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THE CULTURAL PROBLEM

BY

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How is the unity of India to be maintained in the face of cultural diversity? This is the question which five contributors, members of the major communities of the country, set out to answer in this pamphlet. Such cultural differences as exist are associated with religion, but religious differences ought never to give rise to communal strife: 'the great religious teachers speak with one voice.' Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Sir Rustom Masani see hope for the future in a new world-religion, the religion of Humanity, but Dr Appaṣamy points out that 'neither the Christian nor the Muslim will agree to a complete synthesis of religions'. Nevertheless, though they would not go all the way with Sir Jogendra Singh in his assertion that it would be hard 'to prove any difference in culture among ninety per cent of our population', all the contributors are agreed that to create separate cultural regions would be as deplorable as it is unnecessary. In the words of Sir Abdul Qadir, the surest approach to the goal of a united Indian nation is by 'a frank recognition of the existing differences, and a serious effort to minimize them and to accelerate the process of fusion of cultures'. Several ways in which cultural divergences can be reduced are suggested.

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By A. J. APPASAMY

RECENTLY a distinguished Indian Christian said at a conference: 'My ideal for India is *one* Indian society with *one* Indian culture.' These words are quite significant in view of the pressing problem of national unity in India. Men of all shades of thought are seriously concerned with this question today. There are many different communities in India—Hindu, Muslim, Parsi, Sikh and Christian—each with its own cultural background and heritage. In this paper I shall consider the differences in the cultural life and traditions of the various communities and their bearing on the question of national unity. We may begin with the possibility of the emergence of one type of culture for the whole country.

Cultural Differences are Religious Differences

The cleavages in the culture of India follow mainly religious lines. There are different types of culture associated with Hinduism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Sikhism and Christianity. Cultural differences might have followed provincial, linguistic or racial lines but they do not. There is a great deal of difference between a strong, well-built Punjabi with his vigour and energy and a Tamil, short of stature and dark in colour, with his religious fervour and his face 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought'. And yet they are both Hindus. There is a real unity in their

culture. They have both been brought up on the same old stories from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. They have both gazed on the same symbols and images in the temples. Again and again one is impressed by the intimate association of the culture of India with its different religions. Recently I saw the performance of a play called *Rup-Sanatan*. Some Government officials of Madras formed themselves into an amateur dramatic society and acted it. They had a large and interested audience. The play centred round the Bengali saint, Chaitanya. It showed how a man called Sanatan, a minister under a Nawab of Bengal, was so attracted by the figure of Chaitanya that he decided to give up his political work. The Nawab was loath to lose his services and imprisoned him. Sanatan's wife begged him not to leave her. But neither his respect for the Nawab nor his affection for his wife could counteract the great attraction which he felt for Chaitanya. The whole interest of this play is religious. The ideal of the renunciation of all worldly ties in response to the call of religion belongs to the very core of Hinduism. Not only in Hindu drama but in Hindu poetry, architecture, music and dance, the religious motive is predominant. In perhaps no other country is religion so truly the heart and soul of culture.

Can there be a Synthesis of Religions?

The close affiliation of culture with religion has an important bearing on the question of the unification of culture in India. The different cultures in India can really become one only when the different religions become one. On the question of the unification of religions there will immediately be sharp and vigorous division of opinion. Christianity and Islam will never agree to merge in the other religions of India. They both claim to be the supreme revelation of God and regard it as their primary duty to preach their message to all those outside their own fold. Hinduism is not rigid in this respect. It is willing to accept the prophets and seers of other religions and to follow them. Buddhism originally began as a protest against the priestcraft, caste and animal sacrifices of Hinduism. For some centuries Buddhism flourished in India and its message of love captured the hearts of many, but gradually it was absorbed into Hinduism. Buddha became an incarnation of Vishnu. The final victory of Hinduism was achieved when the philosophical tenets of Buddhism were given a new setting and exposition by Sankara, the great Hindu philosopher. The Hindu declares that God cannot be really known and understood. There is not a single prophet or even *avatar* who has known God as He actually is. Prophets and seers catch only glimpses of the Divine Being; these glimpses are not necessarily consistent; there can be entire

consistency only when the whole truth about God is known, and that is not possible. With this idea that Truth is many-sided and that different prophets may understand different aspects of it, Hinduism is quite willing to regard all religions as equally true and valid. Where there is a synthesis of religion, synthesis of culture will become easily possible. But, as I have pointed out, neither the Christian nor the Muslim will agree to a complete synthesis of religion.

As a matter of history no such synthesis of religion or of culture has taken place in India. The beginnings of Hinduism are lost in the dim past. Christianity has been in India practically since the days of the Apostles. Islam has been in India from the twelfth century onwards. Though these three religions—Hinduism, Islam and Christianity—have existed side by side for several centuries, they have not become one. With their different types of culture they have always lived apart.

The American Example

This matter of the synthesis of the different types of culture in India may now be looked at from another angle. America has been called the melting-pot of the nations. To be quite accurate, it is the melting-pot of the European nations. One may see at work there the process of the unification of different cultures. In a real sense all European culture is one. The Englishman will visit Paris to hear operas and spend days in

Florence studying the great paintings there. In the realms of music, drama, poetry and architecture there are many features common to all Europe. While this is quite true, there are subtle differences between the cultural heritage of Germany, France, Italy and England. In America we can see these subtle differences merging together. The people who have settled down in America have come from all the countries of Europe with their diverse cultural traditions and ideals and yet they have practically ceased to be French, Germans or Italians and become Americans. Their culture has attained a distinctive and unified character. Every year several thousand immigrants enter the country. The State makes it a special task to enable these new settlers in the country to become one with the older inhabitants in their political and cultural life. With this end in view ample facilities are provided for the education of the new settlers. They are all taught carefully the use of the English language, which immediately serves as a common bond between the new arrivals from the different countries of Europe. The political and social ideals for which America stands are instilled in them. The new generation of settlers gradually becomes assimilated with the older stock and there is a genuine fusion of different cultural traditions. Year by year the process of assimilation goes on slowly and surely. The conditions which prevail in India are altogether different. The men who follow different types of culture have lived side by side

for centuries. No serious or steady attempt has been made to bring these diverse streams of culture together.

It is clear, then, that no fusion of different types of culture is possible in India. We may even go a step further and say that no such merging of cultures is even desirable. India is such a fascinating country to live in because of its wide divergences in thought and in practice. Without leaving the shores of India we may see many living religions at work, hear a multitude of languages, some of them with books written far back in history, and note immense varieties in architecture ranging from the beautiful mosques and palaces of North India to the stately temples of South India. On no account do we want a diminution of this wide variety of types. It would be a great pity if we could travel from one end of India to the other and hear the same songs or see the same dances. The many differences among the cultural types of the land give a real zest and interest to life.

Fissiparous Forces

If, then, different types of culture should remain in India, what is to be their relation one to the other? I am afraid that so far no serious effort has been made to bring about mutual understanding and sympathy between the different communities. Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Parsis have lived side by side. Often they have mingled together in the office, the court-house or the

market-place, but they have not gone beyond such surface relationships and have lived apart in the cultural realm. The Hindu knows little or nothing about Muslim poets and thinkers. The Christian is equally to be blamed; he is ignorant of the traditions and ideals on which his neighbours, whether Hindus or Parsis, are brought up.

When missionaries from Europe came to India and baptized converts, they were particularly anxious that the new Christians should live alone and apart. They were taught to worship in churches which were built exactly like the churches in Europe and America; they were exhorted not to read Hindu literature, for it contained stories about Hindu gods and saints. In these and other ways the difference between Christians and the followers of other religions was marked out as carefully as possible. I am glad to say that a new outlook has come among Indian Christians now. It is felt that such attempts to separate Christians from others are unwise. In a country with many different groups it would be sad to establish another community which would cherish its exclusiveness. The Indian Christian of today feels that he has a real share in the heritage of India. Music, poetry, architecture and literature have been developed in India through long centuries by men of rare intellectual and spiritual gifts. The Christian in India is as much an heir to these ancient and beautiful treasures of literature and art as others living in the country. He will not accept all the religious stories and doctrines

behind the culture of India, but he will sing Indian music and offer his praises to Christ in melodies racy of the soil. Lyrics are written by Christians who have a real command of the vernaculars and an accurate knowledge of the laws of Indian poetry and who express their Christian experience in forms which are in harmony with the best literary traditions of India. This is not a synthesis of Christian and Hindu culture but a living adaptation and transformation of Hindu culture for Christian purposes.

There have always been divergences between the religious groups in India. In recent years, however, these divergences have been increased and multiplied. We may well ask who are responsible for deepening the gulf already existing between the different communities in India. In every religion there are narrow-minded people who refuse to see anything good outside their own circle. Some of them are quite sincere in their conviction. They really believe that they possess knowledge and experience which others cannot attain. In present-day India we find also many politicians who feed the flame of communalism. To put the best possible construction on their motives, some of them genuinely think that in a country like India, with such large and divergent groups, democratic forms of Government are really impossible to work. Others add to the confusion already prevalent in the country among the different communities and seek to make political capital out of it; some of these are probably in quest of

high and responsible offices as leaders of their respective groups.

Cultural Harmony

There is no reason to fear that men of different communities cannot live in peace under a common Government. The supreme example of peace and harmony among the different religious groups in India is furnished by the reign of Akbar the Great. In his days no man was penalized because of his religion. He repealed the hated *jizia*, which Muslim rulers collected from their non-Muslim subjects. He treated all his subjects alike. He had many friends and allies among the Hindu princes. Among his ministers was a distinguished Hindu, Todar Mal. Akbar had the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* translated into Persian. He held that every religion contained elements of good. In the beautiful city at Fatehpur Sikri which he built, he brought together devout and learned men of all faiths—Jesuit fathers, Parsis, Brahmans and Muslim doctors. In the south of India in the Hindu State of Travancore there is an ancient Christian community. Syrian Christians have lived in Travancore for several centuries in peace, holding their own beliefs and following their own methods of worship. Though a minority community following a different religion from that of the State, their position has always been one of high prestige and rare privilege.

Cultural Regions and Nationalism

The proposal to establish cultural regions such as Pakistan is extremely dangerous to the future well-being of India. *Instead of welding the people together, which ought to be the ideal of every lover* of India, these cultural regions will only bring about more confusion and discord. Some of the best Christian opinion in India is opposed even to special provisions for communal representation. These again introduce and accentuate the fissiparous tendencies unfortunately already inherent in Indian life. The Christian claims the right of freedom of worship and is willing to concede this right equally to the followers of other religions. Further provision for his separate well-being he does not require. He is eager to remain a citizen of a free and united India taking his chance along with others for political and social leadership. He is convinced that real merit will always win its way in the long run. If he fears in any way that he will be overwhelmed by the majority communities in India, he is willing to immolate himself on the altar of India's freedom and unity. He does not seek position and privilege for himself as the member of a special community, because all such communal representation, whether in legislatures or in offices, is sure to retard considerably the growth of a united India.

In this paper I have been concerned primarily with the question of cultural unity. National unity is of many degrees and types and embraces

several spheres of political, social and economic activity. Unity in culture is really an important step forward to political and social unity. If men following different modes of culture come to know each other intimately and understand and sympathize with other points of view than their own, they have advanced definitely on the road to political unity. The consciousness of national unity which surges through the country makes it imperative that people holding different traditions and ideals of culture should not live apart, ignorant of the deeper significance of their differences, but should understand each other clearly and move with each other with respect and tolerance.

The Diffusion of Culture

It may be said, however, that this type of cultural unity can only prevail among educated people. While every educated man is not a cultured person, generally speaking, no cultured person is uneducated. It is quite true that there are, for instance, many Indian women who, while they are ignorant of letters, are steeped in literature. They may not be able even to read or write, but they know by heart many of the beautiful poems, lyrics and stories of India; these make them truly cultured. Such exceptions, however, only prove the rule. It is quite true that, on the whole, cultural unity of the type of which we have been speaking prevails only among the better educated section of the people. And yet

where there is such a large percentage of illiteracy, some of the most philosophical and abstruse ideas such as *Karma* and *Advaita* sink into the mass-mind through popular expositions of the religious classics by wandering preachers and singers. The cinema is now mediating to the masses some of the finest culture of the country in a form which they can understand and appreciate. I saw a Tamil film entitled *Sakuntala*. This is based on Kalidasa's famous Sanskrit drama. The setting of the story—the life in the forest hermitage, the devotion of the disciples to the *rishi*, the constant prayers and meditations in which they were engaged, the close contact with beautiful Nature and the love and tenderness for animals—shows Hinduism in some of its finest aspects. Against this distinctive Hindu background the story of the love of Sakuntala and Dusyantha is acted. The human interest of this love-story, shown on the screen with all the skill and beauty which the modern film-maker knows how to use, drew together a large audience including men and women, the educated and the illiterate, and various representatives from the different faiths. Few of these could have or would have read Kalidasa's play in the original Sanskrit or even in a translation. The film-makers had no intention of playing any part in bringing the different communities together, but they did succeed in creating interest and knowledge among people of different communities of some of the deepest and noblest truths for which India has stood through the ages.

The Influence of the West

We may close with a reference to the place and importance of Western culture in India today. Its impact upon different levels of social and intellectual life in India has been altogether for the good. The study of English has played an immense part in welding men from all over India together and in creating a sense of solidarity and unity. Some of the highest ideals of freedom and democracy have now become a valuable part of our intellectual possessions. The indirect influence of Western culture on the different vernaculars and arts of India is incalculable. Among Hindus a writer like Tagore and among Muslims Muhammad Iqbal have reacted in a striking way to the impact of Western culture. They are truly Hindu and truly Muslim respectively, but their outlook has been influenced by common Western ideals and they are much nearer together because of this debt to Western culture than they would have been if each had pursued his own way independently.

By SIR ABDUL QADIR

THE cultural problems of every country are complex; but they are particularly complex in a country like India, with its vast heritage of many cultures resulting from the intermingling of many races of humanity and many types of civilization, during the long course of its history. There are two schools of thought at present on the question of Indian culture. One of them emphasizes its essential unity and holds that there is really one culture in India, in spite of superficial differences noticeable here and there. Adherents of this school believe that the stream of this culture may have been formed by the flowing together of currents, coming from different directions and sources, and particularly by the two main currents of Hindu and Muslim culture, influencing and enriching one another, but, according to them, the culture of India is now the common property of all its inhabitants, and any efforts to represent its component parts as distinct cultures are to be deprecated. The other school holds that Indian culture is divided into several sections, existing side by side with one another, the two most important of these sections being the Hindu and the Muslim culture. It appears that the truth lies between these two extreme views. There is, indeed, a culture which the two principal communities existing in India have in common, but it is no use shutting one's eyes to the fact that in

many important respects the two cultures have preserved their separate entities and have defied the process of fusion.

I think it would be helpful to have before us some definition of the word culture, which is a somewhat indefinable and elusive term. Someone has observed that when we have forgotten much of what we have read in books taught in our schools or universities, the residue of knowledge that is left with us may be called 'culture'. This is an interesting definition, but it would apply only to intellectual culture. There is a good deal of knowledge which we do not get from books. Some of the best elements of the culture of an individual are imbibed by him with his mother's milk, or are acquired from the example of his father and elders. His surroundings in childhood and his associations in youth also affect his culture and form part of it.

The Way of Life of Different Communities

Among the instances of a community of culture in our country may be mentioned the more or less common mode of life of the bulk of the people of India. They believe generally in 'plain living'. Though it cannot be said that the proverbial counterpart is equally common among them, yet India has been as conspicuous as any other land for the number of people who have been distinguished for 'high thinking'. The dress of Indians is generally simple and, with the exception of a small number belonging to the

wealthy classes, they have always tried to restrict their needs to the minimum and to be content with the few luxuries and comforts that they may be able to get. The ideas prevalent among different classes of Indians on questions relating to rules of good conduct and morality, as well as their notions of charity and neighbourliness, are also the same to a large extent. There is a good deal that is common among all classes of people in the ceremonies observed on the occasions of marriages and deaths. The development of a common language and literature in Upper India and in some parts of the South has also been one great source of a common culture among Hindus and Muslims and other smaller communities. Another feature, representing a common ideal, is the approach of each to the realm of the spirit.

Along with these similarities, however, there exist many distinctions, and there is a desire in each community to maintain its respective peculiarities. It is difficult to say why it was thought necessary to adhere rigidly to these distinctions, but as indications of separatism they cannot be ignored.

In the domestic life of Hindus and Muslims, for instance, there is a distinction between the utensils used by them in their households. The metal favoured by the Hindus is brass, while the Muslims use copper utensils with a silvery coating of tin. You may occasionally come across individuals in each community who may use both

these metals, or, if they are westernized, they may be using utensils of aluminium or china or glass, but the broad distinction mentioned above between the two modes of life continues in most parts of the country.

The food of each community furnishes another striking instance of diversity. The majority of Hindus are vegetarians, while the Muslims are non-vegetarians or take a mixed diet of meat and vegetables. Of course there have always been some groups of non-vegetarians among the Hindus as well, and they are increasing under modern influences, but the description of their community as a whole as vegetarian applies truly to the vast majority of the community.

In the matter of dress also distinctions are noticeable, particularly in the way in which a piece of cloth is tied round the waist. A distinction is observable at some places in the style of the *kurta* (a shirt) worn by a Hindu and by a Muslim. There is distinction even in the way in which one's hair is to be cut or kept, and in the shape or style of what is used as head-gear.

Another point of divergence, which has persisted for centuries, is the difference between names of individuals in each community. A citizen of India can, with a fair amount of ease, distinguish a Hindu, a Muslim, a Sikh or a Parsi by his name. I do not think any other country in the world can produce an instance of this kind of difference in names to an equal extent. It is also significant that notions of nomenclature bring out, in one way or

another, the characteristic features of the cultural background of each community. For instance, among the Parsis, whose main occupation is commerce, you will find that the names mostly represent their occupation or profession. The use of occupation as the basis of proper names is not uncommon among Hindus also, except that among Rajputs and Sikhs the martial spirit of these people finds expression in the names of individuals. This last feature is also to be found in Muslim names among those classes who have military traditions in their families, but the feature which particularly distinguishes the Muslims is that they often include one of the many names of God as a part of their names. Prefixes are added to show that the individual takes pride in calling himself 'the servant' or 'slave of God'. Similarly the name of the Prophet is introduced in Muslim names as a source of blessing.

The Cultural Bonds of Literature, Music and Religion

In drawing attention to the above divergence between the cultural background of different communities, it is not my purpose to discourage in any way the laudable aim of trying to have a united India, held together by the bonds of a common culture. This purpose can be served best by a frank recognition of the existing differences, and a serious effort to minimize them and to accelerate the process of fusion of cultures.

It has been observed already that the nucleus

of a common literature exists and can offer a fruitful field for cultural fellowship between different parts of India. If Urdu literature continues to develop as it has done since the latter half of the last century, it has in it vast potentialities as a bond of cultural kinship between the various communities inhabiting this vast country. Though Delhi and Lucknow are regarded as the chief centres of the Urdu language, and some of the best-known masters of Urdu literature belong to these celebrated towns, yet by force of circumstances its influence has spread far and wide, and places like Hyderabad (Deccan) in the south, Lahore and Peshawar in the north, and Patna and Calcutta in the east, have made valuable contributions to its progress. Eminent Hindu writers have worked along with distinguished Muslim literary men to raise this literature to its present status, and it is noteworthy that even the numerically smaller communities in India have made their own contribution to its development. In the nineteenth century there were many Europeans who acquired such a good knowledge of Urdu that they could write Urdu verse, and many collections of their verses are still available. Christian missionaries from Europe have also had a good deal to do with popularizing the Urdu language by using its prose and verse, because they found in it a convenient medium for influencing a very large number of people. The Parsis, who are mostly settled in the Bombay Presidency, and have adopted Gujarati as their common language,

were not long in finding out that their language was akin to Urdu, and they had no difficulty in picking up enough Urdu for practical purposes. They were the first to start dramatic performances in Urdu and to procure Urdu translations and adaptations of well-known English dramas, and to stage old Indian stories. In consequence of this, Bombay has also done much to develop the dramatic branch of Urdu literature. Calcutta, the erstwhile capital of India, has also played an important part in the advancement of Urdu literature. If we take advantage of the natural growth of this literature, which is common to so many parts of India, we shall take a long stride towards cultural unity.

Music is a powerful ally of poetry—still the most popular branch of literature in India. Music has long provided common ground on which Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Christians can meet and forget for a few moments that they bear different names or wear different head-dresses or profess different religions. The art of music suffered because it had become practically the vocation of a small minority of professional men and women, who were looked down upon in society. Educated and cultured people enjoyed performances given by professional artists, but they did not ordinarily venture to play or sing themselves. Notions on this subject have now undergone a complete change, and educated young Indians are trying to cultivate the art of music. The community of tastes in this branch of art is

conducive to happy results in bringing about cultural affinity.

Another means of bringing together the different communities in India, and creating among them a genuine spirit of broad-minded human sympathy, is through religion. In spite of the fact that there are radical differences between the tenets of the many religions prevailing in India, there is an underlying unity among them, especially in the sphere of spiritual mysticism. The mystics of Islam, known as Sufis, have so much in common with the Vedantists among the Hindus that sometimes it is difficult to distinguish their main doctrines from one another. The ritual and the practices of each are also similar. A few centuries ago, the leaders of this school of thought among Hindus and Muslims saw the vision of an India united in spiritual culture, and men like the distinguished Muslim saints of Ajmer and Delhi, and other holy men like Guru Nanak and Kabir, worked for a unity of religious culture. In our time great men like the late Raja Ram Mohan Roy and the late Keshab Chander Sen saw the same vision, but unfortunately, under the stress of the present days of struggle and strife, a process of disintegration is at work, which threatens to endanger the good work done by these great men in the past. It is to be fervently hoped that the good seed, sown by such holy hands, will not be wasted, and India will one day attain that unity of the spirit which rises above purely material gains and considerations and

believes in the essential oneness of the human race and desires the combined advancement of the whole human family.

What of the Future?

This dream of cultural fellowship among Indians, through religion, is not a new ideal. Aśoka had it long ago and Akbar visualized it again many centuries later. All credit to such great lovers of their motherland for having dreamt such a dream, and for having made an effort to materialize it in their own lives. Their plan was to evolve a common religion for the whole of India. Aśoka desired to put this ideal into practice with Buddhism as the religion of the country, but the effort did not succeed because Brahmanism, though overpowered for some time, re-asserted itself with such vigour as to drive Buddhism out of the country. The effort of Akbar was to introduce a new religion, which was to be a synthesis of all the known systems of faith, with himself as its arch-priest. This effort also died with him, because Islam as a dynamic force was too strong to be driven out of the field so easily. I am afraid it is a mistake to imagine that the different religions in India will disappear or merge into one synthetic combination of all. In my opinion the best ideal will be to seek unity in the midst of diversity, and to recognize that diversity of religious thought is bound to remain. There is a passage in the Holy Koran which says that God could have so moulded humanity as to have only

one religion, but He preferred to test mankind, to see how they use their gifts of understanding and discernment. It appears that this diversity of thought is a part of the scheme of things and is quite in keeping with the scheme of Nature in other directions. The trees, the flowers and the fruits are a significant illustration of Nature's love of variety, with their different colours and flavours and perfumes. Let us recognize that all religions have a right to exist. With this broad basis of fellowship let us study them and respect them. This is what the Sufis and mystics of India, who based their spiritual conquests on sympathy and love, did in the past, and this is the spirit in which India may find the best solution of its cultural problems in the future.

By SIR RUSTOM MASANI

The Impermanence of Cultural Differences

THERE is only one species of man the world over. The fundamental structure of the human mind is uniform in all races and human nature is also the same everywhere. Not a few, no doubt, are the differences in hygienic, economic, educational and ethical standards among the different members of the human family, resulting in cultural diversity. There are also apparent, on the surface, not a few contrasts between the cultures of one group of people and another. At the same time there are resemblances too. Man's emotions and feelings as well as his intellectual ideals, his love of beauty, his longing for harmony, his striving for perfection, his attachment to his country, are the same everywhere. Despite differences of tribe or race, clime or environment, the core of every culture is the same—the fundamental humanity of man.

The differences that exist are due to historical circumstances, passing social conditions and arrested stages of development. Undue emphasis is, however, laid on such diversity as appears on the surface, and impenetrable barriers are needlessly raised, owing to certain conventional beliefs of civilized society which are generally regarded as scientific truths and are propagated with an air of scientific knowledge but which, as a matter of fact, are based on a fragile framework of

superficial anthropological study. Of such beliefs the most harmful is that concerning the innate inequality of different peoples, their irreducible differences, physiological divisions and psychological limitations. It divides the human race into two types, one superior and the other inferior, and draws fantastic distinctions between men with white and black skins, those with broad and narrow skulls, those with thick and thin joints, those with straight and curved foreheads, those with small and large nostrils and those who are tall and those who are stunted. It is the mission of the scientist and the sociologist to correct such errors, and not a few true votaries of science have protested against such fallacious theories of inequality and immutability as having been based on incomplete investigation or inaccurate data. But false theories, like popular superstitions, die hard, so that the study of human varieties has suffered and still suffers owing to errors in observation and investigation and more, perhaps, owing to the racial bias or conventional prejudices of the student.

