha's place!' he said, speaking with increasing urgency and vehemence. 'On the road he has taken, does a man stop? He's too fond of women, to begin with! (There's a way of moderation in everything, a *juste milieu*, as our King has said). And then vanity has a hand in it! He's a handsome man! He'll see you all reduced to beggary for the sake of his pleasure. Indeed you're on the high road to ruin already. Look, since I first set foot in your house, you haven't once been able to do up your drawing room. The words HARD UP shriek from every split in these covers. Show me the son-in-law who will not back out in a fright at sight of such ill concealed evidence of the cruellest kind of poverty there is, the poverty of families that hold their heads high! I have been a shopkeeper and I know. There's no eye so keen as a Paris shopkeeper's for telling real wealth from wealth that's only a sham ... You haven't got a penny,' he said, lowering his voice. 'It shows in everything, down to your servant's coat. Would you like me to let you into shocking secrets that have been kept from you?'

'Monsieur,' said Madame Hulot, who was holding a soaking handkerchief to streaming eyes. 'That's enough! No more!'

'Well, my son-in-law gives money to his father. That's what I wanted to tell you at the beginning, when I was talking about how your son lives. But I'm watching over my daughter's interests. Don't you worry.'

'Oh! if I could only marry my daughter and die!' cried the unhappy woman, her self-control breaking.

'Well, here's the way to do it!'

Madame looked at Crevel in sudden hope, with such an instant change of expression that it should have been enough in itself to touch the man, and make him abandon his ridiculous ambition.

'You will be beautiful for ten years yet,' went on Crevel, his arms folded, his gaze on infinity. 'Be kind to me, and Mademoiselle Hortense's marriage is arranged. Hulot has given me the right, as I told you, to propose the bargain quite bluntly, and he won't be angry. In the last three years I have been able to make some profitable

investments, because my adventures have been restricted. I have three hundred thousand francs to spend, over and above my capital, and the money's yours.'

'Go, Monsieur,' said Madame Hulot; 'go, and never let me see you again. I had to find out what lay behind your base behaviour in the matter of the marriage planned for Hortense. Yes, base,' she repeated, as Crevel made a gesture. 'How could you let such private grudges and rancours affect a poor girl, an innocent and lovely creature? If it had not been for the need to know that gave my mother's heart no peace, you would never have spoken to me again, you would never again have crossed my threshold. Thirty-two years of honourable life, of a wife's loyalty, are not to be razed by the assaults of Monsieur Crevel!'

'Retired perfumer, successor to Cesar Birotteau at the Queen of Roses, rue Saint-Honore,' said Crevel ironically. 'Former Deputy Mayor, Captain of the National Guard, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, exactly like my predecessor.'

'Monsieur,' the Baroness continued, 'Monsieur Hulot, after twenty years of fidelity, may have grown tired of his wife—that concerns me, and only me; but you see, Monsieur, that he has preserved some reticence regarding his infidelity, for I did not know that he had succeeded you in Mademoiselle Josepha's heart.'

'Oh! at a price, Madame! That song-bird has cost him more than a hundred thousand francs in the last two years. Ah! you haven't reached the end of trouble yet.'

'We need not prolong this discussion further, Monsieur Crevel. I do not intend to give up, for your sake, the happiness that a mother feels when she is able to embrace her children with a heart uncantered by remorse, and knows that she is respected and loved by her children. I mean to give my soul back to God unstained.'

'Amen!' said Crevel, his face distorted by the diabolical bitterness of aspirants of his kind who have failed after a renewed attempt to gain their ends. 'You don't know what extreme poverty is like - the shame, the disgrace ... I have tried to open your eyes. I wanted to save you, you and your daughter too! So be it! You shall spell out a modern parable of the prodigal father from the first letter to the last. Your tears and your pride affect my feelings, for to see a woman one loves cry is dreadful!' Crevel went on, sitting down. 'All I can promise you, dear Adeline, is to do nothing to injure you, or your husband; but never send anyone to me to make inquiries. That's all!'

'Oh, what shall I do?' cried Madame Hulot.

Until this moment the Baroness had held out bravely under the three-fold torture that the interview's plain speaking inflicted upon her heart, for she was suffering as a woman, a mother and a wife. As a matter of fact, so long as her son's father-in-law had shown himself overbearing and aggressive, she had found strength in the very opposition of her resistance to the shopkeeper's brutality; but the good nature he evinced in the midst of his exasperation as a rebuffed lover and a handsome Captain of the National Guard turned down released the tension of nerves that had been strained to breaking point. She wrung her hands, dissolved into tears, and was in such a state of dazed exhaustion that she let Crevel, on his knees again, kiss her hands.

'Oh God! where am I to turn?' she went on, wiping her eyes. 'Can a mother see her daughter pine before her eyes and look on calmly? What is to become of this being so splendidly endowed, by her own fine character and by its nurture, too, in her pure sheltered upbringing at her mother's side? There are days when she wanders sadly in the garden, not knowing why. I find her with tears in her eyes.'

'She is twenty one,' said Crevel.

'Ought I to send her to a convent?' said the Baroness. 'At such times of crisis religion is often powerless against nature, and the most piously brought up girls lose their heads! But do get up, Monsieur. Do you not see that everything is finished between us now, that you are hateful to me, that you have struck down a mother's last hope?'

'And suppose I were to raise it again?' he said.

Madame Hulot stared at Crevel with a frenzied look that touched him; but he crushed the pity in his heart, because of those words 'you are hateful to me'. Virtue is always a little too much of a piece. It has no knowledge of the shades between black and white, or of the compromises possible between different human temperaments, by means of which a way may be manoeuvred out of a false position.

'A girl as beautiful as Mademoiselle Hortense is not married off in these days without a dowry,' Crevel observed, assuming his stiff attitude again. 'Your daughter's beauty is of the kind that scares husbands off; she's like a thoroughbred horse, which needs too much care and money spent on it to attract many purchasers. Just try walking along with a woman like that on your arm! Everybody will stare at you, and follow you, and covet your wife. That sort of success makes lots of men uncomfortable because they don't want to have to kill lovers; for, after all, one never kills more than one. In the position you're in, you can choose one of only three ways to marry your daughter; with my help - but you won't have it - that's one; by finding an old man of sixty; very rich, childless, and wanting children - difficult, but they do exist. There are so many old men who take Josephas or Jenny Cadines that surely you must come across one ready to make that sort of fool of himself with the blessing of the law - if I did not have my Celestine, and our two grandchildren, I would marry Hortense myself. That's two! The third way is the easiest...'

Madame Hulot raised her head, and gazed anxiously at the retired perfumer.

'Paris is a meeting place, swarming with talent, for all the forceful vigorous young men who spring up like wild seedlings in French soil. They haven't a roof over their heads, but they are equal to anything, and set on making their fortune. Your humble servant was just such a young man in his time, and I have known some others! Twenty years ago du Tillet had nothing, and Popinot not much more. They were plodding along, both of them, in old Birotteau's shop, with their minds made up to get on; and, as I see it, that determination was worth more to them than gold. You can run through money, but you don't reach the bottom of the stuff you're made of! All I had was determination to get on, and spunk And now you see du Tillet rubbing shoulders with all the nobs. Little Popinot became the richest druggist in the rue des Lombards, rose to be a Deputy, and there he is, in office, a Minister! Well, one of these *condottieri*, as they call them - freebooters of finance, the pen, or the artist's brush - is the only hope you have in Paris of marrying a beautiful girl without a sou, because they are game enough for anything. Monsieur Popinot married mademoiselle Birotteau when she hadn't a penny. Young men of that kind are mad; they believe in love, just as they believe in their luck and their own wits! Look for a man of enterprise and vigour to fall in love with your daughter, and he will marry her without worrying about cash. You must admit that I'm pretty generous, for an enemy, giving you advice against my own interest!'

'Ah, Monsieur Crevel, if only you would be my friend and give up your absurd ideas!'

'Absurd? Madame, don't rush on your own destruction. Consider your position... I love you, and you'll be mine! I want to say, one day, to Hulot: "You took Josepha from me. Now I have your wife!" It's the old law of an eye for an eye, and I'll stick to my plan - unless, of course, you should become too much ugly. I'll get my way, and I'll tell you why.' He struck his attitude, staring at Madame Hulot.

'You will never find an old man or a young lover either,' he resumed, after a pause; 'because you love your daughter too much to expose her to the little games of an old rake, and because you, Baroness Hulot, sister-in-law of the old Lieutenant-General who commanded the veteran grenadiers of the Old Guard, will never resign yourself to looking for the young man of force and energy where he is to be found, because he might be an ordinary working man, like many a millionaire nowadays who was an ordinary mechanic ten years ago, or a simple works overseer, or an ordinary foreman in a factory. And then, watching your daughter, twenty years old, driven by the urges of youth, capable of disgracing you, you will say to yourself: "Better that I should dishonour myself than that she should; and if Monsieur Crevel is willing to keep my secret, I'll go and earn my daughter's dowry - two hundred thousand francs for ten years' attachment to that old shopkeeper who knows how to get on ... old Crevel!" I am vexing you, and what I say is shockingly immoral, isn't it? But if you had been seized by an irresistible passion, you would be arguing with yourself, trying to think up reasons for yielding to me, such as women always do find when they're in love. Well, Hortense's plight will suggest these reasons to your heart, ways of settling things with your conscience!'

'Hortense still has her uncle.'

'Who? Old Fischer?... He's winding up his business, and that's the Baron's fault too-he uses his rake on all the cash-boxes within reach.'

'Count Hulot..'

'Oh your husband, Madame, has already squandered the old Lieutenant-General's savings; he furnished his opera-singer's house with them. Come now, are you going to let me go without some reason for hoping?'

'Good-bye, Monsieur. A passion for a woman of my age is soon cured, and you will come to see things in a Christian light. God protects the unfortunate.'

The Baroness rose, in order to oblige the Captain to retreat, and drove him before her into the drawing room.

'Should the beautiful Madame Hulot have to live among worn-out trash like this?' he said. And he pointed to an old lamp, the flaking gilt of a chandelier, the threadbare carpet: the tatters of opulence that made the great white, red and gold room seem like the corpse of Empire gaiety.

'Virtue, Monsieur, casts its own radiance over everything here. I have no desire to buy magnificent furnishings by using the beauty you attribute to me as "bird-lime, a trap to catch five-franc pieces"!'

The Captain bit his lip as he recognised the expressions that he had used to stigmatize Josepha's greed.

'And all this unswerving fidelity is for whose sake?' he said.

By this time the Baroness had conducted the retired perfumer as far as the door.

'For a libertine's!' he wound up, pursing his lips smugly, like a virtuous man and a millionaire.

'If you were right, Monsieur, there would be some merit in my constancy, that's all.'

She left the Captain, after bowing to him as one bows to

some importunate bore to get rid of him, and turned away too quickly to see him for the last time striking his pose. She went to reopen the doors that she had closed, and did not observe the menacing gesture with which Crevel took his leave. She walked proudly, her head held high, as martyrs walked in the Colosseum. All the same, she had exhausted her strength, and she let herself sink on the divan in her blue boudoir as if she were on the point of fainting, and lay there with her eyes fixed on the little ruined summer-house where her daughter was chattering to Cousin Bette.