Examined in the light of the intellectual life of the so-called superior and inferior races, their psychology reveals remarkable unity of mind. Their overworked physical peculiarities and divergences appear to be mere accidental modalities attendant on their evolution in the past, in no way effacing the substratum common to all humanity. All the branches of the human family, according to recognized authorities, seem to be

equally good or bad, and equally improvable or susceptible to deterioration. Their virtues and vices are merely the consequences of changing circumstances or the influence of environment. Given a number of generations, the 'savage' may equal, perhaps even transcend, the civilized man of today. Cultural diversity should, therefore, be regarded as but a passing phase. While a fairly uniform cultural level is desirable to ensure fellow-feeling and harmony, national unity is not and need not be conditioned by it. The sense of fellowship and world community is latent in man. Left to himself man has always felt kinship with creation. What is true of individuals is true of groups also. Moreover, so far as India is concerned, such diversity of culture as now exists may be regarded as only skin-deep. Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Christians have met and mingled so long in India that they have been greatly influenced by the cultural ideas, art, architecture and the mode of life of one another. Let us examine the problem from the point of view of Hindus and Parsis.

Aryan Origin of Hindus and Parsis

In the dim old days the Aryan ancestors of the present-day Hindus and Parsis lived together in a region not yet definitely located. According to the *Avesta*, the Aryas (the noble ones) had their original home in the fair land of *Airyana Vaejah* (the cradle-land of the Aryas). Some locate it in the northern steppes of Turkestan, others in

Central Asia and others in the Arctic regions. According to the Parsi scriptures there was such a large increase in human beings and animals during the reign of King Yima that *Airyana Vaejah* could no longer contain them. Thrice the illustrious king, surnamed the Shepherd, led his overflowing flock towards the south, 'on the way of the sun'. Thus were the boundaries of their homeland extended. But Angra Mainyu, the Evil Spirit, inundated the country with an icy deluge, compelling the shepherd-king to migrate with his men, his flocks and herds, to a temperate clime. The same beloved name *Airyana* (Iran) was given to the new home, and it still remains the name of the country where the progenitors of modern Hindus and Parsis once kept together as one race, spoke the same language, followed the same religion, performed the same ceremonies and observed the same manners and customs.

Society in Iran was then unsettled. People were constantly on the move in search of fresh fields and pastures new. Even so, the type of civilization prevailing in those days may be said to have passed the stage called 'primitive'. The social organization was so far developed as to have led to the functional classification of the population into three grades, *Ātharvan*, *Rathaeshtar* and *Vāstriya*, priests, warriors and the rest, who in that age were almost all agriculturists, corresponding to the three Vedic classes, Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaisya. Tradition associates the name of Yima with this classification, but the Avestan

works, which speak of these graded social orders in their earliest formation, show the prophet Zarathushtra as their originator. These three classes are usually mentioned in the Avestan texts, whereas the fourth class *Huiti*, the artisan, is mentioned only once. It is only late in the Pahlavi period that we are introduced to the complete group of the four orders.

Cultural Contacts

With such scanty material as is available in the sacred literature of Iran and India, it is difficult to say with any degree of precision when the two groups of the Aryan race parted company. Common references to rivers and places in the sacred books of both the countries point to Afghanistan as the last place where they had at one time lived together. Thence the two branches seem to have separated between 2000 and 1500 B.C., one settling itself in Bactria and the other migrating south-eastward behind the Hindukush and entering India by the passes of the north-west and thence spreading eastwards towards the Gangetic valley. Since that time they appear to have been in touch with each other. References to the Iranians of the Parthian dynasty are found in *Manu* (x. 43-44) and in *Natrayashastra* (xxv. 89). Similarly, there are direct references to India in the *Avesta*. The name Hindu itself is Iranian. The country watered by the seven rivers of the Indus, *Sapta-Sindhu* (seven rivers) of the *Vedas*, is mentioned in the *Vendidad* as *Hapta Hindu*, by which name India was known

to the ancient Iranians. The Indus had then seven branches and not five, which subsequently gave the country through which it flows its later name Panjab. Then the prefix *hapta* came to be dropped. The Avesta word Hindu for Sindhu reached Greece, and as the Ionians had no aspirate, they spoke of the river as Indus and of the people inhabiting the country as Indians.

Scholars testify that the Ahura, God, of the *Avesta*, is the Asura of the *Vedas*. Varuna of the *Vedas* is the same as Ahura Mazda of the *Avesta*. In the *Rigveda* Varuna is credited with omniscience; so is Ahura Mazda mentioned as the all-knowing in the sacred books of the Iranians. The civilization of each group stressed the harmony between the individual and the universal life. Both taught man that he was in close relation with things around him and that he should pay his homage to the rising sun, the flowing water, the fruitful earth and the sacred fire as manifestations of the same Eternal Soul that has created all and governs all. It is unnecessary to overlay this paper with details concerning the parallelism of thought or the correspondence in the mythology, observances and customs of the two most important branches of the Indo-Iranian stock of people. What is of greater importance for our present purpose is their influence on each other after their separation till this day.

About twenty-five years ago, the attention of the world was pointedly drawn to the influence of Iran upon India by two memorable archæological

excavations of the ruins of the ancient cities of Taxila and Pātaliputra (modern Patna) by Sir John Marshall and Dr D. B. Spooner respectively. The discoveries made at these seats of ancient civilization furnished archæological evidence to establish that there had been from the earliest times an interchange of treasures of mind and spirit between the Iranians and Indians and that the Mauryan Empire was influenced largely by Iranian polity and civilization not only in regard to architecture but also in regard to various features of administration and court customs.

To Lord Curzon belongs the credit of instituting a new era in the organization of the study of Indian culture. India owes the creation of the Archæological Survey of India, as it exists today, to his fervent desire and determination to be a faithful guardian of the treasure-house of art and learning committed to his charge during the term of his viceroyalty. Under Sir John Marshall's guidance site after site was excavated, including the key sites of Sanchi, Taxila, Sarnath and Bhita. These and the later excavations at Pātaliputra, at Harappa on the Ravi and at Mohenjodaro on the Indus give us a picture of civilization adapted to local conditions and adjusted to specific environment but revealing at the same time a remarkable resemblance in cultural traits common to the civilization which flourished in the fourth millennium in Sumer and Babylon.

A Melting-pot of Cultures

After the invasion of India by Alexander, Hellenistic culture springing from the union of Iranian with Greek influence dominated north-western India. Then, a little over thirteen hundred years ago, Parsi fugitives from Iran settled in Gujarat and other parts of the country, and from about A.D. 1000 Muslim conquerors, particularly the Moguls, brought Islamic culture to bear on Hindu life and thought. The regeneration of Hindu painting and the synthesis of what we call Hindustani music are the most outstanding illustrations of such cultural affinity. During more recent times Christian missionaries introduced Christian ideas. Thus India has been, so to say, the melting-pot of different cultures from the fourth millennium to the present day. During this period she has also been in close political, economic and cultural contact with the West.

The Empire of Cyrus and Darius extended from the Mediterranean to the Indus. When the Iranians exercised sway over north-western India, the association of the two kindred peoples led to a fusion of religious ideals and cultural concepts. The excavations referred to above bear testimony to such unity of outlook and interests. When, after a lapse of sixteen centuries, the Parsi emigrants sought shelter in India and lived with Hindus as refugees, they adopted Hindu ideas and customs and allowed even some of their religious cere-

monies to be influenced by corresponding Hindu rites to such an extent that one could hardly distinguish a Hindu from a Parsi either by name or by costume, by religious rite or by mode of life. Whether the rulers were Hindu, Muslim, Dutch, French, Portuguese or English, they lived together in peace as good neighbours on most friendly terms. The tide of nationalism had not yet set in. It mattered little who ruled. What held the two people together was a healthy sense of neighbourliness and civic brotherhood.

Intensification of Communal Differences

It was only after the apple of discord was thrown in their midst during the latter half of the last century in the shape of an official appointment, or membership of a local body or legislature, that there was a rift in the lute and people began to hear, although mostly in whispers, of Hindu-Parsi jealousies. The Muslim was out of the picture for several years, as he took to English education long after his Hindu and Parsi brethren had begun scrambling for posts and positions in the public life of their province. When, however, he did appear on the scene, the contest for loaves and fishes and economic competition incidental to an industrial age intensified what religious differences there were between the followers of the Hindu and Islamic faiths. Gradually these differences assumed a political colour, and since the birth of the Indian National Congress a section of the Muslims, along with the Anglo-Indian community,

has remained in constant fear of being submerged under a Hindu *raj*.

The ears of the chronicler are deaf to harmony. He records only the discordant notes. If two members of a family or two groups of people within a community or a nation live together in peace for ages, scarcely anyone takes note of it. But the moment they fall out, the story of their feud forms an interesting theme for gossiping neighbours and the press, and through these channels it reaches the historian. For hundreds of years Muslims and Hindus have fraternized with one another and lived in peace in villages and even in cities, conscious of the essential unity of their cultural life and tolerant of the differences in regard to matters admitting of diversity. Those long chapters of history are forgotten, but the episodes of passing prejudices and disturbances stirred up by religious bigots or other mischief-makers are presented in lurid colours.

It may, indeed, be asserted without fear of contradiction that it is not religious divergences between the different groups of the population but political and economic rivalries that militate against national unity. Religious divergences there are, no doubt, and religious bigotry persists even amongst the educated people. It may seem an anachronism but it is nevertheless true that in India, as elsewhere, despite progress in education and development of social and economic organization, the old-time religion of emotion, forms and dogma still unhinges the minds of persons of

high intelligence and culture. Their anti-social instincts and racial jealousies, inheritances of a savage past, continue to disturb the harmony which the founders of all religions wished to promote. It may yet take years of progress before the religion of emotion and irrationalism gives place to the religion of reason and the doctrine of humanity and dedication to the love and service of one's fellow men. Meanwhile, in different spheres of life, bigots will continue to hamper the fellowship of men and the fellowship of faiths. But despite such obstacles the world will forge its way, as it has in the past, to the goal of human unity.

Who are the Communal Exclusionists?

Within the large groups what classes prize communal exclusiveness? Fanatical priesthood in each group may wish to keep the different groups apart, but in the political life of India priesthood scarcely counts. The most vocal and influential classes working for exclusiveness are the intoxicated communalists, pseudo-nationalists and puny politicians who feel that they can thrive only in an atmosphere of strife. The worst exclusionists, one has to admit with shame, are some of the educated men and women prominent in public life. They are the most bare-faced disturbers of the peace of the country, shattering all hope for unity.

There is another class of exclusionists, less sordid and less aggressive but nevertheless most

harmful. Just as religious bigotry is still rampant in the world, there is such a curse as cultural bigotry. Pride of pedigree, false notions of national greatness and perverted loyalty to a glorious cultural heritage lead some people to arrogate cultural superiority to themselves. Their culture, they believe, is the only culture, and they would either have others embrace it or have nothing to do with them. They forget that no one civilization is complete in itself and that different communities have something special to contribute, according to their genius, to the common culture. Civilization is fellowship, and fellowship knows no religious or racial barriers. In India there are more religious divergences than anywhere else in the world. Even should they continue, there is no reason why they should constitute a bar to national unity or communal co-operation. There is certainly no need for 'minority provisions' or 'cultural regions' to keep together the different groups of people. The growth of the idea of human unity is the only line along which humanity can progress, and anything perpetuating or tending to perpetuate the division of people into religious, regional, functional or cultural groups must be regarded as an obstacle to progress.

The Doctrine of Humanity

The next question is: 'If it is desirable to overcome religious divergences and exclusiveness, how can this be brought about?' The obvious

answer would appear to be: 'Unite the different communities under the standard of a universal religion.' The pages of history, however, bear testimony to the impracticability of achieving such unity so long as religion means to people what it has meant to them in the past. The most notable attempt made in this country towards the enlistment of all people under the standard of a common faith was that of Akbar. It failed, and so would other attempts to secure uniformity of belief in the realm of religion fail. Various churches and faiths have existed and will, it seems certain in the light of the history of human evolution, still exist for ages. But so have people been divided in the past and will continue to be divided in regard to their political creeds and group loyalties, and yet they have marched forward to the goal of national unity. Their love for and their loyalty to their country have been the most potent factors in uniting them despite differences in regard to social, economic and political problems.

The gospel which can unite all human souls under one standard of universal religion is the gospel of Humanity. It will not be a religion in the ordinary sense of the term. It will not be a revealed religion. It will have to be evolved by the combined effort and co-operation of men of good will on earth. Man cannot be transformed overnight. The transition from the old-world tribal religions to the new and universal religion will take ages of human progress upon the earth. But the process

has already commenced. The new faith is being evolved slowly and steadily, modifying men's outlook on life and their attitude concerning problems of human relationship and conduct. In the past, religion has dealt with the next world rather than with this world. Its principal concern has been the salvation of individual souls, the individual and his attitude of faith and conduct directed to a power without, rather than the individual and his relation to his fellow-creatures. The religion of the future will, however, deal with this world more than, if at all, with the next world. It will aim at the salvation of human society through the perfection of human intercourse brought about by a fellowship of faith, by which is meant all forms of consciousness or conviction and all ideals of human conduct and relationship which influence the lives of people.

According to Hindu philosophy self-knowledge is man's highest mission, self-fulfilment his highest destiny. Knowing his true self, he comes to know the Universal Self, of which he is a spark, and to realize the harmony of man's spirit with the spirit of the Universe. In the light of such knowledge he apprehends also his kinship with his fellow-creatures. The profound significance of the formula *tat twam asi*, 'That art Thou,' is then crystal clear to him—'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, because thou art thy neighbour.'

Herein we have the core of the world religion, the doctrine of Humanity, the highest expression of advancing civilization. Not by political pacts,

nor by constitutional devices, but by the acceptance of this larger and nobler conception of religion may man hope to overcome the differences that divide people. In proportion as this concept of religion penetrates society, the stereotyped racial and retrograde distinctions will fade away and the different groups of people now kept apart will be instinct with that spirit of love and charity which neither fears, nor loathes as alien, people of different colour or creed but knits them together as sons and daughters of the same family and sharers in the same destiny.

By SIR SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN

WE are witnessing today the end of an era, the agony of a whole civilization, the liquidation of forces in which we have all been steeped. This world war which is heaping gratuitous and senseless horrors on helpless and harmless people is not to be traced to the malevolence of a few individuals, nor is it to be dismissed as the conflict of rival imperialisms. It is the proclamation of the bankruptcy of the present world order which is marked by the decline of spiritual life and the degradation of moral values. The great instruments of human welfare like science, technology and organization have failed to achieve their purpose. The ideals of peace and goodwill have not been able to stand the test of reality. Our life is secularized and we are engaged constantly in a struggle for material ends, for the control of markets and territories. To succeed in our aims, we degrade ourselves to the animal level. The marvellous feats of our mechanized world are not distinctively human. They are tricks which highly intelligent animals can be trained to perform. The more we perfect the process of mechanization, the more do we approach the impersonal life of bees and ants. We are inclined to overlook the truth about human beings that they are persons who know and love, who hope and pray. The values of life, the domestic decencies, the

simple affections, the savour of friendships, the pursuit of holiness are all delicate, fragile and contingent, and do not get a chance in a blind and insane world from which spiritual qualities are evacuated. Where spiritual knowledge is lacking, there is nothing which prevents society from falling into decay. This civilization which is abandoned by grace is like a body without a soul. It has a brain but no heart; it has a will but no soul. The mind is active but the spirit is asleep. Instead of the pursuit of sanctity, we have the cult of power, which is an intoxicant beside which other intoxicants are light and soothing. Hitler is the naked expression of the bad tradition in all its frenzy and hideousness.

Thinking, sensitive men are feeling terribly lonely and scared in a world which has lost its meaning. They feel that the world of modern man, built on agnostic reason, is falling to pieces. Out of the throes of agony must be born a new vision and a new mood. If the world's trend towards barbarism is to be checked, we must return to faith in spirltual values. Only such an access to spiritual reality can transfigure the world and restore its health.

The Spiritual Basis of All Religion

Hindu culture has emphasized for nearly fifty centuries the primacy of the values of spirit. This primacy of spirit has its roots in the very depths of India's history and has penetrated and dominated everything. The vitality of a culture is

established by the fact that it produces, from time to time, men who from their personal experience confirm and correct truths enunciated by those who preceded them. When the springs of experience dry up, the culture becomes an affectation, belief a dogma and behaviour a habit. The uninterrupted continuity of Indian culture is demonstrated by the apostolic succession of saints, who assert that they speak from experience. The Vedic seers claimed it, and the modern representatives of that tradition urge that their lives and works are a commentary on the great truths of the *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads*, a new formulation of the ancient wisdom of India, *prajñā purāṇi*. The Vedic canon on which the Hindu religion is based registers the experiences of the seers who realized that the eternal longings which man bears in the very fibres of his being cannot be satisfied by any changes in the empirical world of passion and action. The recognition of the Supreme Spirit which is also the Universal Self and submission to that spirit of the individual in thought, feeling and will is the essence of religion and the true destiny of man. Religion consists in such a transformation of the human individual as will enable him to establish contact with the Supreme (*brahmasamsparśa*). It is not so much belief in God as experience of God. If, in spite of centuries of religious teaching, we have not been able to bring about an adequate re-education of the human race, it is because we have looked upon religions in an external or objective way. The Hindu religion

requires us not only to believe in God but realize God in our life. Hindu culture and religion are based on this pure tradition of mystical enlightenment, which is incorporated in the great treatises of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagvadgītā*.

While other religions are inclined to emphasize dogmas and authority and thus divide humanity into rival camps, the Hindu religion lays stress on the subjective features of religion to the realization of which all dogmas and rites are pathways. Though the Hindu believes in the authoritativeness of the *Vedas*, he affirms that other scriptures which record the insights of seers who have attained *āpti* (God-realization) are also authoritative. The *Āgamas* are declared to possess canonical authority along with the *Vedas*. The canonical scriptures of the Hindus are not closed books. They are interpreted liberally and are added to as spiritual life evolves. With its empirical basis, the Hindu religion is in accord with the spirit of science. We are not called upon to believe this or that book because it is the revelation of God. The authority of the *Vedas* is derived from the validity of the experiences which they record.

If a world-society on healthy lines is to be built it can only be on the basis of a world-religion. The ground-plan of such a religion is to be found in the mystic tradition of India. But religions as ordinarily understood are unable to come to an understanding with each other and

interfere with the development of human fellowship. Hinduism, however, represents an effort at comprehension and co-operation. The different dogmas give imaginative presentations of the basic truth of the divine in us. We cannot dispense with them, as they are the ways by which we envisage the eternal under the forms of time, the unchanging counsels of God under the forms of the changing world. Poetry, myth and symbolism have their place in religion. Their purpose is to serve as pathways to spiritual awakening and development. The creed is the starting-point. Belief is the precursor of action. It directs the will. All creeds are attempts of the finite mind to grasp the infinite. They are all valuable in so far as they help us to reach the ultimate goal. They are different because they are adapted to the different needs of the people, their race and history, their sex and temperament. But they are all tentative and so there is no justification for intolerance. Religion should not be confused with fixed intellectual conceptions. Any religion which claims finality and absoluteness desires to impose its own opinions on the rest of the world and civilize other people after its own standards. When two or three systems of belief attempt to bring all people into their own frames, they are bound to clash, for the world has place, if at all, only for a single absolute. We do not see the ludicrousness of these clashing absolutisms simply because we are so familiar with them. When religious life is

confused with the profession and acknowledgement of revealed truth, it becomes dominated by outward machinery. The priest, the church, or the book takes the place of the spirit, and subscription to the creed is the one thing universally demanded. If you profess the creed and join the group, certain privileges and immunities belong to you now and for ever. Compared with life, the machine is too simple, its action too obvious, its results calculable in an absolutely definite manner by means of census reports and statistics, but its influence is directed only to the surface of our nature. If we think that it is right for us to propagate our religion at the expense of others through the employment of force on the ground that ours is a higher religion, we are guilty of moral contradiction since oppression, injustice and cruelty are the very negation of spiritual wisdom and sublimity. Hinduism has no fixed creed by which it may be said to stand or fall, for it is convinced that the spirit will outgrow the creed. For the Hindu every religion is true, if only its adherents sincerely and honestly follow it. They will then get beyond the creed to the experience, beyond the formula to the vision of the truth. Śaṁkara, for example, speaks of six orthodox systems of religion.

The common goal of all religions is spiritual life. All religions are quests in search of this goal. They do not differ in their aim but only in the extent of the progress which they are able to make with the aid of their varying lights. If we

compare one religion with others, we shall see that the differences relate to the formulas and practices. When we go behind dogmas and creeds and get down to the depths of our own religion we discover that all religions draw their strength from the same unfathomable source. The recognition of this fundamental unity should make possible a certain measure of co-operation on a common basis for the good of mankind as a whole. Even in regard to the theological formulation, there is now a possibility of larger uniformity. Like the nation-states the great religions arose and developed in restricted areas of the world when intercourse with the rest of mankind was difficult. But now, through the influence of science and trade, a world culture is shaping itself. All religions are now attempting to express themselves in a new idiom and so are approximating to one another. The relevant elements of modern thought are vitalizing all religions and a community of outlook is growing up. Untenable doctrines are not so much refuted as set aside, and the universal elements of religions on which there is agreement are emphasized. Whatever our religions may be, we are describing them in terms of modern thought and criticism. This process will be speeded up in years to come and the gradual assimilation of religions will function as a world faith.

The principle of toleration has been an accepted tenet of the Hindus. Aśoka and his successor Daśaratha patronized the atheist Ājīvakas. Manu

requires us to uphold the usages of heretics.[1] Yājñavalkya recognizes the customs of the heretics.[2] In short the duty of protecting men of all creeds and of none was enjoined on the rulers.

The Need and Opportunity for a Reformed Hinduism

As social beings it is our task to maintain the values of spirit in the sphere of human life, home, society and polity. Through this human world we have to progress to the kingdom of spirit. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* states that family life, property and other possessions are to be used as the apparatus for the realization of our spiritual resources, *ātmanastu kāmāya.* The whole cosmic process has for its end, to use Śaṁkara's expression, *avagati* or spiritual freedom. The earthly is the raw material to be moulded into the likeness of spirit. The essence of religion does not consist in mere ecstasies or ascetic mortifications but in humility, sweetness and charity, in going through the day's work with patience and calm.

Hinduism has suffered in recent times from a lack of elasticity in regard to social rules and institutions. It has overlooked the cardinal feature of the evolution of Hindu society, that while the truths of spirit are eternal in their value, they are elastic in their application. The result had been a diseased condition of social organization,

[1] IV. 61. [2] II. 192.

where disunity and suppression of individuality are the prominent features. We have exalted rule and routine over life and feeling. The Hindu *dharma* has been changing in response to the changing circumstances, and through these changes has succeeded in remaining its ancient self. Nothing is so subversive to society as a blind adherence to outworn forms and obsolete habits which thrive by mere inertia. It is our duty today to discover the true countenance of Hinduism and let its spirit penetrate the structure of our society. Manu says: 'Know that to be *dharma* which is cultivated by the learned, the elect, those who are always free from hatred and passion, and which is at the same time readily responded to by the heart.'[1] Such a view gives us ample room for liberty of action in social matters. In this fateful hour, we must listen to fresh notes as to ancestral voices. The price of social freedom is not only eternal vigilance, but perpetual renewal, the ceaseless activity of the creative spirit. If our society is to progress, radical changes in the social order are obligatory. Old creeds have lost their power, and old institutions their prestige, and yet the spirit of India's past is a living one and reveals its secret anew to each succeeding generation. We must purge our society of man-made inequalities and injustices and provide for all, men and women, high and low, equality of opportunity for personal

[1] vidvadbhih sevitah sadbhih nityam adveṣarāgibhih
hrdayenābhyanujñāto yodharmas tam nibodhata.

well-being and development. *Dharma* is an elastic tissue which clothes the growing body. If it is too tight, it will give way and we shall have lawlessness, anarchy and revolution; if it is too loose it will trip us up and impede our movements.

The Hindu system of religious thought and practice, I have no doubt, will evoke a response from the inquiring minds of the present generation. It is an outlook on life which satisfies the intellect, stirs the feelings and spurs the will to action. It gives India a new soul in harmony with that of the new world, makes it into a living organism with a vision and a will. It can reconcile the deep-rooted and diverse traditions and enable them to live in amity and freedom. India is still in the making. Public opinion is unfortunately confused, hesitant, divided, not clearly led, almost pathological, and yet Hinduism by its emphasis on the true spirit of religion, inward harmony and outer fellowship, provides the corrective to our distracted age.

By SIR JOGENDRA SINGH

CULTURE! What visions of immeasurable achievements it conjures up with its promise of moral and material progress and its fruit—happy and healthy living.

To cultivate the mind is a peculiarly human prerogative, and the result of such cultivation is the inheritance of the culture of mankind. The process is unending: just as a husbandman continuously ploughs the soil and prepares the seed-bed, so is mankind continuously engaged in purifying the mind and sowing it.

Culture reflects itself in conduct. A well-cultivated mind is free from malice. It learns to forgive and forget and grows strong along the paths of virtue, of clean thought and correct action. It knows how to adjust itself to changing circumstances. An ill-cultivated mind, on the other hand, is always at conflict with itself—dominated by discord, disappointment and despair. The five enemies of human peace—passion, anger, greed, attachment and conceit—spread their gloom and drive man relentlessly to his doom. True culture frees it from their subjection and constantly endows it with the spirit of beneficence, giving it the power to discriminate between right and wrong.

True Culture

It is not possible, therefore, to restrict the field of true culture and confine it within the narrow

limits of a country or community. Indeed, it is the futile, contentious spirit of sect, of creed, of party and the wrong sort of self-esteem, combined with the fatal power of inherited tradition and inveterate prejudice, which clog like wild weeds the field of true culture and effectively prevent its growth.

We speak of Eastern and Western, Hindu and Muslim culture merely to mark the stage which a country or community has reached in the cultural sphere as the result of its religious, social, economic and political achievements. The spirit of national unity and religious tolerance indicates a high stage of development, and the spirit of disunity a low stage. In truth the differences merely mark out different ways and stages of approach to the temple of truth.

Half-hatched ideas and convictions reared in the soil of national, economic and political rivalries prevent the recognition that all those who toil to serve the higher cause of humanity, which is true service of God, are friends and complements of one another. Guru Gobind Singh says, 'Know that this whole creation is His'.

It is difficult to discover any distinct cultural differences between the various communities inhabiting India. Where there is light there is no darkness and where there is bitterness there is no culture. A cultured mind is full of light and sweetness.

It is true that the people of India profess not one religion but many religions, and that their

ways of worship differ. They quarrel over many matters. The Hindu blows a conch, the Muslim sings his call to prayer; the Hindu burns incense and rings bells, and is demonstrative in his ordinary modes of worship; the Muslim offers his prayers in silence turning his face towards the Kaba. Each of them holds that his way is the best and they snarl at each other because their ways of approach to God differ. They object to the outer garments of religion, in which each denomination clothes itself; but, in their everyday relations with each other, men of different creeds carry on as good and helpful neighbours and follow the code of behaviour handed down to them by their ancestors.

Men pay reverence to their parents, respect the village elders and regard the mothers, sisters and daughters of the village as their own. The culture of the women is well exemplified by their good manners and their cultivation of industry and thrift and in the domestic arts of cooking and general household management. Neither men nor women expect much from life. They are satisfied if their small needs are met, and, when bad years come, they show an unparalleled spirit of resignation.

Life in the Villages

Nearly 80 per cent of India's population lives in over half a million villages. The most powerful microscope applied to a village would reveal no great diversity of culture except in the outward appearance of those living in it. A Hindu may be

clean-shaven, a Muslim sport a beard and a Sikh wear his five distinctive symbols. But Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs rise with the dawn and occupy themselves with the same daily occupations; the agriculturist ploughs, sows and reaps, the carpenter and the blacksmith mend and repair the implements of agriculture, the women spin and the weaver weaves the cloth, and others perform their allotted task in perfect harmony, revealing an identity of interest and a steadfast spirit of neighbourliness.

The village people share the joys and sorrows of one another and help each other in their hour of need regardless of any differences in their religions. Hindus and Muslims do not eat together, nor do they intermarry; this is no part of their cultural achievement but marks its failure. It is clear, therefore, that the level of culture among the vast bulk of our population is fairly uniform and that divergence in their religious beliefs does not affect the neighbourly feeling existing among the people. The villages still retain some semblance of a well-balanced self-sufficing economic unity.

Life in the Towns

Then there is the urban labour population. Here again men of all creeds share the common culture of industrial labour, which differs only slightly from rural culture. In the villages, there is a larger spirit of helpfulness and open hospitality; in the towns, competition entrenches upon the spirit of giving, and the cost of living narrows

the scope of hospitality. Then again, the various religious communities dwelling in the towns are affected by political currents and are made aware of new political creeds. They fight when any of their established customs, such as taking out a procession, are threatened with interference. It is such ceremonial occasions which lead to quarrels, rioting and other unpleasant incidents.

Now when we lift our eyes to the upper strata of society, to the captains of industry and the business class, here again community of interest permits no large distinctive cultural developments on communal lines. Captains of industry employ workers who have the necessary skill, regardless of the religion they profess, and trade depends on supply and demand and makes no distinction between the religion of producers and consumers. Indeed, business relations soften all angularities of temper and character and establish links which are so intertwined that Norman Angell believed that owing to this growing international community of interest the days of wars were over.

There is also the small professional class—doctors, lawyers, etc. They render common service and draw their clients from all classes and creeds; their cultural environment does not ordinarily permit of their cultivating antagonistic tendencies which some communal-minded politicians, who depend on the suffrage of separate electorates, regard as the hall-mark of a distinctive culture. Recruitment to the various public services takes

place on communal grounds, and here self-interest nurses the communal microbe, and as a result the services are losing the tradition which required all public servants to be above communal considerations. Happily the Indian Army, drawn from all classes and creeds, represents unity and affords a bright example of what common ideals and discipline can achieve.

No Diversity of Culture in India

In my fairly long and eventful life, I have not been aware of any diversity of culture. I passed my infancy and childhood in the arms of a Muslim nurse; my boyhood spending long hours with my father's Muslim falconers; my youth with Muslim friends—and one of these was no less a person than Dr Iqbal, who sang of 'My India', who aspired to raise a 'Shivala' New Temple to draw all the people to worship at the shrine of the motherland, who exclaimed,

> Religion does not teach hatred.
> We are Hindees
> And Hindustan is ours.

His inherited culture expressed itself in songs of unity, till political currents, unfortunately, carried him to the communal camp.

It must, however, be admitted that some of our politicians preach the gospel of separation in the name of distinct differences in culture, but they will be hard put to it to prove any difference in culture among ninety per cent of our population,

nor can they in their own selves conceal the gifts of a common heritage and evade the dictates of their own conscience.

Material and Spiritual Culture

Culture has a twofold aspect just as man has a dual personality. It partakes of both the material and the spiritual. On the material side, it fosters the growth of individuality which endows man with faith in himself and drives him to seek his own profit and pleasure regardless of the rights of others. Nations under the sway of material culture, in spite of their professions, are all the time apprehensive of losing their position and constantly engaged in rattling their swords, manufacturing armaments and keeping their powder dry. This is the root cause of war. People who fight shy of making the smallest contribution, in time of peace, to promote human happiness, readily give away their lives and their all to uphold the independence and freedom of their countries. They worship at the shrine of Mars in preference to worshipping at the shrine of Christ. The war which was fought twenty years ago, and the war of which almost the whole world is a victim today, are the result of tendencies which modern culture has failed to overcome.

The achievements of material culture have left no place safe from destruction on the earth, sea or air. Science has found means of catching the voice of the world. It has subjected electricity

to human service. It has enabled man to dive deep into the fathomless seas. Under its influence man has found wings, though the old saying, 'When an ant puts forth wings, it approaches its doom', seems very near the truth. Culture that carries us away from our fellow men is not God's culture. The kings and captains depart after their meteoric career, but the truths that the prophets have brought to this earth suffer no eclipse and the word of God remains.

In strange contrast with material culture is the culture of the spirit. It releases the soul of man from domination of the self and awakens sympathy with every form of human life. It converts self-affirmation into self-renunciation, violence into non-violence, desire into contentment. It teaches how we may enter the kingdom of God on earth and enjoy the treasures of earth as well as of heaven.

The Concord of Religions

Religion unquestionably refines our nature, enlarges the sphere of our sympathies in time and eternity and our relations to the great beneficent cause of all—the one God. Religion, therefore, cannot be a source of discord, since it is the true source of concord. The great religious teachers speak with one voice. There is no discord between the sweetness of Buddha and his eight-fold path of salvation, the love for humanity that lighted up every word that Jesus Christ uttered, the declaration of the prophets of Islam that

'whoever rejects evil and believes in God hath grasped the most trustworthy handhold', and the Sikh *guru's* affirmation:

> In the company of saints,
> All sense of otherness departs.
> There is no stranger, there is no enemy,
> There is a feeling of oneness with all.

Alas! It is the uncultivated soil of the human mind which fails to nurse the seed of religion and transforms religion into a sect, and, by doing so, rejects without examining the truth of religion and its saving power. Sect breeds pure prejudice, rendering sterile the soil of spirit, killing life's worth and humanity's advance. It is because of this sectarian spirit that followers of Islam concentrate more on outer observances, and followers of Hinduism, with their declaration that 'God is One'—in complete accord with Muslim belief—and their metaphysical conception of the Absolute, still pursue paths of separation, which in their social and moral consequences are so inexpressibly disastrous, and so powerful in keeping the ordinary achievements of life at so low and meagre a level. They have reduced religion to a mere ritual and to the observance of taboos. A very high caste Brahman would consider his food polluted if cooked by a man of a lower sub-caste. It was this practice of untouchability which the Hindus extended to the Muslims. Its ridiculous consequences are seen in water being distributed as Hindu or Muslim water at all the railway

stations. Guru Nanak protested against this many years ago.

> You call grain and water Divine
> And butter the prime purifier.
> How can these be defiled
> But by contact with impure bodies?

These taboos have been, and are today, responsible for schisms which would have been bridged long ago if Hindus had shown the same tolerance in the matter of eating and drinking as they did in permitting freedom of belief. It is because of these day-to-day material contacts, which count for more than the true conversion of spirit, that Hindus and Muslims, who belong to the same race, who have a common cultural heritage, have failed to find a fusion and to become a united nation.

The question whether Western culture is dowered with the gift of a larger understanding cannot be easily answered. It must be admitted that new thought currents have progressively brought about many changes in the outlook of modern society. They have, as a Sikh *guru* puts it,

> Broken the shell of superstition
> And set the mind free.

Human nature can expand and express itself in innumerable ways, but to what purpose? As an uncultivated soil secures no gifts from the sun and the rain, so man freed from responsibility to God has found no anchors and has become subservient to Moloch.

The Role of the Central Government

The East will do well to follow the light that never fails; the light that has travelled and will continue to travel from the East to the West. Britain, too, will find salvation in the age-old policy of doing right, which gave her an empire over which the sun never sets. They who gradually built the British Empire in India instinctively discovered the secret of uniting India. They resolved to ignore all differences of creed and community and guaranteed equality of treatment to all under a reign of law. They wisely permitted the enjoyment of their personal laws to Hindus and Muslims. They readily shouldered the responsibility of protecting all communities in the legitimate performance of their religious ceremonies. They recognized merit in recruiting the services, and by their own example required all public servants to rise above communal considerations. They refused to recognize any difference in the culture of various Indian communities or to entertain any majority or minority claims. They established a strong Central Government which enforced its will in the provinces under the supervision and control of the Government of India. It was thus that India was placed on the path of nationhood. It is departure from this policy and the encouragement of communal and minority claims that has created the present situation. My own community, small in numbers but not so small in its contribution to the

defence of its motherland, claims no class exclusiveness.

If India is to progress and realize its immense potential powers it must have a strong Central Government—strong and impartial, representative of all interests. It must not follow models of pure democracy or any exotic system, but with singleness of purpose must so constitute its government as to bring the most worthy men to serve the common weal, giving security to prince and peasant alike and assuring to minorities the full enjoyment of their special privileges. The Government of India must become and remain the vitalizing centre, guiding the provinces and assisting them to make a larger economic well-being more universally possible.

It is not in discovering and demarcating separate cultural regions but in ignoring them, not by dwelling upon divergences but by making them subservient to unity, that Britain can fulfil her mission and help India's millions along the path of self-government. Power will prove the most effective solvent and resolve all difficulties. Just as in the Indian Army discipline and control awaken an *esprit de corps*, so will strong government—in the future as in the past—draw all people together and obliterate all passing political differences.

Britain's Opportunity

In this, the hour of the world's greatest need, a united and self-governing India could be the most effective factor in leading all the people to

return to the paths of peace, 'for now sits Expectation in the air'.

In all times and all climes, sages and saints have spoken with triumphant unanimity on the cardinal principles of religion and good government. Abul Fazl, who adorned the court of Akbar, quotes with approval the verse of the Persian Sufi poet:

> Let the apostate glory in apostasy,
> The faithful in his faith;
> For Attār a share in God's love is enough.

Akbar, by continuous discourse with Abul Fazl and the learned men whose company he frequented, discovered that 'the light of God is in all religions, with more or less shade in all'. He was convinced that a king could fulfil his kingly functions only by becoming a shadow of God on earth. This illumination gave him the key to the heart of peasant and prince alike. Her Majesty the late Queen Victoria inherited this gift of understanding from Akbar, when she declared her purpose and policy in the proclamation promising India equality of treatment and position, which became India's Magna Charta. It is because of this policy that Indian soldiers are giving their lives, without inquiring what they are fighting for, in the far-flung fields of the Empire.

It is also the result of the new policy of feeble-minded politicians dwelling on differences—which are in their power to overcome—that, while war



is at India's door, her men of light and leading are waiting to know whether, in fighting for the Empire, India will also win her own freedom and become self-governing. To this British statesmen have given no clear answer.

The shortest and surest way to unite all communities is to endow British policy with one purpose only, to safeguard the integrity and security of India, and to rejoice in her march towards self-government. All human virtues increase and grow strong when practised.

If you have enjoyed reading this pamphlet please see the complete list on the back of the cover. There may be others dealing with subjects in which you are interested.

OXFORD PAMPHLETS ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

No. 2

THE POSITION OF WOMEN

BY

LAKSHMI N. MENON



HUMPHREY MILFORD

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

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INDIA'S biggest minority is its women. Only 2 per cent of them are able to read and write, their health is undermined by early marriage and seclusion, their wages are lower than those paid to men doing similar work, their rights to property are much restricted. Yet as wives and mothers they wield great influence in the home, they are the arbiters of feasts and marriages, and in public life they have taken their place as equals of men with an ease and assurance that is almost unparalleled in Western countries. The women of India are looking forward to many changes for the better, and are working for them through their organizations.

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THE POSITION OF WOMEN

Two thousand years ago Medea lamented how of all beings born to life and intelligence women are the most unhappy. In many respects this is more true, even today, of the position of Indian women than of those of almost any other civilized country. The contrast becomes still more poignant when we compare their position with that of their sisters in other Asiatic countries like China, Japan or Turkey. The persistence of harmful social customs such as child marriage and purdah, the continuance of antiquated and unequal laws relating to marriage and property and the absence of adequate provision for education and medical aid are responsible for this. And yet in some ways the women of India have had a past of which they may justly be proud; and today there is a ferment among them which points to a hopeful future.

Background

There is little reason to doubt that the position of women in Indian society was a good deal better in the early ages than it has been in modern times. In women like Sita and Savitri classical Hindu literature has personified some of the finest ideals of womanhood that human imagination has created. In society, child marriage did not exist. *Swayamvara*, the Maiden's Choice, was at least one kind of marriage among the ruling families. Women held their dowry as their private property, the husband could be punished for cruelty, and a second marriage was allowed only if the marriage was childless. Widows could remarry and, though voluntary suttee was permitted, it was confined in practice to the Kshatriyas. Many women were educated and some, such as Gargi and Maitreyi, were famous scholars who took their part in public discussions in learned assemblies. In the Buddhist period their position was even better, and we know that the Buddha admitted women into his Order. Hiuen Tsiang (A.D. 600–64) mentions that, when he came to Harsha's court to deliver a homily on the Mahayana doctrine, the king's widowed sister sat beside him and took a leading part in the discussion.

But from the tenth century onwards the condition of women steadily deteriorated as a result of foreign invasions. By the time of al-Biruni's visit to India (A.D. 1017–30) the age of marriage for girls had become earlier, the custom of suttee more usual and the remarriage of widows forbidden. Muslim rule brought in the custom of seclusion of women and soon it became universal among the well-to-do classes of both the Hindus and Muslims. However, the women of the richer classes, especially among the Muslim rulers, were well educated and many of them were patrons of culture, poetesses of distinction and administrators of remarkable ability. The memoirs of Gulbadan Begam, Akbar's aunt, are well known. Akbar's wife, Salima Sultana, Shah Jehan's queen, Mumtaz Mahal, and Aurungzeb's sister, Princess Jehanara Begam, were all gifted poetesses; and Sultana Razzayat of Delhi and Chand Bibi of Ahmednagar were distinguished as warriors and administrators.

Among the Hindus, at least Rajput women enjoyed great freedom. *Swayamvara* was still practised and the Rajput wife even accompanied her husband to war; or, like the brave Padmini of Chitor and her companions, she ascended the funeral pyre at her husband's death lest she should fall into the hands of the enemy.

And in more recent times, there are names celebrated in song and story, like those of Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi and Ahalya Bai of Indore.

The Home and the World

The Indian woman and her position in the home have often been idealized. Sita and Savitri are still ideals of Indian womanhood. The Hindu is taught that the gods forsake the hearth where women are not respected; and the Muslim, that heaven lies at the feet of the mother. But the tragic contrast between the ideal and the actual must not be forgotten. As wife, mother and widow the Indian woman's position is one of dependence. Her property rights are limited by law and blacked out by ignorance. Her education is indifferent and incomplete. Her primary duty is in the home. The daily round of drudgery, the mean and interminable duties and worries that fill her days, the constant bearing of children that ruins her health, the lack

of education that darkens the world to her, are hardly remembered in this connexion. One admires the plumage, and forgets the dying bird. It is not surprising that most of this idealization has been done by men. It is not even questioned how far these ancient ideals as ideals are adequate in modern times. Nevertheless, the Indian woman's position is not all misery or her life entirely colourless. Within the circumscribed dominion of her home she enjoys as daughter, wife and mother, a certain freedom, respect and even authority which is unmistakable. The procession of the months with their feasts, fasts and festivals, and of the years with their marriages and anniversaries, with occasional visits in the neighbourhood or a rare pilgrimage to a distant place, all lend joy and colour to her life.

But an increasing number of women are ceasing to confine their activities to the home. Large numbers are already attending universities, engaged in the professions and taking an active part in the social, political and literary movements of the country. If in India there is not that peculiar tradition of chivalry which exists in the West, perhaps there is also not the active opposition to their extra-domestic activities which goes with that tradition; to take but a single instance, one notes how easily women secured the franchise in India.

Some Census Figures

India's biggest minority is its women. Unlike other countries, there is here an excess of males over females in the population. Out of a total of 389 millions in 1941, females constitute 188 millions; that is, they are 13 millions less. The proportion of the sexes is 93·5 females for every 100 males and this figure is actually less than it was in 1931 when there were 94 females for every 100 males. The ratio varies between places, strata and communities. The number of females is relatively low in north-western India; it is 84 in the N.W.F.P. and 84·7 in the Punjab. It is relatively high in the Peninsula—100·9 females for every 100 males. There are also variations in the different strata of society; the lower the social status, the greater being the proportion of women. Thus, for the advanced castes, the ratio of females to males is 87·8 per cent, for the intermediate castes 93·5, and for the

depressed classes 98·2. Communitywise, the percentage is only 78·2 for Sikhs, 90·1 for Muslims, 93·8 for Parsis, 94·1 for Jains, 95·1 for Hindus and Christians and 102·5 for Buddhists.

But the meaning of these figures should not be exaggerated. Many of the problems affecting Indian women are, as we shall see, common to all communities, areas and strata. And it is significant that, notwithstanding the increasing fissiparous tendencies of communal politics, women's organizations co-operate among themselves for the redress of common grievances. Doubtless they could do more in this direction.

India has also the lowest proportion of unmarried women in the world. It was estimated in the Census of 1931 that 49 per cent of women were married, 35 unmarried and 16 widowed. Out of the unmarried women as many as 91 per cent belonged to the age-group under 15. Between the ages of 15 and 40 the percentage of unmarried women was only 5, as against 35 in England and Wales.[1] It is clear that such a universality of marriage, especially early marriage, must tend to shorten the Indian woman's period of education, affect her health and restrict both her professional and public activities.

The Health of Women

The health of women is one of the major problems of national welfare in India. The custom of early marriage, the habit of secluding women, especially prevalent among the middle classes, both Hindu and Muslim, and the absence of adequate medical aid are primarily responsible for this. While nature, everywhere, for biological purposes, endows the female of the species with greater powers of resistance to infection and of survival than the male, in India society has contributed much towards undermining this natural advantage.

Expectation of Life

A low female birth rate is a universal phenomenon. In India 108 male children are born to every 100 females ones.

[1] It is regrettable that the corresponding figures for 1941 have not been published. This applies also to many other matters including literacy, health and occupation.

In civilized countries this disparity is corrected by the higher death rate among male children and by death due to strain of work and exposure to dangerous tasks of men in later life. In India, on the other hand, this disparity is accentuated by high maternal mortality rates among the women of the age group 15–40 due to the lack of essential medical aid during child-birth. Hence the average expectation of life for women in India is actually shorter than that for men. The expectation of life is the lowest among leading countries, 26·9 years for men and 26·6 for women. The corresponding figures for some other countries are: New Zealand 65·4 and 67·9, U.S.A. 59·1 and 62·6, Germany 59·9 and 62·7, England and Wales 58·7 and 62·9 and Japan 44·8 and 46·5. Thus not only is the average expectation of life in India very short in relation to other countries, but it is also less by four months for women; in the countries mentioned women usually live two to four years longer than men.

Maternal Mortality

India has perhaps the highest maternal mortality figures of civilized countries. Records in India on the subject are indeed unsatisfactory and the estimates usually quoted are based only on the records of sample areas. Sir John Megaw's well-known estimate of maternal mortality in 1933 fixed the rate at 24 per thousand. Since then detailed inquiries have been made in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. The Special Committee appointed by the Central Advisory Board of Health to report on maternity and child welfare work in India came to the conclusion in 1937 that the rate of maternal mortality is probably somewhere near 20 per thousand live births. Sir John also estimated that the total maternal death rate was 200,000 annually or 20 per hour, that a vast number of these deaths occur to girls in their teens and twenties, and that of every 1,000 young mothers, 100 are destined to die in child-birth before they cease having babies. The maternal mortality rate for England is only 2·76 per thousand. The figures tell their own tale of misery.

Diseases of Women

Over six millions die every year in India from diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, cholera, plague and smallpox.

In addition there are the diseases peculiar to women, connected mainly with child-birth and largely due to lack of ante-natal care. Mortality as a result of puerperal fever and convulsions is not uncommon. Early marriage and immature maternity are responsible for osteomalacia, the softening of the bones due to the strain involved in child-bearing at a young age. This is most common in the northern parts of India. Although child marriage is not universal, and notwithstanding the Child Marriage Restraint Act, about 25 millions of girls under the age of 15 are married and babies are born long before the mothers reach physical maturity. Lack of birth-control knowledge makes unrestrained child-bearing a common thing, and the constant drain on the limited vitality of the young mother produces anæmia and attendant ailments. Added to this is the effect of purdah. It is estimated that nearly 40 million women live in seclusion in India and this in a large measure is responsible for the mounting rate of tuberculosis among purdah women. The incidence of tuberculosis among purdah women has been calculated to be as high as 44·46 in the 10–14 age-group among the Muslims as against 18·81 among their Hindu sisters. And this death rate soars during the critical period of child-bearing.

Medical Aid

The amount of medical aid that is available is very limited. Over the whole of British India there are about 7,000 hospitals and dispensaries, and each on the average serves 13,000 persons in urban and 53,000 in rural areas. Special women's hospitals are few and are ordinarily found only in the district headquarter towns and other large urban centres. There are only 226 such hospitals, distributed as follows: United Provinces 82, the Punjab 40, Madras 42, Central Provinces and Berar 12, Bengal 18, Bombay 14, Sind 8, Bihar 5, N.W.F.P. 4 and Assam 1. Most of the women's hospitals are run either by foreign missions or out of the Countess of Dufferin Fund for medical relief to women in India. This latter organization also encourages medical education among women by the grant of scholarships for education in India and postgraduate studies abroad. Maternity and child welfare work is carried on by voluntary

and semi-Government agencies like the Red Cross Society and Presidency Councils and Associations for infant welfare. Surely the Government can do much more than it does at present in this respect.