From the first days of her marriage until that moment, the Baroness had loved her husband, as Josephine had come in the end to love Napoleon; with an admiring love, a maternal love, with abject devotion. If she had not known the details which Crevel had just given her, she knew very well that for the past twenty years Baron Hulot had been habitually unfaithful to her; but she had sealed her eyes with lead; she had wept in secret, and no word of reproach had ever escaped her lips. To reward her for this angelic kindness, she had gained her husband's veneration, and was worshipped by him as a kind of divinity.

A woman's regard for her husband, the respect with which she hedges him about, are contagious in the family. Hortense thought of her father as a perfect husband, a model quite without fault. As for her brother, he had been brought up in an atmosphere of admiration of the Baron, in whom everyone saw one of the giants who had stood by Napoleon's side, and he knew he owed his own position to his father's name and standing, the regard in which his father was held. Besides, the impressions of childhood hold their influence long, and he still feared his father. Even if he had suspected the irregularities disclosed by Crevel, he would have been too respectful to protest, and also he would have found excuses, looking at such lapses from a man's point of view.

But now, the extraordinary devotion of this beautiful and magnanimous woman demands some explanation; and, briefly, here is Madame Hulot's story.

From a village on the extreme frontiers of Lorraine, at the foot of the Vosges, three brothers named Fischer, simple peasants, came to join what was called the Army of the Rhine, as a result of the Republican call-up.

In 1799, the second of the brothers, Andre, a widower and Madame Hulot's father, left his daughter in the care of his elder brother Pierre Fischer, who had been wounded in 1797 and invalided out of the Army, and had then undertaken some small-scale contracting work for Military Transport, business which he owed to the favour of the Commissary general, Hulot d'Ervy. By a natural enough chance, Hulot, on his way to Strasbourg, met the Fischer family. Adeline's father and his younger brother were at that time employed as contractors for the supply of forage in Alsace.

Adeline, then aged sixteen, was comparable in her loveliness to the famous Madame du Barry, like her a daughter of Lorraine. She belonged to the company of perfect, dazzling beauties, of women like Madame Tallien, whom Nature fashions with peculiar care, bestowing on them her most precious gifts: distinction, dignity, grace, refinement, elegance; an incomparable complexion, its colour compounded in the mysterious workshops of chance. All such beautiful women resemble each other. Bianca Capello, whose portrait is one of Bronzino's masterpieces, Jean Goujon's *Venus*, whose original was the famous Diane de Poitiers, that Signora Olympia whose portrait is in the Doria gallery, and Ninon, Madame du Barry, Madame Tallien, Mademoiselle Georges, Madame Recamier, were all women who remained

lovely inspite of the years, their passions, and their lives of excess. There are similarities in their build and proportions, and in the character of their beauty, striking enough to persuade one that there must exist an Aphrodisian current in the ocean of generation, from which spring all these Venuses, daughters of the same salt wave.

Adeline Fischer, one of the most beautiful of this divine race, possessed the noble features, the curving lines, the veined flesh, of women born to be queens. The blonde hair that our mother Eve had from God's own hand, an empress's stature, a stately bearing, an imposing profile, the modesty of a country upbringing - these made men come to a halt as she passed, enchanted, like amateurs of art before a Raphael. And so, seeing her, the Commissary general mad Mademoiselle Adeline Fischer his wife forthwith, to the great surprise of the Fischers, who had all been brought up to look up to their betters.

The eldest, the soldier of 1792, who had been seriously wounded in the attack on Wissembourg, worshipped the Emperor Napoleon and everything that pertained to the Grand Army. Andre and Johann spoke with respect of Commissary general Hulot, a protege of the Emperor's and the man, besides, to whom they owed their prosperity; for Hulot d'Ervy, finding them men of intelligence and integrity, had taken them from army forage wagons and put them in charge of important special supplies. The Fischer brothers had done good service in the campaign of 1804. Hulot, after the peace, had obtained for them their contract to supply forage in Alsace, not knowing that he himself would be sent later to Strasbourg, to make preparations there for the campaign of 1806.

For the young peasant girl, this marriage was something like an Assumption. The lovely Adeline passed without transition from her village mud to the paradise of the Imperial court; for it was at that time that the Commissary general, one of the most trustworthy and most active and indefatigable members of his corps, was made Baron, given a place near the Emperor, and attached to the Imperial Guard. The beautiful village maid had the spirit to educate herself, out of love for her husband, with whom she was quite madly in love. It is easy to understand why, for the Commissary general was a masculine counterpart of Adeline, as outstanding among men as she was among women, one of the elect company of handsome men. Tall, well built, fair with blue eyes of a gaiety, fire and charm that were irresistible with an elegant and graceful figure, he was remarkable even among the d'Orsays, the Forbins, the Ouvrards, and the whole array of the Empire beaux. He was a man accustomed to making conquests and imbued with the ideas of Directory times regarding women, yet his gay career was at that period interrupted for a considerable time by his attachment to his wife.

For Adeline, the Baron was therefore from the beginning a kind of god who could do no wrong. She owed everything to him; fortune - she had a carriage, a fine house, all the luxury of the period; happiness, for she was openly loved; a title - she was a Baroness; celebrity - she was known as the beautiful Madame Hulot, and in Paris! To complete her success, she had the honour of refusing the Emperor's addresses; and he presented her with a diamond necklace and repeatedly singled her out for marks of his interest, continuing to ask from time to time: 'And is the lovely Madame Hulot still as virtuous as ever?' in the tone of a man prepared to exact vengeance from anyone who had triumphed where he had failed.

It does not require much penetration, then, to understand the causes, affecting a simple, unsophisticated, and magnanimous soul - of the fanatical strain in Madame Hulot's

love. Having once fairly said to herself that in her eyes her husband could do no wrong, she became, of her own volition, in her inmost being, the humble, devoted and blind servant of the man who had made her what she was.

Note, moreover, that she was endowed with great good sense, the good sense of the common people, which gave her education solidity. In society, she was accustomed to talk little, spoke ill of no one, made no effort to shine. She reflected upon everything, listened, and modelled herself upon the women most respected for their integrity and good breeding.

In 1815 Hulot followed the example of Prince de Wissembourg, one of his intimate friends, and became one of the organizers of that improvised army whose defeat brought the Napoleonic era to an end, at Waterloo. In 1816 the Baron was one of the most hated men of the Feltre Ministry, and was reappointed to the Commissariat only in 1823, when he was needed on account of the war in Spain. In 1830 he reappeared in the administration as Deputy Minister, at the time when Louis-Philippe was levying a kind of conscription among the old Napoleonic adherents. Since the advent to the throne of the younger branch, which he had actively supported, he had remained in the administration, an indispensable Director at the War Office. He had already been given his Marshal's baton, and there was nothing more the King could do for him, short of making him a Minister, or a Peer of France.

With no occupation in the years between 1818 and 1823, the Baron had gone on active service - in a campaign against women. Madame Hulot dated her Hector's first infidelities from the final dissolution of the Empire. The Baroness, then, had held for dozen years of her married life the position of *prima donna assoluta*, unchallenged. She still continued to enjoy the inveterate old affection that husbands bear to wives who have resigned themselves to playing the part of good and kind companions. She knew that no rival would stand for two hours against one word of reproach from her, but she shut her eyes, she stopped her ears, her wish was to know nothing of her husband's conduct outside his home. In the end, she came to treat her Hector as a mother treats a spoilt child. Three years before the conversation with Crevel that has been described, Hortense had recognised her father at the Varietes, in a first tier stage box, in Jenny Cadine's company, and exclaimed: 'There's Papa!'

'You are mistaken, my dear; he is with the Marshal,' the Baroness replied.

The Baroness had certainly seen Jenny Cadine; but instead of being sick at heart when she saw that she was so pretty, she had said to herself: 'That rascal Hector is very lucky.' She suffered nevertheless; she gave way secretly to storms of violent feeling; but as soon as she saw her Hector again, she saw again her twelve years of pure happiness, and was quite incapable of uttering a single word of complaint. She would very much have liked the Baron to confide in her; but she had never dared to let him know that she knew of his escapades, out of respect for him. Such excessive delicacy is found only in girls of noble character sprung from the people, who know how to take blows without returning them. In their veins flows the blood of the early martyrs. Well-born girls, as their husband's equals, feel a need to bait their husbands, to score off them as in a game of billiards, to make up for their acts of tolerance by biting remarks, in a spirit of revengeful spite and in order to assure themselves either of their own superiority or of their right to have their revenge.

The Baroness had an ardent admirer in her brother-in-law, Lieutenant-General Hulot, the venerable Colonel of the Infantry

Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard, who was to be given a Marshal's baton in his later years. This veteran, after commanding from 1830 to 1834 the military region that included the Breton Departments of France (the theatre of his exploits in 1799 and 1800), had come to live in Paris, near his brother, for whom he still felt a fatherly affection. This old soldier's heart was instinctively drawn to his sister-in-law. He admired her as the noblest, the saintliest creature of her sex. He had not married because he had hoped to meet a second Adeline, and had vainly searched for her in twenty provinces during a score of campaigns. Rather than suffer any diminution of the esteem in which she was held by the pure-souled unimpeachable old Republican, of whom Napoleon said: 'That fine fellow Hulot is the most obstinate of Republicans, but he will never betray me,' Adeline would have endured far worse pain than that she had just experienced. But this old man, aged seventy-two, broken by thirty campaigns, wounded for the twenty-seventh time at Waterloo, gave Adeline admiration, not protection. The poor Count, among other infirmities, could hear only with the aid of ear-trumpet.

So long as Baron Hulot d'Ervy was a handsome man, his light loves made no inroads on his fortune; but at fifty it was necessary to propitiate the Graces. At that age, love suffers an old man's change into vice: inordinate vanities become involved in it. At about that time Adeline watched her husband grow unbelievably finicky about his toilet, dyeing his hair and side whiskers, wearing belts and corsets. He was determined to remain handsome at all costs; and this concern for his personal appearance, a weakness which he had once found contemptible, he carried into the minutest details. Finally, Adeline began to realise that a river of gold was being poured out for the Baron's mistresses, whose source was her own home. In eight years a considerable fortune had been dissipated, and so completely that two years previously, at the time when Hulot's son was setting up his separate establishment, the Baron had been forced to admit to his wife that his salary constituted their entire resources.

'Where will this lead us?' had been Adeline's comment.

'Don't worry,' the Councillor of State had replied. 'I shall turn over my salary to you and provide for a settlement for Hortense and our future, by doing some business.'

His wife's profound faith in the ability and outstanding qualities, in the talents and character of her husband, had allayed her momentary misgivings.