The paucity of women doctors is another handicap. The number of women in the Women's Medical Service is less than 40, and the number of women medical practitioners in India is about 3,000, of which less than half are graduates. Quite a number of these marry and lapse into domesticity and their services cease to be available to a great extent. Also, India has very few welfare centres and health visitors. In England, at the end of 1938, there were 3,261 welfare centres and a staff equivalent to the wholetime services of 2,877 health visitors for a population of 41 millions. In India, on the other hand, for a population ten times as large, there were in 1939 about 1,020 centres employing health visitors. The position regarding midwives is still more deplorable; the total number of trained midwives (registered) is 6,135. And the number of women doctors employed in maternity and child welfare work throughout India is only about 75 or 80. Of these only 50 per cent have had special training on the subject.

Major-General Hance, giving the minimum of medical aid required by women, said recently that 'to every woman there must be provision for, (1) adequate care and advice when pregnant, (2) adequate obstetric assistance during labour with facilities for full institutional care, and (3) adequate qualified care of mother and infant during the lying-in period'. But the available facilities are far from adequate. The woman living in the city or district town may avail herself of the ante-natal clinic of the local women's hospital. But ignorance and poverty keep many away from seeking medical aid even in them. In the villages, and the large majority of women live in villages, medical help is invariably conspicuous by its absence. And it is there that the menace of the indigenous *dai* is particularly rampant.

The Health of School Girls

Two special problems are those relating to the health of school girls and of women working in factories.

In every modern State the medical inspection of school

children is regarded as of the utmost importance. In India, while it exists to a certain extent as regards boys, provision for girls is lamentably inadequate. Delhi is the most satisfactory area in this respect. The U.P., which is the best organized for boys with its special school medical officers and clinics, has no provision at all for the medical inspection of school girls. In the Punjab and Bihar medical inspection exists, but not to any adequate extent for girls. Madras had made medical inspection of school children compulsory in all Government institutions and a condition of recognition for aided institutions, but seems to have abandoned the scheme because of financial stringency. It is well to remember that in Soviet Russia children are under the special care of the Commissariat of Health and their welfare is the primary concern of the State.

—and of Industrial Workers

As regards the 252,000 women working in factories, apart from the maternity benefit which they are entitled to under the different provincial Acts, there are no special facilities for medical aid in the factories except first aid. It is true that Factory Acts exclude women from work and processes injurious to their health and limit the hours of work. But there is no legislation which makes the provision of sanitary and adequate housing accommodation for workers obligatory either on the employers or the municipal corporations. Working families live largely in one-room tenements, and one need not live in them to know what it means to the nation in terms of health, moral welfare and happiness. Maternal and infant mortality are highest in these city tenements.

Birth Control

Progress in India, it has been said, is a race between production and reproduction; the pace at which the population has been increasing is much more rapid than the development of the means of production. And in the absence of facilities for emigration and colonization the strain on the existing resources is unimaginably heavy. Yet it is astonishing how public health authorities could think about the reduction of death rates by preventing epidemics without paying any attention to the problem of keeping the

population thus rescued in a state of at least average health and efficiency. For any public health scheme inevitably reduces death rates. It is estimated in the Census of 1941 that, if the maternal mortality rate were reduced even by 10 per thousand, the saving in female life would be 635,000 annually or 6 millions in a decade. If the infant mortality rate should also continue the same steady downward trend as between 1920 and 1940, the corresponding figure of increase will be 7 millions. And when one multiplies the saving of mothers by a reproductive potential the increase will be enormous.

Notwithstanding the low level of national health, the heavy loss entailed by high maternal mortality rates, and the uncontrolled increase in population, there is practically no provision for birth-control advice in India for the great mass of the people. The unfortunate thing, however, is that what is denied to the poorer classes is more or less within the reach of the well-to-do classes who have the wherewithal to bring up fair-sized families. Women's organizations, especially the All-India Women's Conference, long ago took the initiative in this matter and Mrs Margaret Sanger and others have come out to India to popularize the subject among these organizations and women's groups. But, unless the Government extends its support, and special clinics for the purpose are organized in women's hospitals and maternal and child welfare clinics, the movement for family limitation will never gain headway. It is regrettable that maternity and child welfare centres should be more keen to report increasing figures of child-birth than to reduce the unwanted offspring of immature parents or of parents who are so desperately poor that they cannot even feed their children properly.

Education

Ninety years ago the Education Dispatch of the Court of Directors, known as the Wood Dispatch, contained the following observation on girls' education in India: 'The importance of female education in India cannot be overrated. . . . By this means a far greater proportional impulse is imparted to the educational and moral tone of the people than by the education of men.' Yet in 1941 the comment in the Census Report is: 'Even now, however, the percentage

of literacy among women is only 2.' The history of girls' education in India has been one of tragic neglect.

Literacy

Between 1931 and 1941 total literacy has risen from 8 to 12 per cent and male literacy from 14 to 22 per cent. But female literacy has practically remained unchanged at 2 per cent. As between different areas, female literacy is highest in Travancore with 36 per cent, and Cochin follows it with 26·5 per cent. Among the provinces Bombay leads the rest with 9 per cent, and Bengal comes next with 7 per cent. Conditions in other provinces and States are very bad.

It is an incontrovertible fact that the education of girls has been considerably hampered by social customs and prejudices in the two major communities of India. Early marriage, the habit of secluding girls after the age of puberty and the slowly dying feeling against the education of girls account for the very low literacy figures for women.

It is only in a few progressive communities that female literacy is relatively high and the disparity between literacy figures for sexes not so great.

PERCENTAGE OF MALE AND FEMALE LITERACY, 'COMMUNITYWISE'[1]

COMMUNITY	MALE	FEMALE
Parsis	84·5	73·4
Jews ...	48·8	33·8
Christians	35·2	20·3
Jains ...	58·2	10·6
Sikhs...	13·8	2·9
Hindus	14·4	2·1
Muslims	10·7	1·5
ALL INDIA	23·8	2·3

[1] Census, 1931.

These figures tell their own tale.

This disparity is also due to the unequal treatment meted out to girls' education, especially in the primary and secondary stages. Primary education is in the hands of the local bodies. That it has not thrived in their hands is proved by its transference back to the Government in Mysore State, and by the recommendation in the Sargent Report that the same thing should be done in the provinces as well. It will be pointed out in the following paragraphs how in equipment, in the number of institutions, in the quality of teachers and in the amount spent, the existing provision for girls' education is inadequate in itself and inferior to that already available for boys both in quality and quantity.

Primary Education

Primary education is the foundation on which a national educational structure is built. In India that foundation is not only weak but also lopsided, both because of the inadequacy of girls' education and of its relative inferiority to boys' education. There are 86 lakhs of boys receiving instruction in primary schools; the corresponding figure for girls is only 28 lakhs; or, to put it differently, while 51 per cent of boys of school-going age are actually in schools only 16 per cent of girls of the same group attend school. Further, as regards the question of 'wastage', on which the Hartog Committee focussed attention, it is estimated that while 26 out of every hundred boys who begin in Class I reach Class IV, with the girls it is only 13. In respect of the number of institutions there were about 161,000 primary schools for boys in the provinces to 26,000 for girls. Of these 60 per cent of girls' schools and 46 per cent of boys' schools are single-teacher schools. Forty-two per cent of teachers in girls' schools are untrained. There is also difference in the amount spent on girls' and boys' education; the total expenditure on girls' primary education is Rs. 1·5 crores while the amount spent on boys' education in the primary stage is Rs. 7 crores. In all these matters, conditions in the States, except in a few progressive ones, are much worse than in the provinces.

Compulsion

Mass literacy can be achieved only by means of compulsory primary education for boys and girls and also by the strictest supervision and enforcement. Even in progressive States like Travancore and Cochin, where social evils prejudicial to girls' education do not exist, and where primary education is free, illiteracy could have been completely liquidated if the present system were reinforced by compulsion. The meteoric progress made by Russia and the great strides taken by Turkey in this respect during the last 25 years should be an example and hope to all striving towards such an objective. In British India, however, as far as girls are concerned, compulsion is non-existent except in 23 areas in certain provinces. In Madras 7 urban areas and 2 rural areas and in Bombay 7 out of the 12 compulsory areas have compulsion for girls. In the United Provinces, while there is compulsion for boys in 393 areas it exists for girls only in 6 areas. The only other area where education is compulsory for girls is in Bengal.

Secondary Education

If the provision for the secondary education of girls is more adequate, it lacks more in unity of conception and uniformity of control. Secondary education for girls, from the beginning, has been largely left in the hands of private agencies. The missionary societies were the first in the field, and many of the secondary schools for girls are still in their hands, the Government giving them grants and other aids. In course of time this effort was supplemented by other agencies, individuals and organizations who also started schools for girls. The result is that the Government is relatively indifferent to its responsibility for maintaining schools for girls' higher education. Today, this phase of education not only needs more reorganization but also more uniformity than any other stage of education. The education of girls and boys and the development of their character are more and more falling into the hands of sectarian and communal organizations without any national or modernistic idealism and this must ultimately produce more harm than good. The total number of secondary schools for girls is 1,300 as against

the 12,000 for boys. Of these 1,300 schools only 200 are Government institutions. Very few are under the management of local boards. More than 80 per cent are aided and private institutions with a strong communal bias.

University Education

Women are freely admitted and freely join men's institutions for university education. Of the 325 colleges only 45 are institutions specially meant for women. Even now large numbers of women prefer to go to mixed colleges where the staff and equipment are better than what is to be found in women's colleges. There are nearly 15,000 women in the universities in British India and their numbers are steadily increasing every year. Of these, 788 are in the medical colleges and 120 in the law colleges. There has been one woman in the Madras Engineering College.

Adult Education

Very little attempt is made to promote literacy among adult women. The Government's efforts in this direction have been negligible and almost everything has been left to private effort. Indeed during the period of the Congress Governments a great effort was made, but it was short-lived and still depended a good deal on voluntary effort. The usual institutions are night schools and literacy classes for small groups during the day, but the former are inconvenient to women. Bombay and Bihar appear to have done most for adult literacy among women. However, literacy by itself does not constitute adult education; as it is understood in other countries, adult education means mainly post-school education for adult workers who are denied the chance of higher education. In this form, of course, it hardly exists in India. It is also possible to educate the adult woman by means of popular lectures and visual education, thus opening the gateways of knowledge to her even without making her literate; this would naturally mean a huge organization, which does not exist in India.

Co-education

Co-education is very common in India in the primary and university stages of education. Owing to the paucity of

girls' schools or their complete absence in certain areas, girls often attend boys' schools. In fact over 60 per cent of girls in the primary stage of education attend boys' schools and the percentage increases as we go south. Mixed schools are less common in the secondary stage of education. Most girls discontinue school after the primary stage, and the idea of sending adolescent girls to boys' schools is not popular. In the university stage, naturally enough, it is the other way about. Those who seek university education, sometimes by choice and often by necessity, join institutions originally the preserve of men. There are now in these mixed institutions double the number of women that generally attend women's institutions for university education. As far as professional colleges are concerned there are no special institutions for women, except in medicine.

The question of co-education has never roused any controversy in India, partly because in the higher stages there are so few girls who are being educated. As we have seen, innumerable girls attend boys' primary schools, many also attend the secondary schools for boys. For the rest there has never been any prejudice against women being admitted into the universities or the professional colleges. In the medical colleges they were admitted as early as in 1875 in Madras and 1883 in Bombay. In this India is far in advance of the old English universities, which have separate women's colleges, and more like the continental universities where separate women's colleges for university education are practically unknown. It is increasingly felt that special women's colleges for university education are wasteful, unnecessary and meaningless.

Differential Curriculum

Whether women should have a separate kind of education altogether from that of men is still widely discussed, mostly by men. The Indian Women's University, founded by Professor D. K. Karve and inspired by a similar institution in Japan, is based on the assumption that the present system of higher education in a foreign medium, with a strong literary bias, bad as it is for men, is still more unsuited for women. The change is planned by making the mother-tongue the medium of instruction and following a curriculum

looking to utility. A more specialized result of the dissatisfaction felt towards the present system of education is seen in the Lady Irwin College of Home Science in New Delhi, started under the auspices of the All-India Women's Conference. Instruction is in the English medium in Home Science and allied subjects. There are similar institutions in Allahabad and elsewhere to meet the growing demand for teachers of domestic science in girls' schools. The movement is still in the incipient stage. The large majority of thinking women, however, feel that a modicum of intellectual training —which the present system, with all its faults, gives—is highly essential and should not be given up in favour of a less difficult course which excludes mathematics and the physical and social sciences. They value the training that a literary and scientific education guarantees and would rather widen the curriculum by including such subjects as Fine Arts and Home Science than eliminate the more difficult subjects. If women believe in equal opportunities, surely they must have the same kind of training that men have. A real comradeship of the sexes is unimaginable with different training and different attitudes. It is interesting to note that the clamour for a different curriculum comes mainly from men, mostly from fathers who want an inexpensive short cut to some education to enable their daughters to get married while yet young, and much less from women themselves. However this may be, the problem is not yet a serious one; nor is it an urgent one when we remember that the percentage of literacy among women is only 2 and that of women literate in English is even less than one-half.

Women at Work

The percentage of female workers to all women in India is 25 according to the Census of 1931. Since then the position has not changed appreciably. This percentage is almost the same as in some of the Western countries, notwithstanding the fact that in India 40 millions of women are in purdah and therefore practically unoccupied in gainful work. But there is this peculiarity in the Indian situation that most of the women wage-earners are employed in unskilled manual work of one kind or other. When one comes to the liberal professions the numbers of women become microscopically small.

Also, according to the Census of 1931, out of a total of 154 million workers 49 million women, that is 32 per cent, are wage-earners.

Fields and Factories

A large percentage of women workers are employed in manual labour of all kinds. Their number is greatest in agricultural labour and domestic service and least in organized industries. Women form 33 per cent of agricultural labour and 82 per cent in service. In field labour their number is not very much less than that of men, being 46 per cent of the total male labour similarly employed. They take an almost equal share in all the village industries. In the plantations women are employed in large numbers and their proportion is the same as in field labour.

Nearly 85 per cent of the people live in villages and work in the fields. The village women are not only far removed from the amenities of urban life but also deprived of the chances of education and training for skilled work. Necessity drives them to share the burden of existence equally with men. And this has enabled them to live a life of relatively greater freedom without the social disabilities of the well-to-do classes.

The number of women employed in the factories subject to the Indian Factories Act is 24,300, out of a total of 1·8 million workers. Women are always paid lower wages than men in all grades of work, as in all the other trades and professions; but they are beneficially affected to the same extent as, if not more than, men. By the Factories Act of 1911, women are prohibited from employment in dangerous processes, and from employment between 7.0 p.m. and 5.0 a.m. The Act of 1922 prohibited their employment in certain lead processes injurious to health. By the Act of 1934 their hours of work were reduced from 11 to 10 hours in both seasonal and non-seasonal factories. Although there is no All-India Maternity Benefit Act for women working in the factories, there are provincial Acts for maternity benefit in Bombay, the Central Provinces, Madras, the United Provinces, Assam and Bengal. The amount of the benefit is at the rate of As. 8 a day, and the period is four weeks before and four weeks after child-birth. Women factory inspectors,

welfare officers and crèches have followed only slowly on the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Labour.

In 1928, when the prohibition of employing women underground came into existence, nearly 30 per cent of the labour force employed underground consisted of women. The process of eliminating women from such work was completed in 1936. But in August 1943, to maintain adequate coal supplies in war, the Government by a Notification lifted the ban on underground work, first in the Central Provinces and later in other mining areas as well, on the ground of paucity of labour and partly to prevent the married men from drifting away from the mines. This was met by a storm of protest in both India and England, which has had no effect on the decision taken by the Government.

Business and Professions

The economic dependence of women and the lack of any incentive to assert equality with men are responsible for the exclusion of women of the richer classes from business. For, earning a living by entering a business or profession is looked upon with disfavour even among the educated classes and it is regarded as an attempt on the part of the woman to escape parental control by asserting economic freedom. Such a prejudice is of course absent among the poorer classes, and when we remember that 95 per cent of India's women belong to this category, it is not surprising that the number of women in charge of small businesses is very large. In the villages, *gur*-making, rice-husking and grain-parching are all done by women. They are also dealers in pottery, in charcoal and firewood and in dairy produce. In urban areas, they transact business in small shops, handling toys, bangles, vegetables and provisions; or they may be seen as shop assistants, saleswomen, hair-dressers, insurance agents, typists, hotel managers and confectioners. There is no prejudice against women entering the economic field although few possess the capital for such ventures.

But there are certain restrictions as far as the liberal professions and services are concerned. The Government of India Act of 1935 prescribes that a person shall not be disqualified by reason of sex from being appointed to any civil service or civil post under the Crown in India other than

those specified by any general or special order made to that effect by the Governor-General or Governor of the province or the Secretary of State. The following have been so debarred under rules made by the Government of India: the Indian Civil, Medical, Forest, Police and the Audit and Account Services, and Railways and Aviation. Since the beginning of the war the Indian Medical Service has been open to women. There is no restriction in the Engineering Service, but at present there is only one woman undergoing even training for engineering. In England women got themselves qualified for jobs long before they were declared eligible for them. It would be well for Indian women to do the same thing and thus prove their claims for equality. Nor has any woman been admitted to the judicial service other than as an honorary magistrate, the only exception being Travancore where a woman has been recruited to the Bench from the Bar. In Bombay, women are allowed to serve as jurors. The war has given employment to many women in the commissioned posts as well as in the administrative departments. In the railways they are employed in the inferior grades as ticket collectors and waiting-room attendants.

As regards the liberal professions, very few women are in the legal profession. A considerable number are in the teaching and medical professions. Even here the majority are in the lower grades of the professions as primary school teachers, or as nurses, midwives, compounders and health visitors. In 1940 it was estimated there were only 3,000 medical women in India of whom less than half were university graduates. The same is the case with the teaching profession; the number employed as university teachers and professors can be counted in scores. In every case, while the qualified woman starts on a fairly high salary, seldom, if ever, is she given the same salary as the man in the same grade of service. In the various provincial services there are women's and men's grades, the latter being the better paid of the two. The underlying idea is that the woman, since she has no family to support (which is not always true), does not require the same emoluments as the man.

According to the Census of 1931 the proportion of women in the liberal arts and professions is 13 per cent of the total. Here it is not out of place to point to the great

progress made in Russia in this respect. 'The women of the USSR now [1935] supply not only two-thirds of all the teachers but also two-thirds of all the doctors, and a large proportion of the specially trained agronomists. They often fill a majority of the places in the numerous research institutions in every branch of science. They furnish nearly one-third of all the qualified industrial technicians. . . . They supply a large contingent of the train-working and railway administrative staffs. They are to be found, in fact, working in every occupation, not excepting the army, or the mercantile marine or the extensive aviation service.'[1]

In India, while industrial labour is organized into trade unions with representation on the legislatures, the women in the professions are unorganized and there is no incentive for organized effort. They have kept themselves aloof from the women's movement and their indifference to their own interests has been largely responsible for their hardships. A much larger percentage of women in the higher grades of the professions and services, while desirable, does not seem easy of achievement as long as the social outlook remains unchanged.

Art and Literature

In the sphere of art and literature, the number of women who have achieved any kind of national or international reputation is indeed very limited. There are quite a number of distinguished women writers in the various Indian languages but hardly any has attained the distinction of Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu. In the field of painting death has cut short the great promise of Amrita Shergill. Sculpture and painting have their promising pupils and time alone can show the fruition of their talents. Journalism has many followers, but that is another sphere where women have still to come into their own.

Film acting, singing and dancing have claimed a great number of educated and talented women. Considering the popular attitude towards these it is necessary to mention the names of Menaka, Rukmini Devi, Devika Rani, Sadhona Bose and hosts of others who have come in their wake to rescue art from its traditional haunts of doubtful respecta-

[1] S. and B. WEBB, *Soviet Communism: A New Civilization.*

bility. Although a good number of university men and women have chosen film-acting as their career they have not quite succeeded in rescuing the screen from the distressing monotony of conventional themes; yet their entry presages something fine for the future.

Politics and Public Life

In the sphere of politics and public life India shows a strange contrast. Here there is the spectacle of social reaction existing side by side with political radicalism. There has never been any prejudice against women sharing the burdens of public life with men. Both Mrs Annie Besant and Mrs Sarojini Naidu were presidents of the National Congress. Women have always attended its sessions as delegates and the Working Committee invariably has a woman on it. During the days of the Civil Disobedience Movement there were many women dictators and leaders. Women have showed no inhibition from venturing forward into the storm and dust of the struggle. The comradeship of the sexes, already recognized in other spheres of life, was accepted as a natural concomitant of the national struggle for freedom. In the elections of 1937, the Congress Party put up women candidates for many general electorate seats and when ministries were formed the portfolio for Local Self-government and Public Health in the United Provinces was given to Mrs Vijayalakshmi Pandit.

Women were also appointed as Deputy Speakers and Parliamentary Secretaries. The greatest stimulus to the awakening of Indian women has come from the political struggle and there is no doubt that their final emancipation from the thraldom of social evils and unequal laws and their recognition as citizens and equal partners of men can come only at the successful termination of the same struggle.

If proportionately fewer women have entered public life in India the reason is not far to seek. The very small percentage of educated women and the microscopically smaller percentage of women who have the leisure to devote to public work account for their fewness. Such as there are shine like good deeds in a naughty world. But only a revolution in social outlook and education can increase their numbers

or help the natural desire of women to serve their country. India can not only afford, but also needs, this. Goodwill alone is ineffective; women must have opportunities and training. Will they have these in the near future?

Legal Rights

There is no national civil code regulating personal relationships in India. Marriage, divorce and property rights are governed by what are called 'personal laws', that is, customary laws to some extent modified by legislation. And these personal laws are pretty hidebound and prevent the free intermingling of individuals belonging to different communities, intermarriages between members of the different communities, even when possible, being full of legal complications. The Special Marriage Act of 1923, known commonly as the Civil Marriage Act, attempts to bridge the gulf that separates communities from one another; but the absence of compulsory registration of marriages under this Act for purposes of the citizenship rights of parents and children makes it inadequate.

Marriage and Divorce

To the majority of Indian women marriage is the only career they know, and therefore the most vital thing in their existence. The unmarried woman is the exception rather than the rule, especially among Hindus and Muslims. Marriage is regarded as necessary for the woman not only for the supposed social status she attains thereby, but also for her physical existence, and, for the Hindu woman, for her spiritual destiny as well.

Hindu marriage is a sacrament and therefore indissoluble. Scriptural laws and customs regulate the prohibited degrees of consanguinity and affinity, but they have no universal validity as is seen in the different customs among Hindus living in different parts of the country. An immemorial custom, according to the Hindu law-giver Manu, is transcendent law, and therefore supersedes all texts. Although caste is an endogamous social unit, inter-caste marriages are recognized and are not uncommon. For purposes of validity and inheritance such marriages are nowadays performed under the Special Marriage Act and hence outside the pale of the Hindu code. Divorce is recognized, but actually it is

not easy to obtain it except by a change of religion. The hardship on women has been very great indeed.

Muslim marriage, on the other hand, is purely a contract between the parties concerned, the terms of which may be set down in a *nikah nama*, which also lays down the amount of dower (bride-price) which the husband is to pay in case of divorce and which is charged on his estate in case of death. Divorce by mutual consent and also by judicial decree has always been recognized in Islamic law. But the husband still has the right of pronouncing *talak* (divorce) whenever he pleases without assigning any cause. This is unfair to women. And, as a result of their demand for the recognition of their right under the Shariat law, the law was revised by the Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act of 1939. This Act entitles a Muslim married woman to obtain a decree for dissolution on certain grounds such as neglect, imprisonment of the husband for seven years or more, cruelty, desertion for four years together, disease, etc. But renunciation of Islam by a married Muslim woman or her conversion to another faith by itself will not operate to dissolve the marriage. On the whole Muslim law is very liberal except for the arbitrary right of *talak* which is still vested in the man.

The Parsis are governed by the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act. Marriage is monogamous, divorce is permitted and remarriage is legal. The Christian marriage is also a sacrament: the tie is indissoluble for Catholics, but other Christians are governed by the Indian Divorce Act. Inter-caste marriages are valid if registered under the Special Marriage Act of 1923 which applies to Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists. When a marriage is performed between parties who do not profess any of the above-mentioned religions they have to declare that they do not belong to any of the recognized religions. The Indian Divorce Act applies to all such marriages and divorce is granted on the ground of apostasy, adultery, bigamy and adultery with cruelty and adultery with desertion for two years and upwards. The Parsi Divorce Act is framed on the same lines but adds rape and unnatural offences as further grounds for granting divorce.

Property

Women's status in any society depends not merely on her legal rights but also on her economic freedom, which can be assured only by her capacity to earn, inherit equally with her brothers, to own property without restraint, and to alienate it with freedom. The mode of transfer of property in India is governed by one uniform law, namely the Transfer of Property Act, but the right to own, inherit, and alienate property is governed by the various personal laws and differs in different communities.

Among Hindus when they live together in a joint family, the woman has no right to the property of her husband or father and she is entitled only to maintenance, residence and marriage expenses. When the property is separate the son, grandson and great-grandson inherit to the exclusion of the other heirs, namely, the widow, daughter and daughter's son. The widow's estate, when she does inherit in the absence of other near heirs, is not absolute; she holds it in trust for her husband's heirs with very limited right of alienation. The variations under the Hindu law are as many as the divisions within the creed itself; and the rights of women vary slightly under the different schools of law as they exist at present. The two main schools are the Mitakshara, with its sub-schools in the United Provinces, Bombay and Madras, and the Dayabhaga in Bengal. The uncertainties and vagueness of the texts lend themselves to different interpretations according to the background, education and prejudices of the person who interprets them, and it has been a perennial source of litigation lucrative to the lawyer and impoverishing to the unfortunate litigant.

But Hindu law has already been modified in Baroda in respect of marriage, divorce and inheritance. An attempt has been made in British India also to codify the Hindu law on a reformed basis and a committee has been appointed by the Government with Sir B. N. Rau as its chairman. On the recommendation of this committee the Government has introduced two bills on Intestate Succession and Marriage. The former recognizes the rights of the widow and the female descendants for absolute estate over the property which they will inherit as heirs. The latter will not only legalize inter-caste marriages but also reduce the number of

the prohibited degrees and bring civil marriage within the ambit of the Hindu code. *On the whole it improves the position of the Hindu woman, but not greatly.*

Under Islamic law, which has hardly any of the distressing indefiniteness of the Hindu code, woman's rights are clearly defined. She is entitled to a definite share in the inheritance and she has absolute estate over the property which she inherits. On her marriage, unlike her Hindu sister, she does not lose her interest in the family property; she has absolute right to sell, gift away and alienate her property in whatever manner she desires.

Those who are not governed by the Hindu or Muslim law, and those who are married under the Special Marriage Act, are governed by the Indian Succession Act in the matter of inheritance. The provisions of this Act do not recognize any sex distinction in the matter of inheritance, and daughters and sons take an equal share in the estate of the parents. The widow gets a definite share of one-third of her husband's estate if he has left any lineal descendant, and the share is raised to one-half if there is no lineal descendant, the other half going to the kindred. In the absence of kindred the widow takes the whole of it, absolutely. The legal position of the Christian woman is similar as long as she comes under the Indian Succession Act. Only the Parsis have deprived the daughter of her right by Section 50 of this Act by which the share of each son is double that of the widow and the latter double that of the share of the daughter. But when a daughter succeeds to her mother's estate she takes an equal share with the brother.

In Malabar, Travancore and Cochin, where matriliny is the rule, women enjoy the same rights as men in marriage, divorce and inheritance. The customary law, however, has been modified by the Marumakkathayam Acts which give the wife and children a share in the self-acquired property of the husband and father which they did not have under the earlier customary law.

Franchise

Indian women did not have the franchise till the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919. The new political consciousness in the country during the last war, and the interest roused

by the Suffragette movement in England during the years before the last war, led to a deputation of women (Mrs Sarojini Naidu and Rani Lakshmibai Rajwade among them, and Mrs Annie Besant with them) being sent to wait on Mr Montagu in Madras, to claim equal rights with men. The National Congress in its Calcutta Session in the same year, under Mrs Besant's presidentship, had adopted a resolution for the first time in favour of women's franchise. When the Southborough Committee was formed to investigate the question of franchise in India every attempt was made to bring to their notice the claim of women to be included in the franchise reforms. Mrs Annie Besant, Mrs Sarojini Naidu and Mrs Hiraben Tata were heard by the Joint Parliamentary Committee. Parliament, however, decided that it was for Indians to decide whether their women should have the right to vote. So, although the Act did not confer the franchise on women, the rules framed under the Act gave the provinces the power to extend the vote to them; and this was done in Madras and Bombay in 1921, in the United Provinces in 1923, and in the Central Provinces, the Punjab and Bengal in 1926. Thus in 1923 women for the first time voted for the Legislative Assembly and the provincial Councils. By 1926 they were also made eligible for seats in the provincial Legislatures. In 1927 Dr Muthulakshmi Reddi of Madras was nominated the first woman member of any provincial Legislature.

But the franchise was based mainly on property qualifications, and as they were the same for men and women very few women had the requisite qualification. Therefore the number of women enfranchised between 1921 and 1933 remained very small indeed, 315,651 women as against 6·8 million men. Women were better organized to agitate for their rights when the Lothian Committee on Franchise came to India in 1932—sent out as a result of the Round Table Conferences in which two women had sat as members, Begam Jahanara Shah Nawas and Mrs Radhabai Subbarayan. Owing mainly to the joint efforts of the three women's organizations in India, the Women's Indian Association, the National Council of Women and the All-India Women's Conference and the representations of Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Begam Hamid Ali and Dr Muthulaksmi Reddi before

the Joint Parliamentary Committee, the franchise for women was widened under the Act of 1935. Six million women were enfranchised as against 29 million men. This was effected by the introduction of a wifehood qualification and a lower educational qualification for women. Forty-two seats were also reserved for them in the legislatures without precluding them from contesting general seats. Eight women were elected from the latter in the elections of 1937. Five were also nominated to the Upper Houses. When the ministries were formed six women took office, one as Minister and the others as Deputy Speakers and Parliamentary Secretaries. In 1938 Mrs Radhabai Subbarayan became the first woman member of the Council of State through unopposed election from a general constituency; and in 1943 the first woman sat in the Legislative Assembly in the person of Mrs Renuka Ray, nominated by the Government in connexion with the Hindu Marriage and Inheritance Bills.

The Women's Movement

The Women's Movement in India owes much to men who have been pioneers in the cause of social reform. Long before women had become conscious of their position in society, of the evils and inequalities to which they were victims, of the hardships from which no escape seemed possible, male reformers had taken up the standard for them. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the founder of the Brahmo Samaj, not only helped to save the Hindu widow from the funeral pyre of her husband, but also hoped to make her position safe by legalizing widow remarriage. The Widows Remarriage Act was added to the statute book in 1856 as a result of the agitation carried on by Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar. The first enactment of the Age of Consent, which was fixed at ten, was also due to his efforts. Vidyasagar devoted his whole time to fighting the social evils of Hindu society. He was also one of the first to realize the full implications of girls' education and was for a long time connected with the Bethune School, the first girls' institution in Calcutta. B. M. Malbari, a great Parsi reformer, was instrumental in raising the age of consent from 10 to 12 in 1891 and removing certain restrictions on the remarriage of widows. Among their successors were the great Mahadev Govind Ranade

and Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, who succeeded him as the leader of the Indian social reform movement. Later Mr K. Natarajan did yeoman service as the editor of its organ the *Indian Social Reformer*. The apostolic succession is unbroken as is testified by the names of Professor D. K. Karve, the founder of the Indian Women's University at Poona, and Dewan Bahadur Har Bilas Sarda, the author of the Child Marriage Restraint Act, still happily living among us.

The torch first lighted by men was soon taken up by women. Among the earliest of them was Ramabai Ranade, the wife of the great Mahadev Govind Ranade. In more recent times there have been such inspiring leaders as Mrs P. K. Ray and Lady Bose of Calcutta, Dr Muthulakshmi Reddi of Madras and Shrimati Anasuyaben Sarabhai of Ahmedabad. But there also have been great names like those of Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu, the late Nawab Begam Sultan Jehan of Bhopal, Bi Amman, the great mother of the Ali brothers, and H.H. Maharani Chimnabai of Baroda, who in different ways have added to the dignity and self-confidence of Indian womanhood in recent times. Gradually the unobtrusive work of individuals and groups in different ways and in more or less limited directions and spheres became a great national movement of Indian women.

The first organization of Indian women on a national scale was the Women's Indian Association which was founded in Madras by Mrs Annie Besant in 1917. It was an aspect of the great national movement of the time in which, too, Mrs Besant had taken a leading part. Its Charter of Liberties aimed at the educational advancement of women, the abolition of social evils and the securing of equal political rights with men. It also aimed at the organization of women for social service. It may unhesitatingly be called the mother of women's organizations in India. The useful pioneer work it did during the franchise agitation in the early twenties still stands out as its great achievement. In 1924 it had 51 branches, 18 centres and an active membership of 2,700. Its official organ was the *Stri Dharma*. Its part in the abolition of the *Deva Dasi* system in Madras and in the opening of the Rescue Home, the Madras Seva Sadan and the Children's Aid Society is too well known to need recapi-

tulation here. The All-India Women's Conference and the All-Asian Women's Conference are also largely due to the efforts of Mrs Margaret Cousins, a close collaborator of Mrs Besant and for a long time secretary of the Association and editor of the *Stri Dharma*. However, in recent years its activities have been confined to the Madras Presidency owing to the growth of the Women's Conference itself and perhaps also because of its earlier association with the Theosophical Society. Its president since Mrs Besant's death has been Dr Muthulakshmi Reddi.

The National Council of Women of India was founded in 1925 as a branch of the International Council of Women and is affiliated to it. Its object is also the advancement of women. It has now five provincial Councils in Delhi, Bombay, Bihar, the Central Provinces and Bengal. It publishes a monthly bulletin giving women's news in India and all over the world. Its membership is largely confined to English-knowing women and women from the richer and official classes. Although it is extremely vigilant in its own sphere and watches women's interests, it has not been able to capture the imagination of Indian women as the Conference has done.

The All-India Women's Conference came into existence in October 1926 and the first session was held in 1927 as a conference on educational reform. Very soon there was a strong demand for the widening of its scope and its aims have become so wide and comprehensive that they include all forms of activity for educational and social advancement, promotion of national unity and welfare and international understanding and goodwill. It has, along with the Women's Indian Association and the National Council of Women, played its part in raising the age of consent, in creating public opinion in favour of restraining child marriages, widening the franchise for women and getting a committee appointed for the codification of Hindu law. The Lady Irwin College of Home Science in New Delhi, started under its auspices and mainly through its efforts, imparts education in Home Science and trains teachers for the same. Besides granting diplomas it has done a good deal to familiarize women and even men with the advantages of a scientific education for training women as home-builders. There is also

an All-India Save the Children Fund Association formed under its auspices for the purpose of founding homes for destitute children—a problem created by war and famine. Its membership is very much larger than that of any other women's organization in India and more representative of all classes and communities. Its branches and sub-branches, about 120 in number, exist in all the provinces and many of the States. The conference is strictly non-partisan on political questions, but it has a certain national outlook which makes it popular. It publishes a journal, the *Roshni*, which is now the leading women's journal in India. Its annual sessions have always been regarded as events of importance and its proceedings rouse considerable interest in both official and non-official circles.

The above-mentioned organizations are wisely non-sectarian and, while maintaining their separate identity, have from time to time joined together to present a united front of Indian women when it was considered necessary. During the franchise agitation they formulated their demands jointly and joint action proved effective.

There are other organizations of women which do not have the same importance but require mention. The National Y.W.C.A. confines its activities to educational and social work, mainly within the Christian community. The Muslim League and the Hindu Sabha have recently started women's sections, but as yet their work is only in its early stages. One wonders how far such communal organizations, even if they become important, can work for the common welfare of Indian women. There is also a Federation of University Women. Notwithstanding its great possibilities its activities are comparatively small and confined to the cities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.

By the very nature of the educational and social backwardness of women in India, these associations can and do touch only a very small percentage of the country's women. The large majority which lives in the villages, works in the fields and drudges in the factories, lives beyond the influence of these organizations. For them the problem is not one of legal rights and civil liberties or even of political freedom, but the more insistent and inexorable one of eking out an existence. Till the women's organizations are able to con-

tact them, the movement will remain exclusive and largely ineffective.

Looking Forward

And so to the future. One condition of progress undoubtedly is that the women's movement in India should, as was said above, become a more vital one than it is today. One has only to compare it with the unexampled sufferings undergone by the women of England during the Suffragette agitation, or with the intense organizational efforts of American women in connexion with all questions affecting their sex, to realize how much more Indian women can do in this respect. But the success of their efforts cannot be complete unless the Government does its part by the enactment of necessary legislation. To a certain extent the Sargent plan for the future of education, the Rau Committee's Bill for Hindu law reform, and the investigations of the Central Health Survey Committee are beginnings in the right direction. But they are hardly more than beginnings. In any case plans, like words, are only children of the earth, it is deeds that are the daughters of heaven. Further Government efforts in this direction have always been hampered by its historic policy of neutrality in religious and social matters, and, for the time being, its belligerency in the international war. But in England the new Education Act has been passed and the new Social Security and the National Health plans have been formulated in circumstances of far surpassing gravity. It is true that a national government has done these things; but that too has its lessons for India.

It is however not only England that has lessons for us. What has been accomplished in Japan, Russia and Turkey during the last 25 years in the way of education, health and the social advancement of vast masses has perhaps even greater lessons for India as an Eastern country.

For the women of India, then, if the present may not be without its fears, neither is the past without its inspirations, nor need the future be without its hopes.

OXFORD PAMPHLETS ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

No. 3—Double Pamphlet

THE ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

BY

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HUMPHREY MILFORD
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IN this pamphlet the economic background to India's problems is surveyed from various points of view. Mr K. T. Shah, General Secretary of the National Planning Committee (1939), emphasizes the necessity of viewing the background as a whole, the problems of agriculture, industry and currency being incapable of separate solution. Dr P. J. Thomas advocates a bold programme of public works as the best means to increase the purchasing power of the masses, and so set in motion an upward spiral of improving methods of agricultural and industrial production. Mr J. C. Kumarappa, the founder and secretary of the All India Village Industries Association, seeks to develop a society of largely self-supporting rural units, within which the evil effects of competitive money-economy would be restrained. Sir Datar Singh, the administrator of a large estate in the Punjab, puts his faith in technical education; and Sir Jehangir Coyajee considers the place which India will occupy in the post-war world, and recurs to the necessity for a plan, flexible but all-embracing, as well as decades of strenuous exertion, in order to accelerate the rise of the standard of living.

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By K. T. SHAH

ECONOMIC factors condition and influence materially the entire life of the community. The background here sketched necessarily concerns itself with factors and conditions as they are, or have come to be. A brief note is inserted, however, wherever forces are known to be at work which are likely to affect and alter the situation radically. Every endeavour is made, at the same time, to avoid wishful thinking, or giving undue importance to changes that are calculated to bring about a more desirable state of affairs.

In considering the outlines of India's economic background, attention must be paid to the following factors:

(*a*) Production of material commodities, or new wealth, and services not embodied in such commodities, from Agriculture, Forests, Mines and Industries; including Consumption Goods.

(*b*) Distribution of that wealth, including an estimate of *per capita* income, standard of living, or the distribution of the national dividend among the several categories of the population.

The problem of Population overlaps both (*a*) and (*b*).

(*c*) Trade, Internal as well as Foreign, as being the hinge, the pivot, the lever of the entire economic system, conditioning both the production and the distribution of the new wealth of the community, together with its accessories of Transport, and Banking with Currency and Credit.

(*d*) Public (Central, Provincial or Local Government) activity, being the chief agency to modify or recast the background.

THE ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

I. Production

There has been no official or authoritative information regarding the volume and value of the aggregate agricultural production in India. Non-official estimates have been made by individual economists. But they lack in sufficiency of data, and involve an element of guesswork which necessarily detracts from their reliability.

Money value, moreover, the common denominator of all such estimates, is by its nature misleading. Volume or quantity figures, on the other hand, are undependable, because of the constant changes in them due to climatic reasons.

For practical purposes, however, the following estimate[1] of the value of primary production may be taken to give a fair picture:

	In millions of rupees
Value of Agricultural output	... 5,927
,, Livestock products	... 2,683
,, Fishing and Hunting	... 120
,, Forests produce ...	... 92
Total Primary Production	... 8,822

The writer estimates the aggregate wealth produced in British India, in 1931–2, at Rs. 1,689 crores, with a margin of variation of 6 per cent on either side. Primary production thus contributes a little over 52 per cent of the total national income of India.

The year 1931–2 marked the depth of the world depression, when agricultural prices were at their lowest.

[1] See *The National Income of British India, 1931–32,* by Dr V. K. R. V. Rao.

For a country of the size and resources of India this is very small production. Though the estimate relates to a period ten years ago, and though prices have improved in the meanwhile appreciably, the real situation does not show any improvement worth considering. For one thing, the population of British India increased in the decennium 1931–41 by four crores, or nearly 15 per cent; while in many of the leading commodities produced in India, the quantity has actually declined.[1]

There are several explanations of these variations on the downward grade. The material point for present consideration is: that there is no evidence of a steady and continuous improvement, indicating a corresponding betterment in the people's standard of living.

This is due to the fact that the Indian agriculturist suffers from a number of handicaps, almost every one of which is capable of effective remedy. But the remedies hitherto considered and applied are either mere palliatives; or they cannot touch even the surface of things, for fear the very roots may have to be torn up. The unwillingness to consider radical remedies is unavoidable in the present system of government, since the foreign ruler must needs seek, for his own maintenance, the support of the vocal and influential elements in the population. The evil, therefore, goes on perpetrating itself, and accumulating like a snowball.

India has some initial, natural advantages, which make her potentiality so strong that competent observers have declared her capable of producing anything needed for the wants of man. Her land is vast; her climate equable; her

[1] *Statistical Abstract for British India, 1929–30 to 1938–39*, p. 506; and *Indian Year Book, 1941–42*, pp. 348-50.

soil rich; her people simple, honest, industrious. But these advantages are more than counterbalanced by the handicaps they suffer from. And that is why the return from her most considerable source of new wealth is, in comparison to the corresponding return in other countries, low and uneconomical.[1]

This shows not only the initially low per-unit yield in India: it also shows that, while in other countries forces are at work which bring about a steady improvement in the unit yield, in India there seems to be no effort to improve the outturn per unit. The example of Russia may be mentioned to show that, in less than 15 years, the U.S.S.R. has raised the aggregate as well as the unit yield in almost every one of her principal crops by 100 per cent and more. The inherent possibilities of India are in no way inferior to those of Russia.

Considering, on merits, the several handicaps from which the Indian agricultural producer suffers, it is difficult to find a single instance where, given the will to improve, human science and ingenuity cannot overcome these obstacles to the material progress of India.

The chief handicaps of the Indian agriculturist may be classified under two main heads—those imposed by nature, and those made by man.

In the former group may be included the uncertainty, irregularity, or uneven distribution of rainfall; the havoc of floods, locusts, or other pests; the comparative poverty of

[1] While Germany produced 22·6 quintals of wheat per hectare and the United Kingdom 20·6, India produced only 7. While Italy produced 51·2 quintals of rice per hectare, U.S.S.R 16·6, U.S.A. 24·5, China 25·1, India produced only 13·9. Her production of cotton is about a third per unit of the U.S.A.

soils in some regions; their unsuitability for certain crops; or their exhaustion by incessant cultivation.

In the second category are comprised the poverty and ignorance of the cultivator; the host of burdens imposed upon him by the state, the landlord and the moneylender; the laws of inheritance, and the consequent morcellement and fragmentation of land; the lack of organization for marketing his produce; the inattention to connected or subsidiary industries; the burdens of private debt, etc.

Not one of these is it impossible to remedy effectively and finally to eliminate. The only lack is an effective desire to ameliorate the agriculturist's standard of living.

The vagaries of rainfall are no new phenomenon in India. Thousands of years ago, the Indian authorities were alive to this factor, and endeavoured to provide against it. Well- and tank-irrigation was and is considered to be among the simplest acts of self-insurance, which the poorest of cultivators seeks to provide on his holding.

The other similar handicaps—visitation by floods, pests, or earthquakes, poverty of the soil, or its unsuitability for certain types of crops, or its exhaustion by excessive and wasteful cultivation—are all capable of being similarly remedied, or insured against.

When every allowance is made, however, the basic fact remains that Indian agriculture is nowhere near so productive as its intrinsic advantages of soil and climate should require. *A fortiori*, there is still less sign of any steady improvement in the yield per unit of the principal competing crops, as in other countries. Some of this may be due to those man-made handicaps on primary production, which could be easily remedied, if only the powers that be in the land were alive to

their immediate duty, and their responsibility to the people they rule.

The most considerable of these man-made handicaps is the evil of land-morcellement and fragmentation. The average holding varies from 2 to 12 acres in the several provinces. Originally due to the prevailing law of inheritance, which distributes equally among the male heirs of a deceased landholder the parcel of land held by him, other complications have entered into the system which have made the evil ten times worse. The average holding, moreover, has no reference to the normal, standard, or economic unit, sufficient, either to maintain a given number of persons; or, alternatively, to provide adequate occupation to the labour and capital necessary for cultivating it.

A few half-hearted attempts have been made, it must be recognized, to effect a measure of consolidation of holdings. But the principle governing all such attempts is vitiated at the very root, as the rights of property, however uneconomical and unsocial, are assumed to be sacrosanct. Without a comprehensive, compulsory scheme of consolidation into proper economic units, with scientific cultivation and collective marketing, there seems to be no possibility of Indian agriculture meeting effectively the burden of increasing population.

There is, in the foregoing, no reference to industries associated or connected with agriculture. Animal husbandry, for instance, is at its lowest in India, notwithstanding the largest number of cattle. The improvements in the breed and the yield of cattle, their feed and care, the fullest utilization of their by-products while alive or dead, have hardly yet engaged serious attention. Potentialities of immense new wealth from dairy industries and the by-products of milk, blood, bones,

hair, etc. are all but unrealized. Isolated, individual efforts in these fields have succeeded already sufficiently to warrant the statement that the cattle industry, in all its connexions and potentialities, properly developed, would add at least an amount equal to the present wealth derived from that source.

Industrialization

The same tale must be told of the state of industry in India and its potentialities. India, with her teeming millions, has been too good a market, despite the poverty of the people, not to be appreciated as a dumping-ground for the manufactures of advanced industrial nations. Competing Indian industry, on a modern mechanized basis, would obviously make it hard to maintain this market as a pocket borough. It was, therefore, the consistent policy of the British in India to insist upon absolute freedom of trade, which, in practice, spelt deliberate disregard of her industrial possibilities.

Mechanized, large-scale, modern industry made its appearance here two generations after the advent of the Industrial Revolution in the West. In the beginning, however, such industry was Indian only in the sense that Indians, at least on the West coast, provided some capital, the lowest class of labour, and that it was located in India. It was operated mainly by non-Indian interests. No substantial accretion could, therefore, be expected from such industries to the wealth of India.

The real possibilities of industrialization in India were first perceived in the course of World War No. 1. Britain, India's main source of manufactured products, was shut out by unrestricted submarine attacks. And her own war needs demanded the development of India's local material to the

utmost. A Royal Commission on Industries in India revealed these potentialities authoritatively, and made recommendations for developing them, which had, however, to await the end of the war before being taken in hand.

Meanwhile, the financial exigencies of the war led to changes in the fiscal system, which could not but have indirect repercussions on the entire question of state aid or protection to local industry. Four years after the war, a Fiscal Commission recommended, and the Legislature resolved upon, a policy of 'discriminating protection'. The convention of India's fiscal autonomy, under certain conditions, was also adopted about this time. Industry after industry was examined in the light of the principles laid down; and in several cases some measure of conditional protection was given for a specified time.

The industries thus protected have more than justified the new policy. The present war has, similarly, been responsible for further expansion or extension, which may not prove abiding, if the factors, besides the war, leading to their birth and growth are not carefully attended to.

While recognizing this change, even today only a fraction of India's natural advantages for industrialization are being utilized. India still lacks many of the key industries, without which her economic structure must needs be vulnerable. Several minerals, heavy chemicals, forests produce and processing industries; transport industries, like automobiles aircraft, locomotives, ship-building, are either yet unknown, or in their merest infancy. Industries connected with munitions or armaments, their accessories and subsidiaries, or even such essentials of modern industrialization as plant- and machine-making, power-generation, etc. are hardly yet in gestation.

If these industries were taken in hand for intensive and rapid development, they would not lack either for raw materials, labour, capital, or market. Unskilled labour is superabundant. In this age of automatic machinery, the problem of skilled labour is, as Ford says, a matter of time. All the necessary skill can be readily learned at home, or abroad, if only there is a definite resolve and plan. Capital, too, will not be lacking, notwithstanding the legend of the shyness of Indian capital. The experience of more than one new, or expanded, industry; the operations on more than one stock exchange; the presence of crores of deposits in the Reserve, Imperial, the Postal Savings and other banks; and the spectacle of accumulating sterling balances—all go to prove that there is absolutely no lack of the necessary capital, if only a determined policy of industrial development is pursued.

It is, indeed, a curious commentary upon the outlook and policy of those in authority in this country that the repatriation of the sterling debt, for which the accumulated sterling balances have been used, should have been so widely welcomed. This debt admittedly carried a low rate of interest. Its conversion into rupee debt will not lessen materially the burden of interest. The only saving is in the cost of sterling transfers. On the other hand, it has involved an expansion of paper currency, and consequent reaction on the price level, which will have its own nemesis. This amount could have been more profitably utilized for supplying capital equipment needed for existing or new industries. The gain to the country from such a course would have been ten, twenty, or fifty per cent profit. What is a three per cent debt against such accession to the wealth of the country?