And so it is not hard to imagine what the Baroness's thoughts were, and her tears, after Crevel's departure. The poor woman had for the past two years known herself to be living at the bottom of a pit, but she had thought that she was there alone. She had had no knowledge of how her son's marriage had been arranged; she did not know of Hector's liaison with the grasping Josepha; she had hoped that no one in the world knew of her sorrows. Now, if Crevel was talking so freely of the Baron's dissipations, Hector was going to suffer loss of respect and reputation. She had caught a glimpse, through the injured ex-perfumer's vulgarly expansive talk, of the hateful convivialities which had led to the young lawyer's marriage. Two loose young women had been the priestesses of that hymen, first proposed during some drunken revel, in an atmosphere of humiliating intimacy and the degrading familiarities of two tipsy old men!

'He has quite forgotten Hortense!' she said to herself. 'And yet he sees her everyday. Will he find a husband for her among his good-for-nothing cronies?'

She was speaking only as a mother at that moment, and the wife's voice was silenced, for she could see Hortense, with her cousin Bette, laughing the unrestrained laughter of reckless youth, and she knew that such nervous outbursts of mirth were a symptom as much to be feared as the tearful reveries of her solitary rambles in the garden.

ADDA AT NUKKAD

LETTER FROM M.L. DANTWALA & REPLY

23 - 1 - 97

Dear Vinayak,

Many thanks for sending 3 issues of 'Mankind'. I have read a few articles and hope to read others in due course.

I must congratulate you for keeping the flame kindled by Dr. Lohia glowing.

The only thing I dislike is the use of harsh words. But that is my weakness. I do not want to blame you.

Keep up.

With Best Wishes.

Yours Sincerely,

M.L. Dantwala.

25 - 3 - 97

Dear Shri Dantwala,

I thank you for your kind words about *Mankind*.

Your complaint about harsh language has been discussed in *Adda At Nukkad* on several occasions (*MK* Jan/Feb 96, pp. 65-67; *MK*, July '96, pp. 50-51, *MK* Aug/ Sep. '96, pp. 49-50.)

Nevertheless, let us discuss the matter for a fourth time.

There are several aspects which I may reiterate and re-notice.

1. Our ruling classes are largely composed of upper castes, who are a breed apart. They are inured to shameless, flagrant criminal behaviour. To them the mass of the people are not human but sub-humans, who can be kicked about, openly abused and treated like dirt. As untouchables, unapproachable ones to be kept away at varying distances, and on occasions even to be made "invisible" ! (Please remember the case of Census Officials, who found trembling occupants of huts near Madurai, who refused to get counted, and emerge out of their houses in sunlight !)

Such people who enforce caste interdictions by rape, arson and murder, need to be roundly condemned.

Let me concretize :

- a) Through its Attorney General, the Narasimha Rao govt. openly admitted to the Supreme Court that "a nexus existed between politicians,

bureaucrats and criminals" ! It pleaded helplessness ! Even after this official admission, Narasimha Rao did not resign !

- b) Did Narasimha Rao, or his numerous Cabinet colleagues resign after Narasimha Rao was indicted in the Courts for cheating of Lakhubhai Pathak, bribery of JMM MPs, complicity in the Jain Hawala Case, or the Urea Scam ? He refused to resign even as CPP leader after the Congress Party had suffered its worst electoral defeat in history !

- c) The Minister for Environment, Kamal Nath diverts the Beas river for the Span motel owned by him and his family ! Can chicanery go further ?

- d) Manmohan Singh and his Ministry were unanimously condemned by a Joint Parliamentary Committee, and this wretched Finance Minister, whose nodal ministry was under indictment, keeps submitting one ATR (Action Taken Report) after another, to the Lok Sabha, which keeps shoving the ATRs back till the House itself gets dissolved ! Have the people of India recovered a single paisa from the hundreds of crores fraudulently pocketed by Harshad Mehta and his gang ? Have soft-talk and soft-soap with such hardened criminals fetched anything for the people of the country ?

As I wrote to Shri. Niranjan Mehta; Do we tell a rapist "Please, Sir, take care not to break my glass bangles, whilst you are at it !"

Do you really need more instances of flagrant criminality by the Congress-*naukarshah* combine that has been ruling us for over 50 years ?

2. Language is a mere instrument to express our objectives. Our language should make it clear to our rulers that we are also a breed apart ! That we do not seek, or keep the door open, for an eventual rotten compromise !

That is why - Lohia's language was considered by many to be harsh !

3. Our current culture is essentially a

comprador-*naukarshahi* culture. They constantly play the game of one upmanship. They will insist that you dress properly, whatever "properly" means; that you speak softly and politely; that you observe due form; and fill up endless number of forms properly; that you speak correct English as per their notions of vocabulary and accent; that you wield the knife and the fork properly; and so on.

They first want you to observe all these meticulous forms, and then they want to sit on your head !

Gentle language and polite manners when insisted upon, are always political ploys. The compradors and the *naukarshahs* want to break your spirit before they move in to carry away the swag of public funds !

4. I write passionately as I have a passion for truth and justice !

I cannot write otherwise !

I am not a reformist !

I am not seeking a compromise !

I want nothing for myself ! What can they give me, which I will accept ? NOTHING !

I cannot be bribed, and cannot be frightened ! And I cannot be bamboozled by silly sophisticated File Notings.

Mankind lays bare its chest to receive and record every wound, every insult, every infamy visited upon the deprived, the dispossessed, and disheartened masses of our country.

Mankind calls upon history to bear witness !

Retribution shall be extracted to the last penny, from every landlord, who has raped a *Dalit* girl, every big bureaucrat who has stolen from the public treasury, every comprador capitalist who has compromised national interests and every corrupt Congressman who has made merry whilst the people cried in pain.

Historic justice shall be done and historic accounts take a long time to square up ! As Swiss Bankers are discovering now, more than 50 years after they had swallowed the monies of the Holocaust victims.

Nothing shall be forgotten or forgiven.

I have no personal grievance.

Mankind's grievances are all public grievances, openly ventilated ! History grinds slowly but inexorably.

I will sum up :

1. Our rulers are a breed apart of *Dwijas*. They understand only that language which is forceful and unrelenting.
2. Our critical language should make clear, from the outset, that no compromise is available.
3. The game of one-upmanship is over.

4. History will extract total retribution.

As a matter of fact, I do not believe that being intelligent adults, the bureaucrats and the compradors are at all bothered about "the forms of address". They are not concerned with the language, but rather with the substance. They may pretend to be "hurt" by my strong language, but this is not really so. What worries them is the substance of what I am saying, and its uncompromising nature. For instance, when I say that the "Constituent Assembly of 1946-49 was a farce, a joke, a travesty, an absurdity and a betrayal", which is absolutely true; and when I demand that "a new Constituent Assembly be formed for the FIRST TIME on the basis of direct, universal, equal, adult franchise", they know that my demand is valid. But they don't want to concede it, however truthful and valid my demand may be. Therefore, they must object to my way, they must distract attention from the content to the form! How else can they function?

Most of those who call themselves journalists use the term merely as a euphemism for advertisement canvassers; and the bigger the names, the closer they stand to the advertisement collection drive. They usually combine this job with that of publicising the *naukarshahi fatvas* which are quite conducive to the propagation of Westernised consumerism. Would you really want me to fall into such a disgusting groove?

Kindly think about all the points that I have made.

With warm personal regards,
Exe. Edr.

COMMUNICATION FROM BHOOMIHAKKA ANDOLAN SANGATHANA AND REPLY

17th december 1996

The Editor
'Mankind'
Pune.

Dear Sir,

This is to bring to your notice the sad plight of the Adivasis in Ahmednagar District, Maharashtra State. As in many parts of the country, they are deprived of natural resources and have very little employment opportunities.

The recent atrocities by government and police officers towards adivasis residing on Maharashtra State Government land, which was acquired under Ceiling Act and subsequently transferred to MSFC and then left uncultivated for a number of years, has put the adivasis in this area in a predicament. The adivasis have occupied

many portions of this land and had been surviving on them. Most of them have their huts in this land. Now the government officials have started harassing these hapless adivasis by destroying their huts and evicting them using police force. Many of them are arrested and we are expecting many more such arrests. It is surprising that rich farmers who have encroached on the government land are not evicted in the same manner.

We have been trying to raise this issue before all relevant government officials / bodies but have received very little support. We thought on the basis of basic human rights we could bring up this matter before your esteemed newspaper. The tribals, who have been oppressed and neglected so far are now silently carrying out this struggle. Their patience can not be taken for granted. We earnestly request you to look into the matter and if possible bring it to the notice of the public so that the Maharashtra government will stop harassing these landless people by evicting them from the state owned land.

It may be noted that large number of *melavas*, demonstrations, *morchas* to various police stations and concerned government offices have drawn very little attention to this section of the people.

Sincerely,
Pradeep Dushing
Adivasi Bhumi Hukka Andolan
Shingva, Kopergaon,
Ahmednagar,
Maharashtra.

Right to Land

Organisations such as, *Nashik Mahasul Vibhag (Revenue Division) Kashtakari Sangh, Vajapur Taluka Gramin Kashtakari Sangh, Garib Shetkari and Shetmajur Parishad, Shirampur, Dravid Mukti Morcha, Ahmednagar Zilla Bhatakya Vimukta Jati-Jamati Vikas Sanghatana, Dang Seva Mandal*, as well as other activists sharing the same values and desiring metamorphosis gathered together in Kopergaon, Shirampur and Vajapur talukas, and took a decision to implement some concrete action plan to support and expand the tribals' struggle for their right to land.

Activities of the Adivasi Sangram Parishad in Shirampur Taluka

A convention was organised on May 15, 1995, at Punatamba in Kopergaon taluka to delineate and discuss such issues as the tribals' existence, their self respect and dignity, problems of the landless, new economic policy, etc., as well as other problems of tribals and of

the agricultural labourers from the three talukas, Kopergaon, Shirampur and Vajapur. As a result, *Nashik Mahasul Vibhag Kashtakari Sangh, Vajapur Taluka Gramin Kashtakari Sangh, and Adivasi Sangram Parishad* jointly undertook, during June 7 to 10, 1995, a campaign for awakening awareness among the tribals and the agricultural labour. This campaign highlighted not only the problems of the tribals but also those of the other deprived nomadic and semi-nomadic communities and of the landless agricultural labour from other backward classes.

In Kopergaon and Shirampur talukas, there are thousands of acres of vacant land of the Maharashtra State Farming Corporation (MSFC). This public land is covered with dense, thick forests of *firangi gum-Arabic trees*, while private lands of the farmers are being cultivated. These forests on the public lands are of little use to human beings or even birds and animals. It is imperative that these vacant lands are brought under cultivation at the earliest in the interest of increasing national income (GDP).

Tribals Organisation and Action Plan

Around 1990, there was a tribal agitation for forest lands in Rahuri and Sangamner talukas. The tribals from Kopergaon and Shirampur were also inspired to launch a movement for possession of public lands. It was to some extent successful too. Consequently, tribals were roused to protect their rights, also to protect themselves, and thus participated in large numbers in the movement.

Launching of the Agitation

Initially, Shingwa village from Kopergaon taluka spearheaded the agitation. Immediately thereafter, tribals, backwards, nomads, semi-nomads and other landless from several villages in Kohki, Rui and Kopergaon talukas joined hands together, and began taking possession of vacant public lands, like those of the MSFC, grasslands and pasture lands, village lands, river-banks likely to be inundated in monsoon, and Inam lands. However, as the agitation started gathering momentum, the number of selfish leaders joining it also rose. The agitators threw them aside. Those who were in possession of lands for many years also participated in the agitation.

Tribals claim to public lands

Vacant public lands by right belong to tribals and the other-landless. It is the right given to them by the Constitution,

Reverberations of the Agitation.

The tribals and backwards in this region have organised themselves and are being motivated to adopt the process of taking their own decisions in their struggle for their rights. Ignoring their caste distinctions, all the masses who were for generations and ages marginalised have now taken a position. They demand from others particularly the entrenched power-wielders recognition for their existence. Self-respect has been instilled in them by the agitation. There is now a possibility that for safeguarding the just stirred self-respect, for leading a life of dignity, they may sacrifice their life. That is the emotional impact of the agitation.

(Translated from Marathi by Dr. Suneei Rao.)

20 - 3 - 97

Dear friends,

Mankind can never support any agitation that is based on the premise:

"This public land is covered with dense, thick forests of firangi gum-Arabic trees, while private lands of the farmers are being cultivated. These forests on the public lands are of little use to human beings or even birds and animals. It is imperative that these vacant lands are brought under cultivation".

There are no "useless dense forests" anywhere in the world, least of all in India, where over 60% of the land area is already under cultivation, even if it is only fallow or is used as pasture. Hardly 10 to 15 percent is under forests, that also mostly on paper. Actually vast-tracks of so-called forests have been denuded of all green cover.

Forests are the lungs of our people, and they should not be degraded.

The only long-term solution to the problem of joblessness in our villages is Industrialization, in which we include Development of Craft-Workshops and Small Scale Industries.

There are many agro-related occupations like Khadi, bee-keeping, oil-pressing, wine-making and so on, which can be intensively pursued in different regions of the country.

A General Rule should be followed. No allocations made under various heads of Tribal Development Programmes should go to any non-tribal. Even the administrative machinery handling such funds should be manned entirely by tribals.

Educational and vocational training institutions must be immediately expanded in all tribal tracts.

Literacy Campaigns, Adult Education Programmes, and Health Care Workshops and Seminars should be immediately

instituted.

Cooperative Societies of Tribals must handle all Forest Produce (*Tendu* leaves, Straw, Bamboo, Sal Seeds, *Mahua* flowers, *Tadi* Products, and so on.)

A special programme of cultivation of Medicinal Herbs should be launched and the knowledge of tribals must be utilised to develop them intensively.

All major and medium scale irrigation works should be banned till such time as all Minor Irrigation Works (lakes, tanks, wells, etc) are fully developed.

An intensive road development programme must be launched to connect all the villages of every *tehsil* to the District, State and National Roadways Grid.

Tourism of interest to village folk and tribals should be immediately expanded. *Yatras* and *Dindis* to local pilgrimage points and forts should be concentrated upon. The State should take no interest in development of tourist spots that are of interest to mainly foreign travellers and the idle rich of India, who want to waste hundred of crores of rupees on Hill Stations and Holiday Resorts. Let tourism become a weapon of Mass Education, especially for the school children of the tribals, the SCs and the OBCs.

As we have said, all personnel dealing with tribal affairs must be recruited from the tribals themselves.

Not a single penny of Tribal Welfare Funds should be spent upon, or through, any non-tribal.

Friends, you should sit together and work out a concrete plan on the lines suggested above.

Cultivation of more land is not the solution to our problems.

We should not allow the *naukarshahs* and the politicians to engage us in a War with Environment. We must conserve our natural resources and our Environment. We must nurture the few Dense Forests which are still with us. There should be a harmonious development of Man and Nature.

If one or two representatives from your organisation would like to visit me and discuss the issues more thoroughly, I am willing to spare the time. But you must come fully prepared, with all maps and plans, so that we are able to chalk out a concrete plan of immediate action for the tribals of Kopargaon, Shirampur and Vijapur.

I am a *dalit* of the *dalis* and *Mankind* wants to remain a friend of not only the tribals of the three talukas, but also of all the tribals in the entire country. With best wishes.

Exe Edr.

REPORT OF THE CONSULTATION ON "TOWARDS A NEW WATER POLICY" HELD AT BAWANGAJA, BADWANI ON 22-23 DECEMBER 1996

Over eighty organisations and movements participating in the two day consultations on the New Water Policy (NWP) held at Bawangaja, nera Badwani, on December 22-23, 1996, have felt the need to evolve an equitable and sustainable water policy in consonance with the paradigm of the alternative development model. A process has been initiated at the end of the meeting whereby a Working Group of the organisations and experts working on the alternative water management and policy was formed. The group will be preparing a draft policy paper which will then be circulated among all the organisations and experts who have been fighting for the alternative land and water management policies and against the present projects and policies.

The discussions held at Bawangaja came as a sequel to the mammoth rally held in Kasarvad on the banks of Narmada on December 21, against big dams and for a new water policy. The rally and subsequent discussions were attended by organisations from different parts of India (List enclosed). Number of organisations fighting against the large dams and those experimenting with the alternative water management and social organisations like Samaj Pragati Sahayog (Dewas, M.P.), Manaviya Technology Forum (Baroda, Gujarat), Pani Chetana Manch (Palamau, Bihar), Gangotri (Pune, Maharashtra), and others narrated their experiences regarding their struggle for alternatives and the issues emerging therefrom.

Inauguration

While welcoming the representatives, Medha Patkar of NBA had called upon them to consolidate the gains from the people's struggles for the right to life and for resources like water, forest and land. These struggles have refuted the centralised and capitalist/capital intensive methods, technologies which have been proved to be incapable of solving the pressing problems of impoverishment, inequality, resource depletion, but have increased the poverty, inequality and have been destroying the natural resources while concentrating them for the benefit of the few. Accordingly, the ill effects of the present water policy are not confined to the displaced people, but even the so-called beneficiaries too are the victims of the development. The growing inequality

in distribution and consumption, industrial pollution, non-availability of water in the downstream and in the catchment areas, cropping pattern favouring the cash crops, hybrid seeds, chemical fertilisers, insecticides, the over-irrigation and consequent waterlogging and salinization problems - all have been part of the present development policy reflected in the water policy. Alluding to the current state of the corruption exposures, she pointed out that the corruption of the natural resources by the politicians, contractors, multinational agencies like the World Bank, has been more deep-rooted and pernicious. The struggle against the present water policy and efforts to evolve alternatives should take into account the economic, political and technological parameters and also questions regarding the social norms of water utilisation and the current consumerist lifestyle, she said. She hoped that the movements could go a few steps ahead to evolve an alternative water policy.

Dr. Ravi Chopra of People's Science Institute, Dehradun, delivered the keynote address. After Independence, he said, government had concentrated on the big dams and canals projects to increase irrigation, neglecting the development of groundwater, or soil and water conservation. Out of the 420 million hectare meter available water, 70 mha evaporates, 50 mha goes as groundwater, 14 mha is available for surface use while 160 mha is retained as soil moisture. Indian planning has been harping on harnessing the surface water through big dams, groundwater is being depleted at rapid pace, but there is little attention given to utilise and retain the soil moisture, he lamented. Despite spending Rs. 15,000 crores on big and medium projects and merely Rs. 2723 crores on soil-water conservation measures, India could not provide drinking water for the needy villages, neither floods could be controlled nor power could be obtained according to the estimates. Instead, the big dam euphoria has rendered nearly 2 crores displaced, more and more land being prone to waterlogging and salinization. These big dams are based on very mediocre survey, study and planning, he observed. The Government claims only of the creation of the potential for 25 million hectare irrigable land, while the actual irrigation is hardly 12 mha. He charged that the Ministry of Water Resources must be held accountable for rest of the expenditure which amounts to approximately Rs. 1,00,000 crores, which may be the largest scam in the country.

In spite of all this bungling, big dams have failed to provide any succour. Their life span is drastically less than that claimed by officials, there has been no substantial growth in food grain production. In 1964, the availability of foodgrain per person in India was 480 grams, after that, with the exception of 1979, production has always remained low despite the 'green revolution'. He made it clear that the planners have been grossly underestimating the real cost of providing water for agriculture and it will remain so, as long as the present economic policy and development policy, and the dominance of the conventional engineers and their paradigms persist. The marginalisation of the decentralised and community-based traditional water management methods and the absence of knowledge-based, holistic approach regarding water conservation, utilisation, distribution, also contributed to the calamity we have been experiencing, he said. Accordingly, the centralised and unsustainable policy decides as to who should get water and when, for what purpose.

This water policy has exacerbated injustice, inequality, pollution, inter-state disputes and will be of little use for increased production. Dispelling the myth that the big dams invariably increase the foodgrain production. Dr. Chopra said that the alternative water-policy centered around rain-fed agriculture and retention, utilisation of soil moisture, will have to be adopted for future needs. The cardinal principals of this new water policy would be: to fulfil the basic needs of all people, priority to drinking water, productivity, justice, self-reliance, sustainability, allowing water to flow in the rivers and rivulets, special place for rain-fed agriculture, equal rights over water and traditional methods and people's knowledge, sustainable crop pattern, right of the communities over water, retaining soil moisture alongwith right to information, monitoring-evaluation with the people. Mr. Chopra's address had set the tone of subsequent discussions related with the experiences and critique of the present water policy, and the alternatives which so far have been tried in different parts of the country.

The Critique and the Alternative

Shekhar Pathak, of Himalaya Bachao Andolan and Pahar, chaired the session. From the critique of the present projects and planning many desirable parameters of alternative emerged.

Meghnath (Akhra, Ranchi), a veteran activist involved with many struggles in

Jharkhand area, now working on village level water management in Palamau district spoke on behalf of Pani Chetana Mā. . Narrating his experience of tribal people's initiative in erecting over 125 small dams in the villages, irrigating 3500 hectares without displacing a single person and Rs. 9500 per acre as cost of irrigation, Meghnath emphasised the wonders that people's planning can do. The planning, implementation, is done by the villagers with their own uncanny observation, the heritage of traditional knowledge and with full responsibility and sense of belonging. Now, the villagers, men and women, keep an eye on the safety of these dams as these are their own structures. The people's planning has transparency in it, as full break up of the cost is written on the boards adjoining the dams. The expenses were only 81% of the estimates. These were totally different experiences from any governmental planning. Meghnath lamented that Damodar Valley Projects have destroyed the Jharkhand area. Big dams, to him, serve the capitalist interests and inequality which need to be challenged by these small, village level, people's dams.

Ashim Roy from West Bengal is involved in Damodar valley affected villagers' struggle. Giving an historical account of the DVC, he described how the entire river basin has been destroyed, first by the dams, and then by the mines of coal, copper and industries. If these upstream rivers are not saved, West Bengal will become a desert, he cautioned.