The value of industrial production in India is difficult to estimate in monetary terms, and, *a fortiori*, its potentiality. The author of *The National Income of British India, 1931-32*, makes an indirect attempt at this estimate. If one reads his conclusions correctly, the figure may be placed at about 400 crores per annum. Since 1931–2, industry has unquestionably expanded in volume. Equally evidently, the price level has also risen. But, granting all that, the fact still remains that India's industrial potentiality is realized only up to a small fraction. Considering her resources of raw materials, now exported for lack of adequate local industries, labour, capital and market, there is every reason to hold that, with a proper plan of all-round development, the net contribution of industry to the annual wealth of the country would at least equal the income from primary production.

II. Distribution

With such potentiality of production, the country still remains very poor. No systematic and authoritative attempt has been made in recent years to give a proper picture of the distribution of India's national dividend. The unofficial estimates of the annual *per capita* income of the country vary considerably. The latest estimate of the kind puts the *per capita* income in 1931–2 at Rs. 62 per annum. The present writer made a similar investigation for the average of 1900–1 to 1920–1, which yielded a gross income of Rs. 74 per annum *per capita*.[1]

But these figures do not give any idea of the actual share received by each individual, and its relation to his needs. The present writer estimated the distribution of the national

[1] *Wealth and Taxable Capacity of India*, by K. T. Shah and K. J. Khambatta.

wealth to be such that, if we had Rs. 100 of this wealth to distribute among 100 individuals,

Rs. 33 will go to 1 member of the capitalist and landlord class;
Rs. 33 will go to 33 middle-class men; and the balance of Rs. 34 will go to 66 working-men.

Thus two-thirds of the community get per head half the average income; while 1% enjoy more than a third of the national wealth. The same thing, stated in terms of the standard of living, shows that the bulk of the population can get hardly one meal a day, and that, too, of the coarsest and poorest. Against an average human need of 3,600 calories an average Indian can scarcely get 600! And that, too, without regard to any other needs of human existence, and any other needs of civilized life.

The mass of humanity in India thus habitually live below the level of subsistence. In regard to the amenities of life, their position is hardly superior to that of the wild beasts of the jungle. The root cause lies not so much in the steadily increasing population in India, as in the lack of development of the country's inherent resources of agriculture and industry.

That does not mean that India's population problem can be ignored. Census after census has revealed a growth in numbers, notwithstanding famines, plagues, epidemics, or war. This problem is, however, too complex to be considered, even in outline, in this sketch. We need only add that the problem is not confined to securing adequate food-supply for this increasing population; or even its employment. It is also a problem of quality; of redistribution within the country as well as outside; and of its adjustment to the new conditions of life.

With or without a solution of this problem, a recasting of the system of distribution is unavoidable. India can never take her proper place in the roll of nations with such an ill-fed, unclad, ignorant mass of humanity, scarcely above the level of brutes in living conditions. To recondition distribution a radical revision of the laws of property, its accumulation and transmission, is unavoidable. Hand in hand must also go the review of the motive force in economic activity. The cash nexus, the only motive today, is accountable for such perversion and degradation that, without its abolition, there can be no hope for a sane economic system or a just social order.

III. Trade

The principal link for effecting distribution, or bringing about the consumption of the material wealth produced, is trade. The predominant characteristics of India's trade, both internal and foreign, remain substantially the same as they were when the present writer described them in *Trade, Tariffs and Transport in India* in 1924. Necessarily the internal is more considerable than the overseas trade. Their relative proportions are, however, difficult to estimate through lack of official statistics. If we take India's aggregate production, under present conditions, at about Rs. 2,500 crores, and consider that it changes hands only once from the producer to the consumer, it would be nearly ten times as important as the overseas trade. The weekly average of cheques cleared in the Bombay bankers' clearing-house is over 15 crores; and for every rupee's transaction settled by cheques, there is at least a ten-rupees' transaction settled in cash. Bombay, again, is not the only clearing-house in India. The aggregate

of retail and wholesale trade transactions cannot, therefore, be less than Rs. 10,000 crores per annum.

The facilities and organization, however, of conducting the internal trade have never been designed to meet its requirements. In working the currency, the banking, the transport, terminal and insurance facilities, the requirements of internal trade are completely subordinated to those of foreign trade. A considerable amount of unnecessary movement of goods, involving an unnecessary use of transport service, makes the internal trade needlessly burdened. The intervention, again, of a series of middlemen, each levying his own commission, and the incidence of central or local taxation, all load and handicap the primary producer and internal trade.

The main features of the foreign trade of India are that she exports more than imports; that her exports consist largely of foodstuffs and raw materials, while her imports consist predominantly of manufactured and semi-manufactured articles; that the balance of trade is generally in her favour, and is set off to a very substantial degree by the necessity to pay for the 'home charges' reckoned as invisible imports; and the surplus still remaining due to us used, before the world depression of 1930, to be paid in specie, gold or silver. The expansion or establishment of industries in India, and the consequent consumption of India's raw materials for those industries, has led to a slight modification in the last twenty years in the volume and contents of India's foreign trade.

The direction of this trade, or the relative importance of the customers, has also undergone some change in the last generation. But even now Britain remains the largest single customer of India, both as regards imports and exports; and

the trade policy has been determined largely with regard to the economic advantage of Britain rather than of India.

The Governmental necessity to make considerable payments in sterling regularly has made the Indian currency system minister, not so much to the requirements of our internal economic system, as to the needs of our Government, and of foreign trade. It is impossible to detail the historical vagaries of the Indian currency system. But the note must be added that Indian public opinion even now regards it as based on uneconomical foundations, unsuitable to the needs of India's national economy.

The reform of the currency and banking system of the country is impossible, unless and until it is related to the requirements of the country's economic system. The needs of local industry and trade must be preferred to the exigencies of Government remittances abroad. The establishment of the Reserve Bank, and the central control of India's credit mechanism through that institution, is a step in the right direction, if only its vital link is steadily maintained with the industrial and commercial needs of the country.

IV. State Activity to Remould the Economic Background

This sketch of the background has referred, again and again, to the need of effecting some change if a progressive betterment is desired. The only agency for such a change is the state, as the organized embodiment of the community. The Government is the executive expression of the state. Unless and until that organ is recast fundamentally, with a new outlook and new technique, no radical change can be effected, no substantial improvement hoped for. The main activity of our Government today is to collect taxes and

maintain order. This is a negative, or at least a passive, conception of the state and its functions, which will never satisfy the needs of a community like India. The reaction of this narrow range of public activity is exploitive, not developmental. But if the active outlook of the state in India is to replace its present sluggishness, it can only be when the Government is recast radically in complexion as well as in responsibility.

Even when this organ of public action is reconditioned and reoriented, its direction would be haphazard in the absence of a preconceived plan and co-ordinated activity. It has been the bane of India in the past to consider each problem as though it stood by itself in a watertight compartment. The Industries Commission did not consider the fiscal policy; the Fiscal Commission did not consider the tax system; the Taxation Commission did not consider the land revenue; and the Agricultural Commission did not consider the standard of living, or the problem of population. But all these are essentially connected and mutually interdependent. The solution suggested by each, separately, is bound to be vitiated, however well-meant it may be, when its reaction upon the interdependent parts is overlooked or unconsidered.

Under these circumstances, a comprehensive, co-ordinated plan of national reconstruction is indispensable before any real hope of substantial improvement can be entertained. The plan is needed as much to lay down the trends of rational development of our productive resources, and their just distribution, as to prevent the creation of new vested interests that might possibly prevent its final and effective fruition within a predetermined period.

By P. J. THOMAS

THERE was a general expectation some years ago that industrialization in India would cure the widespread unemployment prevailing in this country; but this has been belied by the experience so far. Industrial development in India has been rather rapid in recent years, especially after 1930; we produce today all our sugar, cement and matches, more than 80 per cent of our cotton cloth and a large part of our iron and steel goods, paper, etc. Nevertheless the total number of persons so far employed in organized industrial establishments is still only about $1\frac{1}{2}$ million. In case the rest of our requirements are also manufactured in India, another half a million labourers may perhaps be required. But in India, as is well known, the number of unemployed persons runs into tens of millions and nearly every agriculturist is under-employed. Only a small fraction of these would be absorbed in industry. There is thus no indication that industrialization by itself will cure India's unemployment or raise the standard of living of her population. This is because the causes of Indian poverty lie much deeper. They are connected with India's defective economic and social system.

An economic system can only function satisfactorily if it provides for an adequate production of goods and a proper diffusion of spending-power in the community. But production cannot be adequate, unless the distributive basis of the productive system is equitable, unless the productive mechanism as a whole provides for a proper distribution of spending-power in the community. If such a distribution does not take place, the standard of living of the masses will

remain low; there will be a paucity of demand for goods and services; therefore industry and trade will remain undeveloped, and unemployment of all kinds will result. This is what has happened in India. As a result there has been poverty and misery among the masses in the country, and industry has to face a stone wall today.

The key to this whole problem is employment. Spending-power must be got in lieu of labour. But employment cannot increase unless there is a growing demand for goods and services, and such demand cannot grow unless a reasonable standard of living is maintained by the people of a country. In India as things stand today, the standard of living of the masses is pitiably low, because they obtain very little of the spending-power of the community, and because there is no adequate employment. But adequate employment cannot be had unless the demand for goods and services increases. It is a vicious circle of the most virulent type.

The following features of the Indian economic system are specially worth noting in this connexion:

(1) An inefficient productive mechanism, in which the producer is deprived of the fruits of his labour by inequitable methods of credit and marketing.
(2) An uneconomic use of the annual income which has curtailed employment and kept down the purchasing power of the masses.
(3) The consequent under-production and under-consumption.

I. Defects in the Productive System

It is true that agriculture by itself cannot give full employment to the whole of the rural population; but had agricultural production been based on an equitable system of distribution, production would have been more efficient

and employment more ample. As Malthus wrote to Ricardo in 1821: 'From the want of a proper distribution of the actual produce, adequate motives are not furnished to continue production.'

This is quite true today of Indian agriculture. The tiller is usually a tenant; he hires his land from a zamindar or other landholder on terms which, under the inexorable laws of supply and demand—limited land area and unlimited competition between tenants who know no other occupation —involves the giving away of too large a part of his annual produce as rent. From what remains the dues to the money-lender have to be paid, not rarely at unconscionable rates of interest. The produce is usually sold at harvest-time, at low prices and on terms which are generally dictated by the trader, whose hold on the tiller is strong in most parts. In the result, the tiller of the soil obtains only a precarious living from agriculture. Even normally he lives by mortgaging his future labour: the ryot mortgages the crop even before it is raised, and the labourer lives by mortgaging his future labour. This feature runs through the whole gamut of Indian economic life and this has had the most disastrous consequences. A people living from hand to mouth cannot be expected to adopt improved methods. Such a people can hardly satisfy elementary human needs and cannot be expected to have an effective demand for the goods and services required in countries where a reasonable standard of living is maintained. Consequently agriculture has been languishing, the agriculturist has been a poor consumer, the various services remain undeveloped and a perennial under-employment has been possessing the country. This has obviously been to the detriment of other countries as well as India.

No doubt, employment in agriculture is largely seasonal, and subsidiary occupations are necessary to make up for it. Here again, the same vicious economic system is at fault. Even more than agriculture, cottage industries depend on middlemen for credit and marketing, and the transactions have been such that too small a share of the fruits of their labour went into the hands of the producers. Even the ingenious Dacca weavers who produced the superb muslins of old obtained only a pittance for their labour, and while the middlemen became wealthy the labourers remained poor. Such unfair relationship still continues between the artisans and middlemen in almost all parts of India. Even the most illiterate worker can balance the extra effort against the increase of income which it brings about. When the return is woefully inadequate, there will be no incentive to work. We may give all kinds of encouragement to manufactures; but if they cannot be placed on more humane social foundations they cannot but languish, as a result of rigid demand.

II. Defective Use of Income

Even where income is not equitably distributed, the economic life of society can go on fairly satisfactorily, provided the income is properly utilized. A proper utilization of income involves a balance between spending and saving. I use these two terms in a non-technical sense. Normally, income-earners will spend some part of their income on food, clothing, house-room, recreation and other essentials for a normal standard of living, and the rest will be saved; i.e. invested in banks, Government securities or the shares of companies, or directly used for production by the earners themselves. The part spent will go directly to producers of food, clothing and furniture, and to the purveyors of services,

and therefore will immediately reach the pockets of labourers who will in turn use the same for similar purposes. The part saved will also ultimately reach producers (and labourers), seeing that if savings go to banks or, better still, to business concerns, they will be spent largely on labourers and will sooner or later be used for purchasing goods and services. Thus in a well-ordered economy, money will go round automatically and labourers will have employment, at least in normal times; at any rate no perennial unemployment of the type known in India will arise. This is what has been happening in most countries in Western Europe, especially the smaller ones which are not saddled with unstable external relations. The result is that normally there was employment for all; cyclical unemployment indeed used to arise, but it passed away when times improved.

Such has not been the case in India, because the use of income in this country has been very different. On the one hand, there has not been enough spending of the proper kind; and on the other, there has been too much saving of the improper kind. Those who obtained incomes spent more of their money on gold, silver and precious stones and on other luxuries which do not involve a benefit to the ordinary labourer, and less on clothes and furniture and music and books and the many services which give employment to labourers of all grades. Spending on jewellery or precious stones may add to the employment in a small luxury trade which employs only a few persons, but spending on clothes or books or laundry will lead to a widening range of primary and secondary employment and will set a virtuous economic spiral in operation.

While our spending narrowed the scope for employment, our saving straitened it even more severely. Saving could

increase employment if the money saved went immediately into productive enterprise. Saving in India, till lately, meant hoarding. It has almost been synonymous with buying gold or jewellery. In the result, India has absorbed an inordinate share of the world's production of gold for a long time, and while private holdings of gold are very meagre even in the most prosperous Western countries, they are fairly common in India even after the copious gold exports of the years after 1931. The thirst for precious stones has also been keen in India; where else in the world can one see such numerous and commodious shops dealing in precious stones and so avidly frequented by customers? The poor peasant and labourer invested his little savings in silver, even as the better-off persons hoarded their bigger savings in gold and precious stones. It was 'liquidity preference' with a vengeance.

No doubt all savers in India have not been equally mad after the yellow metal; some of the wiser ones used their incomes for lending to needy persons. Lending money is a beneficial service, provided it is for productive purposes, and provided the terms are reasonable; but neither of these conditions was fulfilled by the bulk of moneylending transactions in India. Credit has been grossly misused by the agriculturist, because he did not know the proper use of it. He would never repay the debt willingly; therefore the rate of interest had to be high and land had to be mortgaged if any considerable sums were needed. But the courts helped the creditors and they never lost much. On the other hand, many of them have amassed large fortunes.

It must be admitted that even unproductive lending has helped in the circulation of purchasing power in the community. What the labouring classes should have received

as wages was made over to them as loans; but as such loans cannot be repaid except in prosperous seasons, rural indebtedness became a serious problem. If a people cannot live on income already accrued, they will have to mortgage their future incomes, and this is what most people in India have been doing. Even this would not have been possible if some persons had not undertaken the risk of lending to such people.

Some benevolent persons scorned to be usurers but purchased land in the belief that it would help the community. It is true that land gave them only a meagre return on the capital invested (although it brought them social prestige), but it did little good to the community. It would have done some good, if those persons not only became proprietors but engaged themselves in cultivation, by employing the tenants as paid labourers or better still as co-sharers. But certain of the high-caste Hindus considered it beneath their dignity to till the land; working with the hand was unworthy of the twice-born. No doubt some of them lent funds to their tenants ostensibly to help them, but such credit often helped the ryot as the rope supports the hanged man.

In every civilized country, the most enterprising persons engage themselves in productive activity with their own or borrowed capital, and thus the labouring classes are able to get employment. In India, on the other hand, such persons have generally fought shy of productive enterprise and confined themselves to trading and moneylending. Productive enterprises are risky and are dependent on the seasons, but trade, especially commission business, brings profit nearly always and the interest due to the moneylender goes on accumulating even while he is asleep. Especially if 12 per cent interest or even more can be obtained for one's capital

from a neighbour who pledges himself and his land, why should one risk one's capital by venturing into agriculture, which is full of risks, or even industry which seldom gives such high return on capital? These wise persons knew what their own interest was, but the national interest suffered severely by this selfish policy. The poor and ignorant cultivator and artisan were left to take all the risks of production, generally with funds borrowed at high rates of interest, and they did what they could. Being unequal to the task they have become impoverished, and under their care agriculture and industry languished. Is it any wonder if under such a system the scope for employment became narrow and the standard of living was kept down to the lowest level?

There were indeed some forces counteracting such tendencies. The pious Hindu thought it his duty to give feasts on certain occasions (although the feeding was generally confined to one's castemen) and distributed alms on other occasions. After a life of accumulation, some of them built temples or established choultries. Such acts give some little relief to the perpetual tendency to concentration of income in a few hands; but they were not calculated to tone down the inequalities of distribution to any appreciable extent.

Islam exerted some influence to counteract the vicious economic forces in operation. Its votaries did not cling to the taboos about manual labour. They saw nothing wrong in enjoying the good things of life and they generally spent more on food and clothing than their Hindu confreres in the country. Further they considered it wrong to take interest on capital and therefore most of them avoided moneylending and invested their savings in trade or agriculture. Their preference for land investment kept the price of

land high in many areas. But they too did not have the experience of large-scale enterprise, and capital formation to any large extent was not possible among them also, owing partly to the nature of their succession laws.

In the East India Company's days, the Government's economic operations were hardly conducive to a proper circulation of purchasing power. Their public finance was largely a one-way transfer. Their 'investments' in cotton textiles were indeed a source of employment to weavers, but their financial operations often denuded the rural parts of spending-power. After 1868, the British Government in India awoke to a deeper sense of obligation to the country and launched a policy of loan expenditure on railways and irrigation works. The loans had to be raised abroad, as there was little liquid capital available for investment at home. What was at first a rill became gradually a mighty river. The first investment on capital works was hardly a crore a year; but in the years just before the world economic crisis of 1929–30, the capital expenditure on the railways alone came annually to the high figure of 41 crores. The outlay on irrigation and civil works also increased. At the same time, private capitalists from Europe opened plantations and trading businesses in India. All this gave rise to a new economic life in the country. Employment increased; towns grew; banks arose; accumulation of liquid capital began. This emboldened many Indian business men, at any rate in Bombay, to venture out into large-scale industry. They first confined themselves to cotton mills. The shyness of Indian capital was gradually overcome and modern capitalism was ushered in. Subsequently, it was nourished by the protective wall raised by the Government after the world war of 1914–18.

But such development has affected only small sections of the Indian community, and even now economic life on nearly the old lines is functioning over the greater part of India. Industrial development, although it has been rather rapid in recent times, has only touched the fringe of Indian economic life, and its effect on employment and purchasing power has not been potent. Intellectual life in the country has rapidly advanced; but the standard of life still remains low, and therefore not only the industries, but also the various services, which form a large source of employment in all civilized countries, remain undeveloped in India. The scope for employment in the country, therefore, remains at a low ebb. While I admit that all young men of the so-called middle classes ought not to aspire to black-coated professions, it is undeniable that many more of them could have been employed in business and in the services had the economic system functioning in India been more equitable, i.e. if the productive process had been based on better distribution and if the surplus had been properly utilized. Not only unemployment, but nearly all our economic ills can be traced to this fundamental defect.

III. The Outcome

The cyclical unemployment in the West is also due to certain inherent defects in the present economic system, but there is a fundamental difference. While in the West the capitalist classes invested their money in productive activity and came face to face with periodical under-consumption, the wiser Indian capitalists adopted the more selfish course of not investing at all; they were perhaps wise, because they avoided the loss involved in producing goods without being able to sell them. But this course was anti-social, because

by their improper use of capital, the other sections of the community have been deprived of possibilities to secure suitable employment. They avoided overproduction of the kind which occurs periodically in Western countries; but a severe underproduction has resulted from the sterilization of capital. Underconsumption is, of course, the final outcome, and this is much more serious, and has come through a process far more injurious than the underconsumption which arises in the West. Underconsumption in the West is only periodic; in India it is perennial. In the West, underconsumption does not affect necessaries; here, a large proportion of the people are unable to obtain bare necessaries, because our resources are lying untapped or ineffectively tapped. By properly exploiting those resources, consumption of goods will increase and there will be fuller employment. The purchasing power of the masses in this country is severely restricted, and in the result their consumption capacity is the lowest. If consumption does not increase in India, there is little scope for further industrial development—a fact which our industrialists will have to take into account, sooner rather than later.

Thus no stable economic progress is possible without curing the economic system of its inherent defects. Unemployment and underemployment are only symptoms of the failure of this economic system. They cannot be remedied effectively without tackling this fundamental problem. No doubt this is an extremely difficult job, but it will have to be undertaken boldly, if any substantial economic advance in India is to be possible.

The remedy lies in breaking through the vicious circle which has been operating injuriously for long in the economic life of this country. A fairly effective beginning can be

made by a carefully devised public works programme; it will set in motion an upward spiral, of increasing purchasing power, rising standards of living, accelerated industrialization and improved agriculture. A time of depression and unemployment is the most suitable for launching such a programme, and in my opinion the immediate post-war period may be opportune, as it is highly probable that a decline in prices and employment will arise then, owing to demobilization and the stoppage of war production. It is hoped that plans for a suitable public works programme will be kept in readiness so that they may be put into operation by public authorities and private concerns in the country immediately after the cessation of hostilities.

By J. C. KUMARAPPA

INDIA presents such a bewildering variety of economic problems that it is not easy for one steeped in Western economics to appreciate Indian conditions, much less to understand the programme put forward by national leaders. These variations from accepted formulas are largely due to the unique course of Indian history and the standard of values developed as a part of its culture and religion. In this essay an attempt is made to explain Indian problems in the light of such a background, with special reference to the standard of living of the people.

I. THE STANDARD OF LIFE

Whatever may be the definition of the 'standard of life', it is generally accepted that the major part of the teeming millions of this country is hardly able to procure the mere necessities to eke out even an animal existence, and that there are few civilized countries with such a low standard.

Income *per capita*

Many attempts have been made to measure this situation by appraising the national income, and from that to arrive at the *per capita* income and then to compare the results obtained in other countries by a similar process. The latest estimate, *The National Income of British India*, is by Dr V. K. R. V. Rao. His computation of the *per capita* income is Rs. 62 per annum. However useful such calculations may be for certain academic purposes, the picture of conditions

they unveil is thoroughly misleading as regards the real circumstances prevailing in rural parts. Naturally, the handicaps under which such calculations are made are many. The scarcity and unreliability of statistics available, the lack of uniformity of treatment, the vast range over which the average is struck, etc., vitiate the conclusions to which one may be led by relying too much on such figures. A theoretical calculation of this type brings the income to about Rs. 5 a month. Even such an income is far too low to ensure a satisfactory balanced diet on a subsistence level, not to mention provision for clothing and shelter.

A more reliable and closer approximation to facts may be obtained by a survey of actual incomes in villages. An average struck from figures collected from over 50 villages of Matar Taluka by the present writer gives an income *per capita* of Rs. 14 per annum.[1] This taluka is in a comparatively prosperous part of Gujarat, which province itself is better-off than many other provinces of India.

Another way of getting a more accurate picture of the income is to work up from actual expenses, as some of the income in agricultural communities is derived from the land direct, and does not figure in terms of money. A calculation based on a survey of over 600 villages of the Central Provinces discloses a *per capita* income of Rs. 12 per annum.[2] This amount will not cover even half the cost of a low subsistence diet. Therefore, even assuming that all the income is used for obtaining food, the people have to remain half-fed at best.

[1] *A Survey of Matar Taluka*, p. 70.

[2] *Report of the C.P. Government Industrial Survey Committee*, Part I, Vol. I, p. 6.

Why it is Low

Granting that the standard of living is below the subsistence level, we have to probe deeper to ascertain the reasons. It is wrong to attribute low standards in India to the inculcation of ascetic ideals. People go half-starved, not because they desire to be slim but because they cannot get enough to eat. They have no purchasing power to make their demand effective. When the people are industrious and intelligent it is no argument to say that their production is low, or that they are inefficient. We have to look elsewhere for satisfactory reasons to explain why their productivity should be so low.

A person may be willing to work hard, and may be intelligent, but may have no opportunity to occupy himself gainfully, or if he does have employment it may not bring in an adequate return for his labours. The standard of living of an individual under such conditions is bound to be low due to no fault of his. This appears to be the position in our country.