Dr. Dwejindra from Delhi describes the plight of overcrowded, polluted and spreading Delhi, turning Yamuna into a cesspool. Yamuna waters have been exploited for Green Revolution, for farmhouses, burgeoning urbanisation, including that on the outskirts of Delhi extending upto Ghaziabad. NOIDA groundwater has been exhausted and Yamuna waters are but an amalgam of hazardous chemicals and sewage, nobody caring for the downstream people upto Benaras.

Ravi Hemadri from the Samanvaya Samiti of Bisalpur dam affected people in Tonk district in Rajasthan questioned the project which has submerged some of the finest land in Rajasthan to supply additional water to the cities of Ajmer and Jaipur. Ajmer town is surrounded by hills and there are traditional wells and tanks which are today in disarray. Same is the story of many regions in the state, including Bikaner - a declared drought area - where the tanks and traditional water

management systems still cater to the needs of the villagers. In Jaipur city too, almost in every old house there is a tank, which would provide water to 40% population of the city. The marble industry around Aravalli hills has been destroying the catchment of Banas river. Some 15 years ago, Banas was flowing even in summer, now it dries up before December.

Arun Jena, from Baliapal Anti-Missile Base Movement pointed out the growing menace of aquaculture on the coastal areas, the usurpation of local rights in the Chilika lake and in Baliapal area, pesticide danger in the agriculture as the main water related problems in his area. The resettlement issues of the Hirakud and Indravati projects form yet another aspect of the problem. The plans to divert Subarnrekha in Mayurbhanj district of Orissa are still on paper due to the paucity of funds.

Pradeep Sharma of Toxics Link talked about the need to make the considerations related to industrial sewage also a part of the water policy.

Ashok Kadam of Konkani Sangharsha Samiti, Maharashtra, had another story of his once pristine area. The rivers in Konkani are being polluted due to rampant industrialisation, urbanisation and usurpation of lands and sea coast by the high and mighty. Villages, once self sufficient in water, have to wait for the government tanker and the fisherpeople do not find fish in the rivers. Projects like Enron Power Project, Hindustan Oman Petrochemicals and Nippon Denro are out to spoil the economy, environment and culture of Konkani while the multinational megatrawlers are out to snatch away the produce of the sea. People are fighting against the destruction and displacement in all parts, symbolised by anti-Enron struggle.

Veteran tribal leader Waharu Sonavane (Shramik Sanghatana, Dhule) spoke about the knowledge base of the tribal communities and the need for equitable distribution of the created wealth. He cautioned that if the alternative does not come from among the villagers and tribals, it may become yet another 'experts' business. Arun Deshpande from 'Prayog Parivar', Maharashtra emphasised upon the need to utilise soil moisture and techniques, equipments he had devised. He put forth the view that the technology must progress enough to tackle present day issues. Science, to him, has the capacity to develop environment-inspired technology to harness natural resources to their full potentiality.

Struggle And Future

Ashok Rathi from Manaviya Technology, Baroda narrated the struggle by the villagers in Amod tehsil against the usurpation of groundwater of the villages by the IPCL project in Baroda. Referring to the pollution in industrial areas like Ankaleshwar and Ahmedabad-Baroda, Mr. Rathi commented that the industries treat rivers like Narmada as gutter for their polluted waters and words like 'treated water' are misnomers. To implement the right kind of water management policy, one needs to have right power policy. For example, the Government should not allow electricity connections to extract groundwater in the 'dark zones' in Gujarat. Manaviya Technology Forum is trying to force the state government to have a policy on pollution, he said.

Santosh Gondhalekar from Gangotri (Pune) has been involved in the planning of the small schemes and watershed development programmes in the drought prone areas in Maharashtra. His group has so far helped over 100 such projects. He has taken exception to the first statement of the current water policy, 'water is a scarce resource', which is a myth. From their experience in Maharashtra, he said that about 90% of the villages can get enough water for their needs - for drinking water and irrigation. He delineated some aspects of the alternative.

Financially, Rs. 50-60 lakhs would be sufficient for every village. This is about 10% of the current rate of investment in irrigation per hectare, Rs. 1,00,000. In such schemes, socially, there is no displacement. Politically, if such movement begins, the established leadership follows it, though initially unwilling or obstructing. 'We must have at least 500 such models from among 5 lakh villages' he said.

Vijay Shankar from 'Samaj Pragati Sahayog' (Dewas, M.P.) came down heavily upon the current perception of the water problem. To him, the logic of population growth - more food production - need of more water - high dams is unreliable and has not helped in solving the problems. There are limits to such a growth and the people have been opposing these big projects on various grounds. Instead, a long term investment could be in environment regeneration, which also will provide employment as 80% of the expenses in such schemes go for labour. In M.P., 41 out of 44 districts are supposed to be dry. With the schemes of ecoregeneration, there can be employment in all places. Also, the norms for water utilisation should be decided. His

group is engaged in the watershed planning in Dewas district and harnessing the water in the Narmada Valley in M.P.

Pradeep Sharma of Toxic Links spoke about need to monitor pollution and protecting the water aquifers against pollution. Mrs. Vijaya Pathak from Bhopal gave details about the rampant pollution of once pristine Betwa river with number of industries coming up on its banks. Arun Deshpande talked about the need for water literacy, in every school.

Dr. Uma Shankari and her group in Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh have been working on the alternative agriculture, water management, 'swadeshi' campaigns. Water is not only a commodity to be discussed in technical terms, but something more than that. She described the traditional methods of water conservation and harvesting as being most sustainable, equitable and respectable.

Deepak Mepani from 'Kutch Jal Sankat Nivaran Samiti' criticised the overdependence of the powerholders on the distant promises of the controversial Sardar Sarovar Project. Though this project will not benefit the drought prone areas of Kutch, it is being projected as the only panacea. The excessive water-consuming commercial crop pattern has created havoc, he said.

K.C. Sharma of Udvasti Sangharsha Samiti of the Rihand dam, Singrauli, posed a significant question as what to do about the victims of the already completed water projects, like the ones in Singrauli. Though new dams may not be allowed henceforth, what about the existing dams which are wrecking havoc, both environmental and human, he asked.

Swami Agnivesh emphasised on an integrated view of the water policy. Water policy has to be seen in the context of the present development paradigm - the capitalist, multinational, consumerist and centralised system. He harped on the alternative system not going backwards, but creating new politics based on values.

The second day of the session began with a brief summary outlining the major points emerging from the discussions of Day One to prepare a Statement of Intent, a draft document of New Water Policy, as also questions regarding the process of how this policy will be taken to various groups - the local people, bureaucrats, "policy makers", etc. Group B was asked to discuss the political framework in which we may look at the "alternatives", the traditional ways of water management, as also how to link the micro with the macro, and how to create an awareness and

movement in the country regarding the alternative approach. Group C was asked to discuss the process which will take the new policy ahead. What is the Forum to take this up, what will be the structure etc. It was also asked to suggest concrete action programs.

The three groups discussed these issues intensively for a few hours and then presented their reports to the Plenary Session.

GROUP A

This group came up with a draft of a Water Policy, which the working group will refine and circulate to all the participants and other groups.

GROUP B

Many people in the group felt that there is a need to move from the micro to the macro in the case of alternative water management. However, Government efforts to do this (Rajiv Gandhi Mission, for example) were mostly failures. The view was expressed that such efforts would be most successful where some people's movements were already working. Some suggested that the various struggles in the Narmada Valley had created a good context for this, where the macro level alternatives could be tried out.

A suggestion was also made for holding referendums before the clearance of any project.

An important point came up was that are we offering "another gadget for a gadget" when we talk of alternatives? Or are we really talking about alternative ways of thinking, alternative approaches? In this context, it was also said that any alternative must think about the consumption pattern, and the limits on the same.

A need was also expressed for a more substantial dialogue between those working on the alternatives and those fighting the current destructive projects.

GROUP C

This group came up with a number of specific recommendations for action programmes. In particular, it came up with a detailed process of formulating, circulating and campaigning on the alternative policy. Many of the recommendations are included in the next section on the decisions of the meeting.

Last Session

The last session discussed the concrete action programmes to be taken up following the sectional reports. Some suggestions other than the ones reported by the various groups also came up. The important decisions taken are summarised below.

Decisions of the Meeting

The consultation also discussed alternative strategies of water management and it was felt that there is enough work done at the micro level, and the water management alternatives to large centralised projects have been established clearly. The need is now to take it up at the macro level. As a beginning, it was decided to initiate steps to prepare a macro level plan of Alternative to Narmada Valley, where the government is planning, apart from the SSP, another 29 large dams, and 135 medium dams. The Alternative Plan would lay out how the water of the river can be used without these dams- and without the displacement and environmental problems. The Samaj Pragati Sahayog, a group working on decentralised alternatives in Dewas District of M.P. took up the responsibility to convene a meeting soon to discuss the Alternative Plan.

The Consultation also discussed how to consolidate the struggle against large dams as also against the growing problem of water pollution and toxic industries. In particular, for the large dams, the following suggestions were made.

- Jan Sunwai: Public Hearing on the Large Dams Affected People.
- Strategy to Fight on the Basis of the River Basin as a Unit - To bring together people of a single valley.
- To identify and involve groups working on Large Dam Struggles in all the States.
- Capturing and Occupation of Drawdown Land of Reservoirs of Large Dams.
- Discussion on National Rehabilitation Policy and Joint National Program.
- Legal Actions.
- Warning to All Agencies Supporting Large Dams (through Memoranda, Actions) including World Bank, Bilateral Donors, Government.
- List of all Large Dams proposed or under construction, as also information on any proposed or actual international funding of these.

A meeting on Large Dam Struggles has been called on 27-28 January in this context to discuss the action program, as well as take up some actions like the presentation of memorandum to the Government of India, World Bank, and the bilateral donors.

Discussions on the First International Meeting of Large Dam Struggles

The friends representing Anti-Large Dam Struggles of Nepal and Thailand too participated in this meeting.

These friends shared the experience of the struggles in their respective countries. Nepal's experience is important for India for we share a common boundary and many of the projects are joint projects. The Thai experience showed that the struggle there is similar to our struggles and they too have raised the issue of an alternative paradigm of development.

The important points /decisions made in this meeting were :

1. There is need to build solidarity between the dam struggles of the world, especially of the 'Third World', and these should be a means to larger political alliances especially in the context of the New International Economic Order.
2. The whole issue of struggle against large dams must be placed in the context of the larger fight for an alternative development vision.
3. We should approach all those engaged in struggles, whether they are present in the meeting or not, and involve them in this program. Some specific responsibilities for contacting the organisations in each state were also decided.
4. We must focus on bilateral funding as this is becoming very important. A suggestion was made to prepare a Model Case Study for Bilateral Funding, for one country, possibly Japan.
5. It was felt that further processing should be carried out by a larger group. A Preliminary Working Group was set up to co-ordinate further activities in this regard. The group includes :
 - Bargi Bandh Visthapat Avam Prabhaviti Sangh, Jabalpur
 - Baisalpur Bandh Samanvaya Samiti, Deoli, Rajasthan
 - Guru Govind Doob Kisan Sangharsh Samiti, Banswara, Rajasthan.
 - Koyna Affected People's Organisation, Maharashtra.(Source : Shripad Dharmadhikari, Narmada Bachao Andolan, B 13 Shivam Flats, Ellora Park, Baroda - 390007.)