Lack of Opportunities

Even a cursory glance through the list of imports and exports will reveal the fact that the bulk of our imports are manufactured goods, and the exports are largely raw materials. The process of transforming a raw material into a manufactured article involves employment for the people. When we export raw materials we are creating unemployment for our people by depriving them of the opportunities of work. At the same time, when we import finished goods we employ foreign labour to the exclusion of our own. Applying this reasoning, our foreign trade is an open record of the transfer of our opportunities of employment to foreign countries.

How this is directed is a long story. No protection was afforded to struggling infant industries. Railway freight rates are designed so as to encourage the shipment of raw materials from the ports and the transport of finished goods to the interior. Heavy taxes and dues at the source of raw materials, a bad policy in regard to communications, the building of roads and canals, etc., have discouraged the growth of industries. Hardly any research calculated to help the villagers' production has been carried on. Government expenditures have not patronized local production and have set wrong standards of efficiency, leading to large supplies for Government departments being obtained from foreign countries. The educational system was not calculated to help young men to enter industries and commerce as entrepreneurs. It will not be possible within the space at our disposal to go into the details of these false steps, but the above enumeration indicates to the reader the methods which have deprived the people of their birthright. Added to these are the uncertainties of a countryside dependent on the vagaries of the monsoon for its agricultural operations. These fortuitous circumstances have produced the unemployment and underemployment of the people, thus lowering their income.

Unremunerative Stages

The return that a manufacturer obtains at the various stages in the course of processing the raw material into the finished product varies. In the earlier stages—near the raw material—the return is small, and as the article reaches the consumption stage the gain increases. If all these stages take place in one and the same country, the income of the country, as a whole, will not be affected. The distribution

of wealth may not be uniform, but will adjust and level itself in time. If, on the other hand, these various stages are so separated by political boundaries that the badly-paying earlier stages are in one country and the more remunerative later stages are in another country, without the possibility of settling down to a common level, then we have watertight compartments in which the country undertaking the earlier process of manufacture has to be content with a lower income than the country where the finished goods are produced.

For instance, let us examine a chain of producers working on the basis of cottage units, manufacturing hair-oil from groundnuts. If a farmer with about four acres of cultivable land, which is more than an average holding in India, produces Rs. 100 worth of groundnuts at a cost of Rs. 70 for seeds and land operations, taking five months for the crop, the farmer's income will be Rs. 30. If he is fortunate enough to raise another crop during the year, of wheat, he will have a net income of say Rs. 50 from it. These gains, totalling Rs. 80, will represent his annual income.

If an oil-presser takes Rs. 100 worth of groundnuts and presses out oil, the operation will take him about a month, during which period the upkeep of his bullocks will cost Rs. 10, and he will obtain as a product Rs. 125 worth of oil and Rs. 25 worth of oil-cake. Thus he gets an income of Rs. 40 per month. Where adequate finances are forthcoming to enable the oil-presser to stock sufficient groundnuts for crushing during the whole year he can secure an income of Rs. 500 per year at this rate.

The hair-oil manufacturer can convert this Rs. 125 worth of groundnut oil into scented hair-oil, at a cost of about Rs. 245 for deodorizing, scenting and bottling, in about a month, yielding Rs. 500 worth of such scented oil. This will

give him an income of Rs. 130 per month, and with the necessary capital he can get employment throughout the year, netting an income of about Rs. 1,500 annually.

The facts stated above show that owing to the vagaries of the monsoon and the nature of his calling the farmer gets only Rs. 80 per year, while the oil-presser, if he can command sufficient finances, can manage to occupy himself *throughout the year* and obtain an income of Rs. 500 per year; similarly, the manufacturer of hair-oils may gain Rs. 1,500 per year. We notice that as the process comes nearer the consumption stage more capital but less personal labour is needed. This aspect will be even more accentuated if centralized methods are resorted to. As it is, to keep one hair-oil manufacturer engaged right through the year we need about a dozen farmers on the verge of starvation to supply the requisite oil-seeds. Even then, if all were in the same country, in course of time the varying incomes would adjust themselves within a limited range. But if the farmers were in India and the manufacturers in Germany this variation in the income of the different groups would never have the opportunity of readjustment but would lead to increasing divergence resulting in progressive poverty in the former country and accumulated riches in the latter—the raw-material producers being assigned in perpetuity low-income-yielding occupations and the manufacturing, ruling nations reserving to themselves the more profitable avocations. Thus we see the reason for the competition amongst the nations to be the ruling race, and to hold others in bondage as the raw-material producers for themselves. This is the basis of all imperialism, which consigns the less remunerative task of producing raw materials to the subject races, and reserves the more remunerative functions to the rulers. This method of dividing the func-

tions between nations is bound to consign the raw-material producing nations to an economic state of progressively increasing poverty which will ultimately result in the deterioration of the culture of those nations. In the course of the last century, with the growth of industrialization in Europe and America, India has slowly slipped into this lower order. Hence the low share she is getting out of the great wealth the human race is pouring out today. The problem is not one of production but one of a fair method of distributing the gains obtained.

Change in Demand

India is a country abounding in labour wealth. The people will only find a market for the exchange of their wealth when articles of consumption whose main costs are labour costs are in demand. With the growth of mechanized industries in the West and a drive towards labour-saving devices, the market was flooded with goods in which the labour cost was very low, the major part of the cost being for raw materials, transport, insurance, marketing, and overhead charges. Thus the capitalists established themselves in the markets everywhere, while labour was ousted. In India, with a scarcity of capital and abundance of labour, this situation intensified unemployment and underemployment, when even such labour cost as entered into the cost of the manufactured articles came largely from foreign lands. The only wealth of the masses in India is labour. The market for this labour has been much restricted by the advent of the products of centralized industries in the world markets and the cultivation of a philosophy of multiplicity of wants by the well-directed propaganda of vested interests. In India the satisfaction of wants so created has been directed towards goods imported

from abroad by political control. In the absence of a market for the labour wealth of India the purchasing power of the masses has fallen low.

Money and Credit Economy

Our country has a large internal market for all kinds of goods. If this market had been properly husbanded and directed the people would have had a never-failing demand for their products. In the last century, the growth of money-economy with its monster-child 'Credit' spread its tentacles so far and wide that our internal market has been totally disorganized and captured by foreign interests. For transferring purchasing power, money and credit are unsurpassed. An honest exchange does not consist in such transfers of material values only, but should also include transfers of human and moral values. These last two are not represented in a money transaction. The bargaining power of a seller of perishable bananas or fish is not on a par with that of the buyer, the holder of imperishable gold. The growth of money-exchange has smothered all considerations of equity and justice. As long as the buyer pays the price, nothing further need be said about the transaction. Under these conditions commerce can extend its markets to the uttermost corners of the world, but cannot guarantee an equitable distribution of wealth and values. This unrestricted extension has resulted in the export of raw materials to distant industrial countries and imports of manufactured articles from such far-off manufacturers, with the consequent intensification of unremunerative production in our own land, as noticed in an earlier paragraph.

The old Indian system of distribution was a combination of money and barter exchange, where humane considerations had

a place. Certain artisans, like the carpenter and blacksmith, and menials, like the barber and the sweeper, were guaranteed their subsistence by a payment in kind at the time of harvest in consideration for certain basic services to the community. This system, known as *baluta* or *puddi* or *dan*, is fast disappearing, leaving the former beneficiaries to starve out of existence in the competitive struggle of everyday life.

II. WHAT IS THE TENDENCY?

Even if the income of the people was low, it would not be a matter for anxiety if the tendency over a long period was showing a steady rise. To be able to observe this tendency we have no adequate statistics prepared at periodical intervals on the same basis and principles. In the absence of such information we are, therefore, thrown back on the common-sense method of proving it. This method is perhaps the most reliable. An increase in the number of millionaires does not necessarily prove the country's prosperity. About 90 per cent of the population lives in villages, and so our inquiry should be directed towards assessing their financial conditions in the past and the present, by actual examination of their assets and social customs. Such a change in their state is well reflected in (*a*) their houses, (*b*) their hoarding of gold or investment in ornaments and (*c*) the carry-over from their old customs.

The Evidence

(*a*) *Houses and Buildings*

Any observer who comes to take stock of the state of the dwelling-houses, public buildings, etc., in the villages will not be long before he notices that most of the substantial buildings are old ones, in bad repair, and that there are

hardly any new ones of an ostentatious and ornate type. This reveals that the people were well-off forty or fifty years ago to be able to spend money on such buildings; while the descendants of those very same people are content to live in the dilapidated ruins of the dwellings their forebears had erected. The financial state of the present generation does not allow of even a sufficient margin to keep these buildings in repair.

There are few public buildings, such as dharmashalas, choultries, temples, tanks and schools, which are of recent origin. People have not had the wherewithal to donate such gifts. This is an unmistakable record of the weakening of the financial resources of the people.

(b) Ornaments

Whatever the habits of the urban people in regard to commercial investments may be, the Savings Bank of the rural population still remains the hoarding of gold, or investment in ornaments. Today the village goldsmith is a rarity. Such as still exist sit before the dead embers of their smithy fires to tell a tale of woe as to how within their lifetime they have lost their profession. This fall in the prosperity of the goldsmith is an indicator of the decreased margins of savings amongst the people.

(c) Social Customs

A customary wail against the budget of the villager is that the expenses on social occasions are excessive. No doubt this is true if we take their present scale of income as the norm. This high proportion of social expenses is itself a proof that their income, which was high enough at one time to allow of such expenditures, has now dwindled, making the

ratios between the various items on the budget unreasonable. If a man's income is Rs. 1,000 per annum, and he spends Rs. 100 on marriages, etc., nobody need take up the cudgels to belabour him for extravagance. When the income of the son of such a well-to-do person falls to Rs. 300 per annum, and he still continues to spend the same amount of Rs. 100 on social occasions, he will certainly be open to charges of extravagance. Social customs the world over are very tenacious. People in all lands, even though willing to forgo items on the menu, will cling on to the standards of social expenditures set up by their forefathers. The lag of this item in adjusting itself to decreasing income has created this so-often-criticized disproportion, and provides valuable evidence that the income of the villagers is steadily falling.

The above three items present an indelible record written with the miseries of a people whose income has shrunk from opulence to poverty below subsistence level.

Competition with the Beasts of Burden

Apart from these long-term evidences we notice that there is a growing tendency for men to compete for the work hitherto done by animals, so that they may earn a meal somehow. Bullock-drawn vehicles are now being replaced by man-power, and horse-tongas by rickshaws. Can these be the signs of prosperity? Indeed the masses have sunk to dire poverty where they would 'fain fill their bellies with the husks that the swine did eat'.

We cannot be blindfolded by the seeming prosperity evidenced by new buildings rapidly rising in suburban areas, nor by the increase in the capital drawn from Indians for working a few industrial concerns, nor by the luxurious lives of city-dwellers. India lives in the villages, and the evidence

as to the prosperity or poverty of India has to be sought in the villages.

III. INDUSTRIALIZATION

Centralized industries accumulate wealth but distribute it badly. Therefore their proper place is for the exploitation of natural resources on a service basis for the benefit of the producers working decentralized units. For example, we can use centralized units for mining and converting iron ore, for rolling steel bars and sheets, but not for making cart-wheels, which latter is the work of the village wheelwright.

On a Service Basis

As such industries need considerable Governmental aid in regimenting labour, maintenance of communications, provision of exchange, and control of tariffs, they are best carried on by the Government on a service basis. All public utilities, power production, transport, etc., can be run with great advantage on this basis. Centralized industries must function as an accessory to the industries carried on by the people on a decentralized basis.

Labour Costs

As we have already mentioned, the labour cost in such industries is low, hence in India they cannot make full use of the labour wealth we possess by industrialization. If we wish to create a market for our plentiful supply of labour we can only do so by decentralized industries. We have to be very sparing in the use of centralized units in our country.

IV. AMELIORATIVE MEASURES

The above discussion in itself contains indications of the ways in which reorganization can take place so as to increase

the wealth of the people, and attention is drawn to some of the items below.

The state should manage forests so as to supply the artisans with the material they need when and how they want it. If the carpenter needs timber, the forests should be so planned as to produce the quality and kind of wood, properly seasoned, at the place where it is wanted.

The mineral wealth of the country should be worked by the state, not for export purposes, but for providing raw materials to be worked up in the vicinity into finished products. As we have already pointed out, trade in raw materials does not bring the highest returns to the people.

Railway rates, tariffs, etc., should be scheduled so as to encourage local manufactures on a cottage basis.

Facilities should be afforded by the state for research and experimentation for the improvement of tools, implements and processes, and an adequate medium should be provided for the dissemination of the information gained. Educational institutions where aspiring young men can equip themselves for production by means of cottage units need to be organized.

Foreign trade should be regulated by the state so as to encourage the export of surplus products and to furnish openings for the people seeking employment.

The evil effects of money-economy should be moderated by a judicious use of barter, and payment in kind. This will entail a certain amount of tax payments being received in kind by the state. Recently Gandhiji has thrown out a suggestion that handspun yarn should be accepted by certain organizations as a medium of exchange.

In many industries, such as tanning, the length of time involved in the process of production calls for adequate

financial facilities, without which the tendency to hasten the processes yields goods of inferior quality. Where such finance is called for, arrangements in the form of state aid, loans from regulated *mahajans*, or co-operative help, should be forthcoming.

The measures indicated above are largely state functions, but they can also be carried out by private bodies working on an altruistic basis. The All India Spinners' Association and the All India Village Industries Association represent two such bodies attempting, in spite of all the handicaps of private effort, to reorganize the economic life of the great poverty-stricken masses of our land under the advice and guidance of Gandhiji. The Reports of these Institutions indicate the lines on which they have been working to achieve this end and, at the same time, to usher in a society based on mutual goodwill and understanding, the lack of which in our modern competitive world plunges us periodically headlong into wars of destruction, on a diabolical scale made possible by the advance in present-day methods of production.

By SIR DATAR SINGH

THE standard of living in India was until a few years ago proverbially low. In villages people lived like the men of primitive ages. They wore only a few coarse garments, ate rough and scanty fare, and lived in scattered thatched huts. The fruits of wild shrubs and trees were staple foods. Their time was mostly spent in tribal disputes and warfare. The standard of living in cities was higher than in the villages, though it was much below what is considered normal in Western countries. Barring rich and advanced families, the average citizen lived in an insanitary flat or building. His food, lacking essential vitamins, was definitely insufficient for the healthy growth of his body. By living in unhealthy surroundings, ill-fed and ill-clothed, he was steadily losing his energy and vitality.

It is an interesting study to trace the causes of this low standard of living. By diagnosing the disease one can hope to find the remedial measures. Below are given some of the outstanding causes which are responsible for the present position.

Poverty

The root cause of the low standard of living is the appalling poverty of the people. It is common knowledge that the average income of an Indian is far below that of the inhabitants of Europe and America. In this sub-continent, where thousands of people can barely have one meal a day, it would be too much to expect that they should have any idea about the standard of living. As the means of the people are limited, everything cheap is always in demand,

cheap wages, cheap labour, cheap cloth and cheap wares.

The question then arises, why are the people so poor in India, which is essentially an agricultural country? Is the soil poor or has it deteriorated? Is it due to an act of God? Certainly not. The rich, vast and fertile lands of India have been the envy of the world. The saffron-growing fields of the Kashmir valley are an instance of the bounteous gifts which Nature has bestowed on India. Why then are the masses writhing in the chill grip of grinding poverty?

Illiteracy

The plain answer is that it is due to lack of education. The diffusion of education in India has been very slow. While other countries have made rapid progress in education in a very short time and have been able to educate 95 per cent of their people, in India the percentage of the educated has not risen above 10. The result has been that the villagers have remained steeped in old and archaic methods of agriculture. In other countries people were growing two blades in place of one, but the Indian peasant remained where he was. He used the same old plough and the same old harrow. His bullocks, half-famished and bony, could hardly plough land sufficient for his sustenance. He could not follow the scientific methods of agriculture by reason of his illiteracy and ignorance. He could not afford to buy the new and improved agricultural implements because of his traditional poverty. With increase in population, the holdings became attenuated on account of divisions and subdivisions. They ceased to be economic, and the Indian farmer grew to resemble the withered branch of an old tree.

The lot of villagers carrying on cottage industries was

hardly better. The introduction of machinery brought about an industrial revolution, and handmade things could not easily compete with machine-made articles. Illiterate artisans had no notion of the industrial and scientific progress which other countries were making, and their indigenous methods of manufacture became out-of-date. The industrial revolution put the craftsman out of gear. Cottage industries gradually declined, and with them the standard of living sank low.

Faulty Methods of Education

In cities, schools and colleges were started. For some time educated youths were absorbed in the Government services, but year after year, as the number of educated went on increasing, the avenues of employment became limited. Everybody could not get a Government post. The result was a large intelligentsia, an undigestible intellectual proletariat without any substantial means of livelihood. Parents who had spent much in getting their sons educated were bewildered to find that, for all their education, their sons could not keep a good coat on their backs. Thus no appreciable improvement could be made in the standard of living.

It soon became apparent that the education imparted in schools and colleges did not equip students properly for the ensuing struggles of life. It had serious defects. The educated youths shunned manual work, and did not understand the dignity of labour. They had no industrial training, no education in arts and crafts. The great poets and authors they had studied had certainly awakened their mental powers, but these did not help them in earning their livelihood. As was observed by His Excellency Lord Willingdon in a speech

delivered at the University Conference of 1934, 'From the point of view of the students it is heart-rending that many young men who have fought their way successfully up the educational ladder and have gained high degrees and distinctions, often in spite of many obstacles and handicaps, are yet unable to find means either of maintaining themselves or of serving their fellow men. From the point of view of the country it is disastrous that the labours and initiative of these young men should be running to waste. Keen and unmerited disappointments accentuated by irksome inactivity are apt to lead high-spirited young men into dangerous and unexpected channels'. The problem of making drastic changes in the educational curricula began to engage and is still engaging the serious attention of our statesmen and politicians. It is realized that unless Indian youths are trained in various arts and industries the pace of progress may be retarded and discontentment may grow.

Shyness of Capital

One reason why large-scale industries could not gain a foothold in India is that capital is very shy. Those who have spare money want to hoard it and do not like to part with it. The benefits accruing from pooling resources and from joint work and labour have not been generally realized, with the result that vast capital is languishing in India which might otherwise have been usefully employed.

Growth of Population

The steady rise in population has greatly affected the standard of living. It is well known that the population of India has doubled within the last few decades. It is now about four hundred millions. The long spell of peace, the

high birth-rate, and modern scientific discoveries for fighting epidemics and infectious diseases have contributed towards this phenomenal rise. But multiplication in population without enhancement of the sources of income has the natural effect of reducing the standard of living. Where four instead of two persons share the same income the level of income is sure to fall.

All the above circumstances taken together brought about an unfortunate state of affairs. The struggle for existence became keen. Hundreds of B.A.s and M.A.s competed for jobs carrying a salary of Rs. 30 or Rs. 40 a month. Mr Vishnu Sahai, I.C.S., a Registrar of Co-operative Societies, in evidence before the United Provinces Unemployment Committee stated that he got several applications from B.A.s for a clerical post on a salary of Rs. 20 a month.

Ameliorative Measures Taken

Realizing this state of affairs the Government introduced several beneficial measures. Vast canal projects and colonization schemes were initiated. The waters of several large rivers which had previously run to waste were harnessed. Huge dams were constructed with masterly engineering skill. From the Sukkur Barrage, the Upper Chenab, the Lower Bari Doab and several other canals millions of acres of arid land have been brought under cultivation. Hundreds and thousands of people have taken to agriculture and are making a good living. Scores of new cities, towns and villages have sprung up. Great new markets for the purchase and sale of commodities have come into existence, and have given employment to thousands of people. Their income has substantially increased and with it the standard of living has swung up.

In nearly all provinces measures have been taken to remove agricultural indebtedness, and sincere attempts are being made to improve the condition of the peasantry. Departments of Agriculture have been set up to make landlords and tenants understand new scientific methods of agriculture, and intense propaganda for rural uplift has been set afoot. Shops for the sale of better implements of agriculture at cheap rates have been opened and are within the reach of all. The advantages of sowing good seeds, of scientific farming and of rearing a good breed of cattle are frequently impressed upon those interested in agriculture. Every encouragement is given to those who work energetically for the improvement of their farms and produce. Research institutes and agricultural colleges have been started, which have benefited the people to a great extent and have undoubtedly contributed towards the better living of a substantial majority.

Within the last few years, especially since the end of the Great War of 1914–18, many new factories and workshops have come into existence. One great lesson of the last war was that industrial India would be of enormous help to England in the hour of her trial. Many new industries, for example the textile and sugar mills, have been successful, and their large profits have encouraged industrialization. Technicians and experts were in great demand, for trained labour was indispensable for the new industries. Many people went abroad for technical training, and saw for themselves the gigantic progress which other countries had made. They imbibed new ideas and felt keenly the vast difference between the standard of living of persons living in those countries and that of their countrymen in India. They brought new standards and ideals back with them. Buildings of ultra-modern design began to be constructed.

A new emphasis was laid on sanitation and hygiene. In great cities like Bombay and Calcutta, Improvement Trusts were formed to make those cities better and healthier, and many modern housing and drainage schemes were carried out. An upward tendency in the standard of living became noticeable everywhere.

In the sphere of education several ambitious schemes have been set afoot. Vigorous efforts have been made for the education of the masses, and are still being made. Numerous schools have been started in towns and villages, and in many provinces compulsory education has been introduced. New ideas of progress have begun to permeate the hearts of the people, and the country is pulsating with new life.

These measures account for the gradual ascent in the standard of living.

Suggestions for Improvement

But the progress so far achieved leaves India's standard of living far below the normal. Vigorous efforts are necessary to raise it still further.

The first thing to do is to reform and reorganize the system of school and college education, which requires thorough overhauling. The salvation of India lies in promoting her industries. It is absolutely necessary that boys should be given training in handicrafts and industries during their educational career. The curricula of schools and colleges must be transformed, and vocational training should become the essence of education. Let students be taught in their own vernaculars till they pass the sixth or seventh primary class. By that time they will have acquired sufficient knowledge of the three R's and

their faculty of understanding will have developed to some extent. From the sixth or seventh primary class right up to the end of the college career industrial education and training must form a compulsory part of education. Students should be trained in very simple small-scale industries in the beginning, and more complicated processes introduced progressively. For instance, in some countries, to start with, students are given lessons in the making of shuttle-cocks, cardboard boxes, sports nets, carpentry, smithy work, etc. By the time a student finishes his school career he knows several crafts. He may join an industrial concern or may start an independent industry. If he joins an industrial concern he will be welcome as he knows the job well, and if he starts his own work, he will be able to earn his livelihood. Training in more technical processes should be given to students as they mount the educational ladder. There are of course some industrial and arts schools in India, but they are much below the standard to be desired. Too much stress is laid on theory, and the practical side is mostly neglected. Few opportunities are given for the handling of tools and implements, with the result that when students complete their academic career they are theorists rather than practical craftsmen. Few workshops will admit them and business men can ill afford to train youngsters at their own expense. Unless industrial training is implemented by practice it is of no avail, and it is well said that an ounce of practice is better than a ton of theory.

To train men for large-scale industries arrangements will have to be made with the leading industrial workshops and factories. The students can be given practical lessons by their own teachers in the technique of a particular industry. For instance, boys who are preparing to enter the steel

industry may be sent to the Tata workshops at Jamshedpur, and those who are interested in textiles may be sent to mills at Ahmedabad or Madras. If the schools and colleges are remodelled on the lines suggested, there is every hope that India's industries will improve and expand rapidly.

Conditions Necessary for Economic Progress

There are five conditions for the success of industry in a country: (1) Technical education, (2) Financial help, (3) Cheap motive power, (4) Cheap transport, and (5) Protection.

The subject of technical education has been discussed already. Financial help is the soul of every industry. It may best be secured (*a*) by starting joint-stock banks in every town, which will be in a position to give long- and short-term credit facilities to local industries; (*b*) by the raising of Government loans for industrial purposes; (*c*) by the starting of private industrial concerns with Government subsidies.

Cheap electricity and gas are the sinews of industry. In many foreign countries gas and electricity are available in the remotest villages at cheap rates. In India there are many waterfalls which, harnessed, would generate millions of additional horse-power.

Cheap transport can be secured by building many more metalled roads and by encouraging the motor and fuel industries.

Small landholders have special difficulties in improving their standard of living. The necessities of life have increased and their income is insufficient to provide them. They should supplement their income by taking up cottage industries. Their spare time can be utilized in bee-keeping, cattle-rearing and dairy-farming, and for a small investment they can add considerably to their income.

There are still vast tracts of waste land which can be brought under cultivation by the construction of canals. It is well known that Hissar and Rohtak have been in the grip of famine on account of long drought. By the construction of perennial canals and by wisely-planned colonization, many hungry mouths could be fed. The fear of insecurity and precarious living would disappear, and with ordered progress the standard of living would rise.