LETTER FROM M. SUNNY AND REPLY

2 - 2 - 97

4A, Pocket C, Siddhartha Extension, New Delhi - 110014; India.

Dear Vinayakji,

I got your letter about your visit in last week of Feb. I talked to a friend from Punjab who is now in JNU doing a M.A. in History. They are in process of instituting outside speakers for a lecture series on

indigenous perceptions to History, Politics, Technology.

I told them that your vast and intense scholarship towards developing a Global Indian Vision of aesthetics, history, economics and socialistic values; of analysing events from a completely self-grown vision independent of intellectual fashions but open and sensitive to groups and individuals who are developing autonomously to create awareness on values of equity and freedom. So they want to invite you to a lecture in JNU. While you are in Delhi would you like to speak? None of them have seen *Mankind*, so it would be a good way to introduce students from all over North India to your literature.

With regards,
Yours,
Sunny.

23 - 3 - 97

Dear Sunny,

By the time you read this letter, many things have already happened, as visualised in your letter. I met you and Meeta and have already spoken at the Periyar Hostel at JNU (see the report about the meeting appearing elsewhere in this issue).

I am very happy that everything went off well, as planned by you.

With best wishes to both of you.

Exe. Edr.

Science & Technology under the Deng Regime

Dr. V.P. Kharbanda*

In China, the period around the mid 1980's marked the beginning of a new phase with the initiation of Science and Technology Reforms. The third session of the 6th National People's Congress in April 1985 endorsed the proposals concerning S & T reforms which concentrated on two aspects: (1) Further opening to the outside world to accelerate import of advanced technologies; and (2) Revamping of S & T System to better serve economic

construction.

The Open Policy

Initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1978, the open door policy had two main declared objectives, first, to acquire modern, sophisticated technologies and equipment to transform the country's backward enterprises; and second, to keep in touch with the international stream of knowledge.

The import of technologies from abroad was given top priority. To facilitate this a number of instruments were created. The two most important were the introduction of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Joint Ventures in Sep. 1983, and the 'Chinese Patent Law' which came into force from 1st April, 1985 (Revised 1992 in accordance with GATT requirements). As a result, during 1985-95 the country received a total of 480,000 foreign and domestic patent applications. In 1994 alone, it received 77,745 applications, which is ten times that of 1985, making China 10th largest recipient of patent applications in the world. Special Economic Zones, coastal cities and the Hainan Island were opened to foreign enterprises with offers of preferential treatment. Approvals for import of technologies were decentralized, for example imports of technology and equipment up to the value of US \$ 5 million could be approved by the relevant ministries, provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central authorities. If it was above US \$ 5 million, it needed the approval of the State Planning Commission.

Prior to 1985, technology transfer and its research in China was all administered and coordinated by the government and the research results were given to industry free of charge. In January 1985, the State Council promulgated "Temporary Provisions on Transfer of Technological Achievements." It stipulated overtly that technology is a private commodity in contrast to Mao's perception who considered technology as a common property or a 'social good'. Any institution or individual

could sell or transfer technology between various regions, different departments and in various economic forms, without restriction. In this connection a "National Coordinating and Guiding Group" in charge of the national technology market was established during 1985. In Dec. 1986 this Group promulgated "Provisional Regulations on Technology Market Management." It called for elimination of uncompensated transfer of technologies, and called for market prices to be determined through negotiations between the seller and the buyer, with no restrictions imposed by the State. In January 1987 the State Council promulgated "Law on Technology Contracts" which guaranteed the legitimate rights and interests of buyers, sellers and intermediaries of technology. All income from such transfers was made exempt from taxation. To speed up the process of commercialization of scientific research results the China Technology Market Management and Promotion Centre (Sinotechmart) was formally established in January 1987 under the SSTC to be responsible for coordination, management, investigation and statistics of technology trade activities.

While Western information and consumer technologies brought with them Western socio-cultural values which are largely unacceptable to the Chinese socialist society, the leadership expressed much concern for this cultural contamination.

Increasing crime, economic corruption and widening gap pose a serious threat to the economy and a challenge for the leadership under President and Party Chief Jiang Zemin.

(* Scientist, National Institute of Science Technology and Development Studies, Dr. K.S. Krishnan Marg, New Delhi - 110012, India. The views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily of the Institute to which he belongs.)

THE GREATEST MODERN INDIAN NOVEL SERIALISED PUBLICATION 'CHHAMANA ATHA GUNTHA' : 3 Fakirmohan Senapati

BHAGIA AND SARIA

At one end of the Weaver's block of the village was the *Bhagavata* house and the *Dadhibaman* Temple. The temple was built from a fund raised by the weavers. It consisted of amounts realized by way of fines for violations of the social code.

Let us explain this to the modern Babus. They are said to be well-read and have learnt many big things; but they cannot tell the name of their great grand-fathers, although they have at the tips of their tongues the names of the forefathers of King Charles II of England! Since they pass for learned men if they study the social affairs of the English and the French, why need they know the affairs of their own society or those of their neighbours?

Forget it. What is the good of our saying so at the risk of annoying the Babus? The common fund of the weavers was raised by imposing fines on those who were found guilty by the Panchas. If the guilty man was found to be very poor, he paid a nominal sum as a mark of respect to the Panchayat, who would then sanction his acquittal. The money remained with the headman. The temple had been built with this money. This used to be customary with the craftsmen class. But, alas! This fine custom is gradually dying out.

Now the doors of the law courts are open to all. The people have become educated and civilised. Who cares for the arbitration of the Panchas? The English law says, "Beware! If you commit any crime, and there be legal evidence, you will be punished!" To this a clever man says, "Sir, I know the tricks by which evidence can be suppressed". The lawyer pats him on the back and says, "Never mind the crime.

Get me the money and I will turn black into white, and *vice-versa*." Thus many a clever and well-to-do offender escapes the clutches of the law. The poor and the innocent are put to trouble and both parties ruin themselves by spending money which disperses into the pockets of diverse persons. The fines realised by the Panchayat, from people who were really guilty, were accumulated for a good cause.

People say that folly is associated with the weaver class. If someone is found to be foolish, people ask if he is a weaver, implying that he is as foolish as a weaver. If you call yourself civilised, you will certainly say that the construction of the *Dadhibaman* temple by the weavers was an instance of their folly. You will say, "Why this misuse of public money? Provide money for a scholarship in the name of the Collector Saheb or found a hospital in the name of the Lat Saheb (the Governor); but why this nonsense about a temple!"

Actually, however, the expression "Weaver's folly" has a different meaning. The lotus grows in the mud of the tank, but much else that grows in the mud of the tank, aquatic plants, molluscs and the like, are not lotuses. Weavers may be foolish, but all foolish people are not weavers.

Don't you know how the weavers of Manchester moved the British Parliament the other day? It is the weavers who have made it possible for you to dress yourself as a Babu. So it is a sort of ingratitude to find fault with the intelligence of weavers. On the other hand, we could well say that our forefathers were all weavers once.

If you know the people of the interior,

THE STORY SO FAR

Ramachandra Mangaraj of village Govindpur used to lend paddy and money to the inhabitants of the village. He gradually acquired more and more land, became a Zamindar and amassed immense property by quite unfair means.

Sheikh Dildar Mian was a big Zamindar of Midnapore. He owned some land in Orissa and Ramachandra Mangaraj was entrusted with the work of collecting revenue from this zamindari. Mangaraj succeeded in getting a loan-bond of thirty thousand rupees signed by the Mian when the latter was drunk, then sued him for recovery of the debt and finally secured possession of the zamindari.

you would know how they toil all day; and as soon as it is evening, they take their meals and go to bed. There are no religious preachers and no libraries in the villages. How would they ever know anything about religion? It is the blowing of conch shells and the ringing of bells in the temples that reminds the young and the old that there is a God. In the temple also is the sacred *Bhagavata* which is recited on such festive days as *Radhasami* and *Janmastami* and in the month of *Kartika*. Had there been no temple, the people would have been deprived of the opportunity of hearing about God and the scriptures. If a stranger comes to the village, or if any villager cannot cook for some reason, he can get a full meal from the temple by paying a small sum to the priest. The meetings of the Panchayat to judge the innocence or guilt of the villagers are held in the temple. We can perhaps make ourselves better understood if we use the English terminology to explain the purposes served by a temple. It serves as a church, a public library, a hotel, and a townhall for the village. Now let us put a stop to this topic. We have to deal with other subjects.

Like all other classes of craftsmen the weavers have a headman who is the leader of the caste. He is indispensable in all social functions. On ceremonial occasions like marriage, the headman takes betel-nuts from the inviting householder and delivers them to the invited castemen as a token of formal invitation. In recognition of this respectable service, he gets a piece of cloth and a betelnut. If any complaint is lodged with him by the castemen, he invites the Panchas by offering betel-

nut to each of them. At a formal meeting of the castemen, he gets first place in the distribution of flowers and sandal paste. At a social dinner, he breaks the first morsel.

The headman's office is hereditary. That is, the son succeeds his father; in the absence of a son, another member of his family becomes the successor. No one else can become the headman.

The headman in those days was called Bhagia Chand. Bhagia was very simple by nature and incapable of any crookedness. He would say 'yes' to anything you said. The village people called him the idiot weaver.

Now you would say, "Were not these people down-right fools? They bowed down to an idiot as their headman simply because his father was a headman. If they had to choose a leader, couldn't they elect a clever man by casting votes as people do elsewhere in electing a member of Parliament or the President of the U.S.A.?"

Again, take the case of the Brahmins. If you are a Hindu, you must respect the Hindu scriptures like the Vedas, the Vedantas, etc. The scriptures lay down the following characteristics of a Brahmin: Self-control, purity, contentment, forgiveness, honesty, devotion to God, kindness and truthfulness. A Brahmin possessing these virtues is worthy of respect and reverence. We are prepared to bow down at the feet of such a Brahmin. But we are unable to respect a so-called Brahmin like Sunder Tripathy.

Listen! Listen! O Readers good,
Watered rice and dry fish are his food.
Unlettered, he wears his sacred thread,
With sandal paste he paints his forehead.
Foremost is he in the paddy fields in weeding,
As for flattened rice and curd, none can rival him in eating.
Prayers he never says three times daily,
Catches fish in the paddy fields only.
The palm-leaf book never opens he,
Rice and pice he demands from clients as his fee.
Never speaks he in a meeting or party,
Such; you know, is Sunder Tripathy.

You bow down to Sunder Tripathy because he is born of Brahmin parents. He is your family priest because his father was the priest. We dare not say anything more.

Again, it is enjoyed in the scripture that one should bow down to that perceptor only who can open the blind eyes of ignorance with the light of his knowledge. Tell us frankly if you will take such a man for your Guru (preceptor) or one who is merely the son of your Guru?

Now, let us stop this discussion and attend to the affairs of the village.

Bhagia's wife was as foolish as Bhagia himself, matching each other like a lid fitting a pot. She was called Saria. Her age was about 25. Would you like to know anything about her appearance?

If you hear of a young princess, you take it for granted that she is very beautiful and accomplished, nay a paragon of beauty, even though she has swollen cheeks and a flat nose. When you hear that a certain Zamindar is a moneyed man, you take for granted that he is handsome, meritorious, kind and liberal and so on.

Similarly, you can draw your own inference about Saria, who was a mere weaver's wife in a village.

Bhagia and Saria were the only members of the family. Women say it is very good to have a family of two members. Our Bhagia's family was such a one. There was no domestic trouble. They never separated from each other even for a moment. They

co-operated in their household work. While Bhagia was engaged in weaving, Saria would do all the preliminary work, such as winding the yarn on bobbins and making the shuttles. When Saria was cooking, Bhagia would blow the fire and bring water for the kitchen. Wags in the village made harmless jokes about Bhagia and Saria and their great attachment like that of a pair of doves. But we say, is it a disgrace to be constant in love? In our opinion, the couples ridiculed for their constancy are the really fortunate ones. It is only they who enjoy the bliss of heaven. An English poet has said that those who enjoy pure conjugal love are divine beings. If that love becomes strained, one suffers the pangs of hell.

But we have been guilty of a mis-statement. The proverb goes that there is no greater sin than lying. So we have to tell the truth. The fact is that Bhagia and Saria were not the only members of the family. They had a cow called Neta, who was the third member of the family. We mention the cow as a member of the family, along with human beings, because there is a reason for this. Saria tended and loved the cow as if it were her daughter. God has given the wonderful instinct of parental affection to human beings. When someone is hungry, he chews leaves and twigs if he cannot get food. Similarly, a childless person loves and nurtures even a puppy, a kitten or a calf as his own child.

Saria was all attention to her cow day and night. Even when Neta was let loose from her tether, she followed Saria like a shadow. If Neta ever strayed for a while on to the village pathway, Saria would call her by name. Neta would respond with a loving moo and come back immediately to lick Saria, who would pat her and talk affectionately to her of many things. When Neta dipped her muzzle into a basin full of watered rice, Saria would give her a soft affectionate pat with an endearing rebuke. We know how a rebuke can be full of love and affection.

Bhagia, Saria and Neta used to sleep in the same room. Saria would make a smoking fire of rice-husks and dried cow-dungs beside Neta. A lucky animal was Neta. She had begotten a she-calf lately as her first issue. Neta was black all over with a white patch on her forehead. The proverb goes that a black cow with a white patch on the forehead adorns the house of the lucky householder. Her horns were thin and twisted, her tail thin, long and bushy at the end, sweeping the ground, the back low and broad, the hind part wide. Her hump looked like a small pumpkin, a little inclined towards the back, her gullet hanging down a little more than that of other cows and her udders looking as if full of milk. Neta was of medium height, unlike the tall cows of the Kalinga breed. There is a saying that a cow should be about 2 cubits high, should eat sufficient bran and enough grass in order to yield a large quantity of milk. It is said that the more a cow is fed by mouth, the more milk she gives. That does not mean that you can draw the milk from her mouth. We may say that a cow is just like a paper mill. If you fill the mouth of a mill with rags, fragments of ropes, rotten Panasi grass and soiled cotton, it gives out fine, white and smooth paper at the other end. Similarly, if you fill the stomach of a cow with bran, gruel and grass through her mouth, milk will flow down her udder.

We do not know the quantity of milk Neta yielded. One day, there was some talk about Neta in the Kutchery of Mangaraj. All present were of the opinion that Neta's yield of milk would not be less than five seers per day.

Mangaraj expressed surprise and said, "What! a mere weaver has such a cow!"

People say that a son takes after his father. But it is also a fact that a worthless son is born when the ruin of a family is imminent.

Bhagia's father, Govinda Chand, had been an important man in the village. At any sitting of the Panchayat in his village or in neighbouring villages, his presence was indispensable. Govinda was much in demand when any difficult case had to be decided. For instance, if a court peon came to serve any summons, or if a postal peon came to deliver a bearing (postage-due) letter, people would not come out of their homes until Govinda came there.

Govinda himself did not do any weaving. He used to purchase the cloth woven by other weavers and sell it in the weekly market or to some wholesaler. He used to make a decent profit out of it.

People thought Govinda was worth a few thousands. People have a tendency to over-calculate their own expectation of life and other people's wealth. Govinda had no doubt earned a good deal of money. When the Zamindar family of Baghasingha were approaching their downfall, they began to sell their lands in dribbles. One block of fertile rent-free land situated near Govindpur and measuring six acres and a half was purchased by Govinda.

They say the rent-collector of the village generally gains possession of the land through which the rain water of the village flows. That is to say, the rent-collector cultivates the best land of the village. The sewage of the village is washed into such land during the rains; so the land is very fertile. And as there is plenty of water in the land, the *Ravana* variety of paddy thrives well on it. There is a proverb that if a man sows paddy of the *Ravana* variety in such land, the yield is bound to rouse the jealousy of the neighbours. There being no risk of flood or drought, the land is sure to produce 24 maunds of paddy per acre every year.

Bhagia did not cultivate his land himself; so he let out his land on a crop-sharing basis, and used to get 15 maunds per acre as his share.

Foolish though he was, Bhagia possessed many good qualities. He used to feed his castemen on ceremonial occasions and never turned beggars away from his door. It is said that a dumb person has no enemies. Bhagia and his wife shut themselves in their house whenever a quarrel took place in the village, for they were incapable of taking part in it. They were liked by all the villagers. What is the root of all troubles? People feel unhappy whenever they lack any of the desirable things like wealth, learning, fame and health. Our weaver couple had none of these wants. If you wanted to see a conjunction of heavenly attributes like pure conjugal love, unalloyed affection, perfect contentment, unflinching good health and sincere piety in one place, you should have seen this weaver family. From our life-long experience, observation and study, we hold that uninterrupted happiness has never fallen to the fortune of any human being. Was this weaver's family an exception to this law of nature? The great poet Kalidas has said, "It is never the intention of God to create a being possessed of all excellent qualities to perfection."

Was not then this weaver family perfectly happy? Who can answer this question? The *Shalagram* idol does not seem to change its position. The feelings of a man find their expression in the outbursts of his laughing and crying. No one had ever seen this couple laugh or heard them cry. Their feelings could have been gauged from their speech, but they would speak to none. But no one escapes our notice. Hunters track their game by following the spoor. Similarly, we find out what is going on in the minds of people by following their actions.

One day, Saria had been to the house of Rukuni Ma to attend the ceremony observed on the 6th day after the birth of a

child to her daughter-in-law. She just had a glimpse of the baby and came away, not waiting till the distribution of the ceremonial cakes. Returning home, she went to bed without eating anything, complaining of a stomach-ache. She lay tossing in bed till late in the night without any sleep. Saria had lately been very keen on the observance of periodic fasts and rites. She was also showing her devotion to Budhi Mangala, the village deity, to an increasing extent. If you find a man at the door of a doctor or a pleader, take it that the man is in difficulty. Budhi Mangala served the purposes of both doctor and pleader. If any villager fell ill or was entangled in litigation, some gain accrued to Mangala.

From Saria's devotion to Mangala, we inferred that there was some worry on her mind. While plying the wheel in her verandah, if Saria found a child playing, she would stop working. When some dainty food was prepared on any social occasion, Saria would heave a sigh. She would not partake of it unless Bhagia fondly pressed her to do so. One day, Bhagia had to weave a small piece of coloured cloth to fill an order. After the weaving was done, Saria took half a day in folding it. Bhagia heaved a deep sigh as he saw her eyes fill with tears as she folded the cloth.

THE CHOWKIDAR

The Harijan Basti was situated in the midst of paddy fields at a distance of 400 to 500 paces from the Weavers' block. It was not a separate village but a part of Govindpur, inhabited by 10 *Doma* families, besides Gobra Jena.

He was the Chowkidar of the village, for which he enjoyed one and a half acres of *jagir* land and, in addition, a bundle of corn from each family at harvest time. Jena was very particular in the discharge of his duties. It was due to his vigilance that thefts did not occur in the village. Though four or five burglaries did take place each year, the Chowkidar was in no way responsible for them. For on those nights, the Chowkidar remained absent on account of some social engagement in another village 8 or 10 miles from his own.

The Chowkidar kept watch over the village all night but so cleverly that nobody knew of it. He did not call out in his watch, lest the thieves should run away.

Our Jena Chowkidar was an honest and good-natured man. He took no bribe from anyone, except his annual levy of corn in the harvest season, a piece of cloth on the occasion of marriages, one rupee as his due from each bride-groom coming from outside the village, some ration money in case of any death, and a gourd or a pumpkin grown by the villagers. Besides, he charged one rupee as his fee for lodging information with the Police in any case of theft or unnatural death caused by snake-bite or drowning. But as this fee was permitted by law, who could question it?

Gobra Jena alias Gobardhan was rather kind-hearted. If any poor man was in trouble, Gobardhan would let him off in return for only one or two of his few utensils. As is customary, he took a bunch of plantain, some gourds and pumpkins for the Sub-Inspector of Police, his assistant and the constables, whenever he went to the Police Station once a month to submit his report. On account of pressure of work the Chowkidar could not take his meal for the night in his own house. The villagers supplied it by turns. He always gave them timely notice for it. If for some reason a householder could not give him food, the Chowkidar became unable to concentrate on watching that house. The thieves got immediate information of the slackness of the watch that very night and would pilfer some vegetables or fruit from the kitchen

garden of that householder, or steal paddy from his fields, or just ram down the front door of his house.

After eating in a villager's house, Gobardhan would wend his way home, bawling the usual watchman's cry, "Look out, beware, all ye householders !" Hearing this cry, the children still awake would fall asleep. Thereafter, nobody knew anything more about him. Gobra Jena was not a mere watchman of the *Pana* caste. He had about a thousand rupees in ready cash and a stock of 50 to 70 maunds of paddy.

One cannot escape trouble, however cautions one might be. Once there was a dacoity in the house of Bhubani Sha, a money-lender of the Teli caste in the village of Makhanpur. Eight persons were arrested and one of them, Dikadia of the *Pana* caste, said in his statement that Gobra Jena had abetted not only this dacoity but also 10 or 15 thefts and was moreover instrumental in the sale of stolen property. But his statement was unsupported and Gobra Jena saved himself by giving the Sub-Inspector of Police 250 rupees.

Gobra Jena was a favourite of Mangaraj on account of his cleverness. He attended the Kutchori of Mangaraj every morning and evening. People had seen Gobra and Mangaraj sitting alone at dead of night. Many *Pana* families lived in Fatehpur Sarasandha. People suspected that they were professional thieves, dacoits and street robbers. The suspicion owned its origin to the fact that they were often arrested by the Police and often sent to the prison-house. Gobardhan very generously looked after the helpless children of the imprisoned men and procured paddy for their families from Mangaraj's granary. But slanderers always speak ill of others; they misunderstood Gobardhan and misinterpreted the generosity of Mangaraj too.

THE VILLAGETANK

There was a solitary tank in Govindpur village. Its water was used by all the villagers. It was a very big tank, measuring about 1,000 square yards, and was called the Asura Dighi.

Rumour goes that it was excavated by the Asuras (demons). That may be so. How could ordinary men like us have built such a remarkable and enormous reservoir of water ? Ekadasia, 95-year-old weaver of the village, said the tank was excavated by Banasura, king of demons. He did not, of course, do the work himself. The demous, who started the work on his orders one night, could not complete it before day-break. They left unfilled about 12 or 14 cubits in the southern corner which now served as the mouth of the tank. When people began to move about in the village at day-break, the demons dug a tunnel under the tank, through which they escaped to the bank of the Ganges, bathed there and went away.

In former times, water used to flow into the tank when the tide rose in Gangesagar. There people took their sacred bath on particular auspicious days. The flow of water had now stopped because people had become corrupt. Let not the English-educated Babus laugh at Ekadasia's "history", for if they do, half the writings of Marshman and Todd will by the same token be meaningless.

There were fishes in the tank. You may say that wherever there is water, there are fish; then why need we say that there were fishes in the tank ? But your argument is not quite consistent. The connection of fish with water is not like that of molasses with sugarcane, or of the body with bone. Were it so, fish could be found in the jar of water kept in your house. It is not our practice to write on the basis of mere presumption. We shall give irrefutable evidence to prove that there were fishes in Asura

Dighi:

Three fish-eating alligators of varying sizes were to be found lying on land at a distance of 5 cubits from water on the southern side of the tank. They were there every day. Why were they in the tank ? What did they live on ? Had anyone seen them grazing like cattle in the field ? Or were they non-violent like the Jains ? Certainly they were living on something found in the tank. And what was that thing ? These alligators were also called fish-eaters, because they ate fish. Some might argue that they ate fish, no doubt, but they got it from somewhere else. Fish was certainly available in the market, but nobody had ever seen them going with money to purchase fish from the market. Moreover, when fisherwomen came to sell fish in the village, the women folk got fish from them in exchange for rice and paddy. But we are prepared to say on oath that we never saw any alligator procure fish in exchange for rice or paddy. Hence it is proved that there were fishes in the tank.

That is not sufficient proof. There are many other convincing proofs. Four cranes used to flap about in the mud like dancing boys; this they did for the pleasure of killing small fry. Some might blame the cranes for their cruel joy in killing the small fry. You might call them cruel, wicked, devilish whatever you like; but they would not sue you for defamation; for the more a man cuts the throat of his fellow-men the greater is the glory, honour and fame.

Some cranes waded in the mud from sunrise to sunset in search of small fry like poor labourers struggling for a job. But two water-crows came flying from some strange land, dived three or four times into the tank, filled their stomachs and fluttered away. Another water-crow sat on the bank drying her wings spread out like the gown of a Memsahab.

Oh, you Indian cranes ! Look at the English water-crows who came flying with empty stomachs and flew away bloated with big fish whereas you, living on the banyan tree on the very edge of the tank, are not getting anything more than small fry even though you wade in the mud all day long. The struggle for existence is greater now. Henceforth, swarms of water-crows will be coming to carry off all the choicest fishes. There is no way out for you, unless you learn to go to foreign countries by swimming across the seas.

The kite is very alert and very clever. It sits quietly on a branch of the tree near the tank like a High Priest. It earns its daily food by lifting whatever it gets by a single plunge into the water. The High Priests do not stir out of their homes except once a year when they appear at the houses of their disciples to press the demand for their annual fees.

Upto a distance of 40 or 50 cubits from the margin of the tank, the water is full of aquatic weeds. Amidst the weeds, lilies bloom at night and veil themselves during the day like shy-newly-married Hindu maidens. Side by side, the aquatic Shimuli flowers dance freely in the breeze all day and night like unmarried girls. Further on in deeper water, there are the red lilies. They are like our educated Christian ladies, who have gone out of the lilies but have not been accepted into the lotuses. The centre of the tank is free of weeds, which cannot grow there because it is frequented by the deity Budhi Mangala at night. The tank is full of lotuses much valued by the Indian poets, wherein resides the Goddess of fortune, and the Goddess of learning, and which are the birthplace of Brahma, the Creator. The deity is sole owner of the flowers. Once a man swam in to pluck a flower. The Goddess chained his legs and dragged him down into the water. No one has ever made a second attempt.

Asura Dighi has four Ghats of which three are generally

used by the common people. The southern Ghat is used by those who perform the rites on the 10th day after a death. This Ghat is a dangerous place, seldom visited by the people even during the day, night being simply out of the question. There is a very big Peepul tree a little off this Ghat. Everyone knows that it is haunted by the ghosts of two Brahmins. Many people have seen them stretching their legs from the top of the tree to the middle of the tank. The names of the eye-witnesses are not known, but it is a fact ! Besides, there is sufficient direct evidence to prove that many female spirits, having made their home there, catch fish in the tank; lights are seen on dark nights, and the spirits move about in groups, specially in the dark nights during the rains.

The eastern Ghat is used by the washermen. The washermen beat clothes on a block of stone and make a hissing sound. An Oriya proverb says - "The washerman's ghat shows how clean a village is." A cart-load of dirty clothes lies there in a heap. Four washermen are engaged in washing and drying the clothes.

The weaver's Ghat is in the north-western corner. Being in the middle of the village, it is the meeting place for women in the morning. On account of the great noise and the gathering of a large number of women we call it a mart, not that commodities are actually bought or sold here. The rush is very great when the women come to take their bath before cooking their meals. If there were a daily newspaper being published in the village, this place would save the editor much labour in collecting news. He could sit there, with a pencil and a piece of paper, and note down information on matters such as what was cooked last night, what is the menu for today, at what time they went to bed last night, who were much bitten by mosquitoes, who were in need of salt, who bought oil on credit, how the daughter-in-law of Rama's mother is very quarrelsome, how she came but yesterday and has started defying her mother-in-law, when Kamali would go to her father-in-law's house, how daughter Saraswati is very good because she cooks very well and is very shy.

Padi began a short lecture while cleansing her teeth by the tank, the sum and substance of which is that there was no one in the village to rival her in cooking, and there was no stopping her tongue while she talked of many useful and useless things.

Some beautiful women were rubbing their faces with one end of their Saris to enhance their beauty. Lakshmi had already reddened the upper part of her nose above the nose-ring by hard rubbing. Bimali had started abusing some unknown person using words which do not find a place in the lexicon. The subject-matter of her lecture was that somebody's cow had damaged her pumpkin plant last night. She was cursing the cow's owner unto the third generation. Citing instances of the damage done by the cow, the luxuriance of the pumpkin plant and its fruit bearing potentialities, she wished the cow's owner would gift it to a Brahmin.

We would have collected much more information at the Ghat, but the sudden outbreak of an unexpected quarrel between Markandia's mother and Jasoda prevented us from doing so.

Jasoda in chest-high water was cleansing her teeth. Markandia, a boy of five, muddied the water by playing in it. As

some water splashed on to Jasoda, she stepped angrily out of water and abused the boy in filthy language, wishing him a premature death. Markandia's mother rushed forward and made a fitting retort in a similar tone. Ultimately, the quarrel ended in a defeat for Markandia's mother who slapped her son and returned home carrying a jar-ful of water in her arms, muttering darkly and dragging Markandia behind her, crying loudly.

The sound of thunder reverberates in the sky long after the bolt has fallen. The quarrel had ended, but discussion about it continued for a long time. The middle-aged and aged women divided themselves into two groups, one taking up the cause of Markandia's mother and the other of Jasoda.

We are fully with Jasoda. After careful consideration we come to the judgement that Markandia is the root of the trouble. He is entirely to blame and his offence is inexcusable. We are prepared to shoulder the responsibility if you abuse him still more, beat him or do whatever you like.

You see water is the very life of man, and what is more everyone drinks the water from the weaver's ghat. Is it not a serious offence to spoil that water ? It is another matter that four or five score of women wash themselves there. Every day some wash their soiled mattresses and some the bed clothes of their children and other rags. All these doings of the women are nothing compared to what Markandia did. Markandia's offence was very serious indeed.

Saanta Ghat is some distance from the weaver's ghat. In the first half of the day, no woman comes to this Ghat. It is used exclusively by men. In the month of Baisakh, even before it is mid-day, the air, heated as it were by fire from above, scorches the body. The cloud of dust rising from the ploughed fields looks like smoke emitted by the burning earth. The Ghat is already crowded with people. The farmers unyoke their bullocks after finishing their work which they started at about 4 A.M., in the last moonlit part of the dark fortnight. The farmers plunge into water, some after a hasty anointing of their bodies with oil, leaving their ploughs inclined against the walls of their houses, some with their towels on their shoulders, some without these and some coming straight from their paddy fields after unyoking their bullocks at the Ghat. A few pairs of bullocks graze by the sides of the tank after drinking to their hearts' content. Some men come chewing their tooth-sticks, scrape their tongues and cast away the sticks at the edge of the tank. On both sides of the Ghat, there are heaps of discarded tooth-sticks, enough to make half a cart-load. It is not that the men hold their tongues while bathing. They too talk about many things like the women. The topics are of the same good old variety, "the sowing in the low land, the second ploughing in the square plot of land, Bhima's smart bullocks, Saanta's pair of white bullocks which are not ordinary bullocks but like a pair of young elephants." Someone said, "I have wasted a handful of money by purchasing that brown bullock. Saanta's granary will open this month for lending paddy. The influence of the Shravana star, from the 15th day of this month will bring incessant rain, the astrologer has said." Everyone knows this kind of talk. We need not dilate on that.

(To Be Contd.)



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- 1932 Ph.D. in Economics, Berlin University Thesis on Salt Taxation in India, (in German).
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- 1936 Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Indian National Congress.
- 1938 Resigned as Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Committee.
- Aug. 1942- May 1944 - Led underground struggle against the British, made clandestine Congress Radio broadcasts, published pamphlets.
- June 1946 & Sept. 1946 Arrested in Goa, twice for challenging Portuguese Rule. Tortured and brought to the border and expelled to "India".
- May 1949 Arrested for supporting the Nepali agitation against the Ranas.
- 1949 President of Hind Kisan Panchayat, Patna.
- 1956 President of the newly formed Socialist Party at Hyderabad. Editor of *Mankind* - Led from 1956 to death, innumerable struggles against Indian dalals of Anglo - American imperialism.
- 1963 Elected to Lok Sabha. Made his famous maiden speech, spread over 3 1/2 hours, bringing out data on the abysmal level of income of the average Indian. His attack on Jawahar for spending 25,000 times more on himself rattled and unnerved the Prime Minister.
- 1964 Arrested in USA for breaking the Colour Bar.
- 1967 Died prematurely on 12. 10. 67 as a result of hospital negligence at former Willingdon Hospital, now renamed Dr. R. M. Lohia Hospital, New Delhi.

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