The diffusion of education, the promotion of industries and the resulting increase in income would go a great way towards raising the standard of living of the masses. Most of the old towns and cities require remodelling with more parks and gardens, extended streets and lanes, sanitary tenements and houses. The villages also require replanning.

The task is long and arduous, and the best results can be obtained by co-operation between the Government and the public. An improved standard of living is, however, a healthy sign of the physical and intellectual development of the people, and a worthy goal for any nation to aim at.

By SIR JEHANGIR COYAJEE

THERE are countries with regard to which a propitious destiny seems to have ordained that they should have ample time and successive periods for solving their political, social and economic problems. England is the country that has been particularly favoured in this respect. In her case, the political and industrial revolutions were separated by an entire century; while, in between these two, much progress was made in the sphere of agricultural development. In the case of some other countries, however, the break-up of the old order and the progress towards modern ideals takes place simultaneously in the political, economic and social spheres. The difficulties of the formation of proper objectives and of wise planning in each of these spheres are greatly increased by such an accumulation of tasks. India, it need hardly be said, forms a notable example of such arrested development in various directions.

Confining ourselves here to the investigation of a sound economic policy, we have, in the first place, to consider what should be the ultimate object or goal of such a policy. That object has been differently envisaged by leading economic authorities. It has been described by some as the maximization of the national dividend, by others as maximum prosperity, by still others as the highest possible level of employment. We shall not be far wrong, however, if we interpret it as a high standard of living; because that concept implies not merely a large national income but its proper distribution and wise utilization.

SIR JEHANGIR COYAJEE

A Rising Standard of Living

That the standard of living in India has been rising slowly but steadily, for many years, can scarcely be disputed. We shall notice presently the factors that have been acting on that standard favourably and unfavourably. But there are unmistakable indications that, on the balance, there has been progress. The growing production and imports of articles of luxury and their steady penetration into the rural areas is the best proof of this. It is also evidenced by the steady rise in the national income per head. Quite a number of attempts have been made during the last seventy years to compute the income per head in India on various lines and with various objects. It is a matter of satisfaction that, with successive computations, its figure has tended to mount up. No doubt the increasing national dividend would have had even happier effects with a better distribution and wiser expenditure of wealth—with a desirable change in the economic outlook. But, even as things are, there can be no reasonable doubt regarding the rise in the standard of living.

It is an economic truism that any substantial and lasting improvement in the standard of life must be based upon a proportionate growth of national income and production; and there is ample evidence of the expansion of production in India in the sphere of manufacturing industries as well as in that of agriculture. Witness the great expansion of our textile industries, our sugar industry, our cement industry which have, each in its line, achieved the ideal of self-sufficiency in India. Witness also the rise and progress of the iron and steel industry, which has placed Jamshedpur on the map of the world as one of the leading centres of production. Nor can we neglect in this connexion the striking and rapid industrial evolution of Indian States, like Mysore. Surely

such developments could not have failed to expand the national income of India. They must also have had important and favourable repercussions upon the income and standard of living in a great many rural districts. The growth and expansion of new industrial centres like Jamshedpur and Ahmedabad, like Cawnpore and Nagpur, is bound to increase the income of many rural areas and to introduce better notions and higher standards of comfort in them. Improvements in our rural economy, too, have contributed their share to this growth of the national income. Let us give their due to such important lines of progress as the expansion of the total area irrigated by ten million acres in a single decade, and the policy of crop-improvement which has increased the yield of nearly twenty million acres.

Some Unfavourable Influences

But the beneficent influence of the factors referred to above is neutralized, to a considerable extent, by certain unfavourable influences. Amongst these latter, easily the first place is occupied by the rapidly growing pressure of an uncontrolled growth of population upon the means of subsistence. Recently some economists have attempted to describe the condition of India as that of 'relative over-population'. But it is obvious that even if, in a future condition or ideal economic development, India can support a larger population, under existing circumstances the rapid increase of numbers is doing immense harm. It leads directly to increased fragmentation of holdings, to a steady deterioration of agriculture and to the multiplication of landless peasantry. An Indian economist, Dr Radha Kamal Mukerjee, who has made a special study of both land problems and the population problem, has expressed his conviction that 'with agriculture on a steep

incline, pushed down by constant population increase and recurrent droughts, India's industry and trade cannot contribute usefully to the solution of her poverty and economic backwardness'. The great density of population in many parts of India tells its own tale. We are witnessing a race between the growth of population and the rise of the standard of living in which the former presses the latter very hard indeed.

Among other contributory causes of our low standard of living might be emphasized mistaken standards of consumption on the part of both the wealthy and the poor. Taken in the mass it is the extravagance of the poor on ceremonial occasions and in litigation that costs the country more. The Royal Commission on Agriculture has also drawn particular attention to another aspect of error in consumption—malnutrition due to unwise choice of dietary. It leads to more money being spent on a less nourishing standard of consumption.

In the above discussion attention has been drawn to the main factors in the improvement of our standard of living. We have to plan our population on both the quantitative and qualitative aspects, to improve the distribution of wealth and the standards of consumption; to increase the national income alike by industrial progress and agricultural development. It has to be, obviously, a many-sided and properly co-ordinated process of evolution; for no one line of progress is adequate by itself to raise the standard of living materially and to solve the problem of poverty in India.

Importance of Agricultural Development

There are some writers to whom the problem of India is essentially an industrial one, who attach an exaggerated

importance to industrialization, and who would employ hot-house methods to push it forward at any cost. The better view would seem to be that we should aim at a well-balanced economy as efficient as possible both on the agricultural and on the manufacturing side. These two sides are essentially supplementary in character, and notable success cannot be achieved in either unless there is simultaneous progress in the other. Improvement in rural economy is required to increase the purchasing power for the products of industry, as well as to permit the necessary exodus of labour from rural areas to industrial centres. Agricultural progress can act directly and beneficially so as to raise the standard of living in this great agricultural sub-continent. With the population of our country increasing at the present rate, a considerable development of agriculture will be needed merely to feed 'the teeming millions'.

Those who profess to find the welfare of India in a predominant industrialization are either led away by the examples of England and America or have been repelled by the difficulties in the way of rural reconstruction and agricultural advance. True it is, as has been well pointed out by Professor Kale, that 'no economic revolution is to be expected in the rural areas, and there is no short cut to our goal'. But where a task of primary national importance has to be achieved we may not shrink from arduous or prolonged efforts. As the pivot of rural reconstruction we have to reshape the primary co-operative society, enlarging its functions gradually and tentatively. At all costs we must have a much enlarged and improved co-operative system, with an adequate measure of state guidance and state help. We have to improve the systems of land tenure and to rouse the Indian landlord to undertake his true role—that of the pioneer of

capitalistic agriculture. These are but a few among the numerous aspects of rationalized agriculture; and hence we have to multiply our resources for the work by concentrating them on preliminary experiments at the most favourable points.

As regards the too-tempting examples of England and America in the sphere of industrialization, neither our traditions and aptitudes nor our equipment and requirements make them suitable for us. A far better model for the development of India is to be found in France with its well-balanced development in manufacturing industries and agriculture. As economic historians have noted, development on such lines forms 'a valuable insurance policy against unsettled times and has decided compensations in the long run'.

After-War Problems of Industrialization

Coming to the equally important topic of industrialization, it is to be emphasized that while the present world war is sure to give a considerable impetus to our manufacturing progress it raises a great number of new and important problems. Without aspiring to a detailed foreknowledge of the world conditions at the close of the present war, we might assume that the economic world will be in something like the same disorder as manifested itself after the first world war, but that its maladies will be even graver and also more dangerous. Currencies will be in utter confusion, economic warfare more embittered, and enough of the totalitarian spirit will be left in the world to make abrupt decisions and sudden changes of economic policy on the part of individual states fairly frequent. Under such circumstances *flexibility* of economic policy is a matter of

the first importance for India. Such a policy should find its expression mainly in the development of the key industries and in the steady expansion of vocational education. The 'Bevin boys' scheme forms a welcome precedent and will have to be continued and enlarged, if possible. With these two essential conditions fulfilled, India will be in a position to vary and expand her industrial policy as required by the changing conditions of the economic world.

What the exact lines of the industrial policy of India are going to be will depend on whether the Empire is to work out a common policy or whether India is to strike out a line of her own. There are advantages and drawbacks peculiar to each of these courses; though, on the whole, common action is the more desirable, provided that all parties observe the rules of the game. With a common economic policy for the Empire, or even with co-operation between India and England, the industrialization of our country will be very rapid in many directions. Access to the great capital markets will be greatly facilitated; and the very large amounts necessary for a thorough industrialization as well as a sound agricultural development may be placed at our disposal. Following the same policy, we can count upon obtaining managerial skill and technical guidance in ample measure. The 'Bevin boys' project might be expanded so as to meet our full requirements of trained industrial labour. As the demands of the Commonwealth members come to be pooled, a large number of metallurgical and other industries could be developed which would otherwise have to remain long on the waiting list. Moreover, the support of the Empire countries would be of great value against economic manœuvres directed by foreign countries against the interests of India. At the same time, allowance will have to be made for occasional

clashes of interests between the countries thus co-operating; and some consequent limitations and restrictions upon the full programme of the industrial development of India are inevitable.

If, on the other hand, India follows an autonomous industrial policy she might, perhaps, in the very long run, gratify her full aspirations after industrialization. But the pace of development will be much slower, and valuable opportunities will be lost—especially in the post-war period—which may never offer themselves again. Each new experiment in industrialization will have to be carried out entirely at our own risk and charge. India still remembers the short lives of many industries which were started during the period of the last world war.

The country will have to decide between these two alternative policies. Or, perhaps, a compromise might be arranged by which India might grant a preference to England as regards the products of those industries for developing which our country is not yet prepared. It could be so arranged that the circle of such preference might grow narrower with the gradual advance of India in such lines. In return for such preference India might receive assistance in other lines of industrialization.

Planning the Industrialization

But, even apart from these after-war problems, far-sighted economic planning in the sphere of industry is of the highest national importance and will have to be adopted. In fact all wise economic organization consists in distributing the resources and factors of production at one's disposal so as to yield the best results; and this is of the essence of planning, whether in the case of the state or of the individual. Instead

of considering in casual succession the problems of the promotion or stimulation of individual industries, we have to envisage the full programme of national industrialization in the light of our resources and equipment on the one hand, and our objects and aspirations on the other. In order to obtain anything like a clear perspective of the main lines of planned industrialization in India, it is necessary to consider the chief tasks devolving under it on the state and on the industrialists of the country. Here there is space only to supply a few examples and illustrations. Obviously, it is for the state to inaugurate a general survey of industrial resources and potential lines of progress. This survey will form the necessary basis for any planning, and the essential condition of the efficient functioning of an Economic Council or Councils working out the plan. If, with the garnering of experience and the development of suitable personnel, it becomes advisable to introduce institutions like the National Board of Industries and the National Investment Board to regulate investment, here again the initiative and leadership will rest with the state, though the co-operation of experts and industrialists will be highly desirable and necessary. The same statement will hold good in the solution of the important problems of fuel and power. Government agency will also be to the fore in the formation of Industrial Banks and in the raising of rural reconstruction loans, though here the state action will have to receive the support of our banking experts. While we are dealing with the subject of state action in the sphere of economic planning, it might be noted that the existing provinces cannot be taken as forming the most suitable economic units; and hence it will be necessary to divide the country, for the purpose in hand, into more convenient regions of economic control and development.

We might now turn to some important elements in economic planning as to which the lead must be taken by Indian industrialists—their efforts being properly backed up by Government policies of a suitable character. For example, in improving the present haphazard localization of industry the industrialists must be to the fore, while the state will help by a suitable railway rates policy which will be properly adjusted to the changing phases of a progressive industrialization. We may, by a just gradation, pass on to tasks and spheres in which the industrialist has to forge his own fortunes and be the master of his own fate. Thus while legislation has already improved the managing agency system to some extent, the task of bringing that system to the high pitch of efficiency of which it is capable lies pre-eminently in the sphere of the Indian entrepreneur. It is for him, too, to bring up the industrial units in the country to the optimum size. It would appear that while in determining the proper unit of business control there is much to be said for concentration, in fixing the size of the unit of production all the economies are not on the side of the larger unit. It would also be a material contribution to industrial planning in India, if the Indian industrialist got rid of his isolationist attitude, which so often leads to unhealthy internal competition. He might learn with advantage to co-operate with others of his class, in purchasing raw materials at home and in marketing Indian products abroad, as well as in recruiting and organizing a well-trained and contented labour force. It remains to be added that, in a programme of industrial planning for India, there should be a correct perspective of the large-scale and small-scale industries—the latter being specially suited to the national genius, and particularly needed in the rural areas to supply subsidiary

occupations. They have a great part to play in the industrial development of this country.

The Role of Protection

With the advent of a system of planned economic progress, protectionism is sure to undergo a considerable change as regards its significance and criteria. In fact, in an important sense, protection will be subsumed into economic planning. Even from its beginning, protection has been the weapon of a half-conscious economic planning, since it was meant to divert national resources from the existing industries to others which were assumed to be more productive. This is the avowed object of economic planning, which aims at distributing the sum total of national resources between industries, new and old, so as to yield the best results. In the past it has been objected to the system of discriminating protection prevailing in India, that it imposes a few conditions on the extension of tariff assistance. But it is obvious that in a regime of planned economy such conditions and criteria are sure to be multiplied. For under it the claims of any particular industry to protection will have to be considered, in relation not only to the whole plan of industrialization and agricultural development, but in relation to a well-conceived policy of the proper distribution and consumption of wealth.

Such is the vision—or rather, a glimpse—of the many-sided and properly co-ordinated development of India on the economic side, which might result in a highly gratifying development of the national standard of living. The realization of that vision will require decades of strenuous and unremitting exertions guided by wise, well-informed and far-sighted leadership.

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No. 4

INDIAN STATES

BY

K. M. PANIKKAR

Virendra Kuma
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WITHIN the frontiers of India are about twenty major Indian States, and more than five hundred smaller ones. Legally they are foreign territory, but though independent and autonomous in varying degrees they must now be regarded as integral parts of the Indian political system. In this pamphlet the author traces the history of the present relations between the States and the Crown, and the gradual evolution of the conception of Paramountcy. It is generally recognized that small states, both in antiquity and in the New World, have been able to make valuable contributions to humanity by acting as laboratories of social experiment, and the fact that many Indian States have similarly been pioneers of social reform gives them a unique place in the Indian body politic.

Sardar Kavalam Madhava Panikkar has been intimately connected with the States for the last seventeen years. He attended all three Round Table Conferences in 1931–3 as Secretary to the Princes' Delegation, was Foreign Minister in Patiala (1933–9) and is now Prime Minister, Bikaner. His English publications include *Indian States and the Government of India* (1932), *Indian Princes in Council* (1936) and *The Future of South-East Asia* (1943). He is also a well-known poet and novelist in Malayalam, and the author of several historical studies on Malabar.

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INDIAN STATES

INDIAN STATES cover an area of 5,98,138 square miles, or nearly two-fifths of the total area of India. Though they vary in size, population, revenue and the extent of the rights they enjoy, there is one fact which is common to them, that is, their territory is not British and their people are not subjects of the Crown. British Indian courts have no jurisdiction inside even the smallest States and the laws passed by the Indian Legislature do not, except in certain cases in relation to British subjects, extend to the States. Legally they are foreign territory.

There are 562 such units in India.[1] But the figure is misleading. The following table will give an idea of how the number is made up.

	No. of States	Area	Population (1931)
States whose Rulers are Members of the Chamber of Princes in their own right	135	5,72,997	7,51,09,344
Estates whose 'Chiefs' are represented by election in the Chamber of Princes	108	20,574	25,19,989
Talukas, Jagirs, etc.	319	4,567	13,67,521
Total ...	562	5,98,138	7,89,96,854

The following further analysis will be found interesting. Twenty States between them have an area of 3,96,291 square miles and a population of 5,55,09,675.

[1] By a recent decision of H.E. the Crown Representative a large number of the Jagirs and Estates in Kathiawar have been attached to the larger States adjoining them, such as Baroda and Nawanagar.

Out of the estimated total revenue of about Rs. 45 crores for all the 562 States, 23 States have between them a revenue of over 35 crores.

Geographical Background

The geographical distribution of the States is important. In the extreme north lies the great state of Kashmir with an area of over 89,000 square miles and extending to the Pamirs on the one side and to Tibet on the other. At the very tip of the peninsula is the ancient and important State of Travancore with a long seaboard. South of the Vindhyas, on the tableland of the Deccan, the Dominions of His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad and Berar stretch over a vast area and stand as the connecting link between the South and the North. Further south lies the progressive State of Mysore representing the tradition of the Vijayanagar Empire. The vast territory of Rajputana is under the sovereignty of the representatives of ancient dynasties, the most important of which are Udaipur, Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bikaner. Spread over Central India are the States of Gwalior and Indore, the survivals of the great Maratha Empire in Hindustan and Malwa. The peninsula of Kathiawad and the plains of Bundelkhand are ruled over by their hereditary Princes freed from the claims of the Maratha Empire. The once powerful Sikh dominion in the Punjab is represented by the States of Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Faridkote and Kapurthala, while spread over the lesser ranges of the Himalayas are the smaller Rajput States, the upholders of an unbroken tradition of independence, which neither

the Pathans nor the Moguls were ever able to reach or conquer.

In fact the history of India in its different stages is represented on the map of the States. The unbroken Hindu tradition, dating back to dim antiquity, is represented by such States as Cooch Behar, whose Rulers claim to have been sovereigns over the same territory since the time of the *Mahabharata* battle, by the Rathores who represent the Imperial dynasty of the Rashtrakutas, and by the Rulers of Cochin and Travancore who claim descent from the Chera kings. The fight against Islamic invasions is represented by the premier Rajput State of Udaipur, while Mysore, as an original Viceroyalty of the Vijayanagar Empire, represents the tradition of Hindu independence. Pre-Mogul Muslim rule is represented by the State of Palanpur, while the Mogul tradition is continued uninterrupted by the House of Asaf Jah in Hyderabad. The Bhonsle Chattarpati of Kolhapur is the descendant of Shivaji, while the great States of Baroda, Gwalior and Indore represent the Maratha Empire which extended over Hindustan. The Rohilla invasion survives in the State of Rampur and the Sikh regime in the States of Patiala, Nabha and Jind.

Thus the States of India are rooted firmly in Indian history. Every period finds its representatives; Hiuen Chang in the seventh century has described the Ruler of Cooch Behar of the time, Arab travellers have left us descriptions of the Court of Cutch, Vasco da Gama negotiated with the same family in Cochin as now rules over the State, and the British made their first treaty in India with the Ruler of Travancore. The history of the

century that preceded the battle of Plassey is mainly the fight of these States against the Moguls, while the story of the establishment of British rule is inextricably connected with them. It can therefore be justifiably claimed that the States of India form the warp and woof of Indian history, the very flesh and blood of the great tradition of India.

Another important fact stands out from a survey of the geographical position of the States. With the exception of the two States in the south, the peninsula of Kathiawad and the island of Cutch, the Indian States have no seaboard at all. In the main they are internal States surrounded by British India and interspersed within British Provinces. Originally, it will be remembered that the authority of the East India Company was confined to the great seaports, and their territorial expansion by conquest was confined to the fertile plains of the Ganges and the Punjab. Elsewhere it was merely the coastline that was occupied, leaving States without outlets to the sea. This policy, it is true, was considerably modified in the time of Dalhousie when the Kingdom of Oudh and the dominions of Bhonsle Raja of Nagpur and the areas nominally under the control of the Nawab of Arcot were annexed. But in the main it is still true that, apart from the Gangetic valley and the Punjab, the coastal tracts constitute British India and the internal areas are divided up into autonomous States.

States Not Created by British Policy

The position of the States in the political system of India today has been determined largely by the circum-

stances of the growth of British power in this country. When, after the decay of Mogul power in the middle of the eighteenth century, the East India Company began to intervene in the political affairs of India, it had to solicit the favour of Indian Rulers, like the Nizam and the Marathas, and to seek their alliance in order to keep the French power in check. The Company was not at that time a political power, and the same circumstances which favoured the growth of its power also operated to strengthen and to establish on an independent footing the rule of the local chieftains and Viceroys who owed nominal allegiance to the Mogul Emperor at Delhi. Thus, though the majority of the bigger Indian States are not survivals of old Indian monarchies, they are still not the creations of British policy. Without a knowledge of the historical conditions which gave rise to the present position it is, therefore, impossible to understand the relations subsisting between the Government of India and the States.

History of Present Relations

Originally the East India Company, like other European trading corporations in India, was interested merely in commerce and had no political ambitions. It was only after 1740, when the political genius of Dupleix forced the issue on the Coromandel Coast, that the English Company turned its attention to political power. From the occasion of its first intervention in Arcot against the French to the battle of Buxar, which reduced the power of the Nawab Vazir of Oudh, and the acquisition of the Diwani of Bengal in 1765, the

Company stood in relation to Indian States in the position of subordination. From the time of the acquisition of the Diwani to the end of Warren Hastings' rule the Company was engaged in wars, first with Mysore and then with the Marathas, with the object of establishing an equality of status with the Indian powers.

This period saw the development of the theory of subordinate alliance, not indeed as a general scheme for India, as it became under Wellesley and the Marquis of Hastings, but as a scheme for defending the Company's possessions from external aggression and carrying on offensive warfare, if necessary, without any expenditure.

The first of such subsidiary treaties was negotiated with the Nawab Vazir of Oudh in 1765 after the Company's forces had marched into Lucknow. The Company was not in a position to annex the State, as it would have given the British merchants, whose strength lay on the sea, an extensive land frontier which they would have had to defend against two powers which were at that time stronger on the land than they were—the Afghans under the Durrani king and the Marathas. The result was an alliance by which Shuja-ud-Daula was restored to the throne and the Company undertook to defend his frontiers on the condition that he defrayed the expenses of such defence. The Company recognized that the defence of Oudh was the defence of Bengal. Thus the subsidiary system began as a method of defence without expenditure.

During the period between 1765 and 1782 the authority and prestige of the Company was greatly increased owing to the grant of the Diwani by the

Mogul Emperor and the reorganization of its political administration by the intervention of Parliament. The Regulating Act transformed the Company from a purely trading corporation into a semi-sovereign political body under the control and direction of Parliament. But except for the reduction of Oudh by successive treaties to a position of absolute dependence, the relation of the major Indian powers to the Company remained unchanged.

This position continued practically undisturbed until the arrival of the Earl of Mornington, later on the Marquis of Wellesley. But the power and authority of the 'country powers' *inter se* had undergone considerable change. The Nizam was reduced to impotence on the fatal field of Kurdla in 1795, where his army capitulated to the Marathas. The central authority of Poona had weakened in the Maratha Empire, and their great territorial chiefs in Hindustan, Malwa and Gujerat—Scindia, Holkar and the Gaekwad—had begun to assert their independence and to claim the status of sovereign States. Mysore remained under Tipu, but that redoubtable Sultan's power had been very greatly reduced by the campaign of Cornwallis. Scindia alone remained a power of first-class military importance in Hindustan, and the forces of Holkar held Central India.

It was the masterful personality of Wellesley which transformed the position of the Company from that of one among a number of rival Indian States to one of paramountcy over the rest. A new treaty was negotiated with the Nizam by which he was rendered a subsidiary ally of the Company. This treaty differed from the

former agreements negotiated between the Nizam and the Company in at least three important matters:

(1) It was indissoluble. After the signature of this treaty the Nizam was not free to pick and choose his friends. The State came to be in 'permanent alliance' with the British.

(2) A British Army officered by Europeans but paid for by the Nizam was established in his territory. This force was for the purpose of internal as well as external defence and it gave to the Company a handle wherewith to interfere in the internal affairs of the State.

(3) The treaty stipulated that the foreign relations of the Nizam should be conducted exclusively through the Company.

These three characteristics which found full expression in the Hyderabad Treaty were developed slowly by a process of trial and error during the fifty-five years of relations with Oudh and Arcot. The subsidiary system did not come suddenly into existence with all its characteristics fully developed. With the increasing power of the East India Company new restrictive clauses were introduced in the original stipulation of a subsidiary force to be paid for by the Ruler. It is in the Hyderabad Treaty that we meet with all these clauses in their fully developed form.

Characteristics of Treaties

The Hyderabad Treaty may, therefore, be said to be the subsidiary treaty *par excellence* and the consequences that followed from the special characteristics noted above may, therefore, be analysed.

First, it may be said here that the East India Company

did not in any way conceal its object in negotiating the Hyderabad Treaty. Wellesley stated:

> 'The fundamental principle of His Excellency the Governor General's policy in establishing the subsidiary alliance is to place the States in such a degree of dependence on the British power as may deprive them of the means of prosecuting any measure hazardous to the security of the British Empire.'

The permanent and indissoluble character of the alliance deprived the Ruler of his independence. No right was left with the State to decide its own course in matters of vital importance. Thus, though the Nizam realized that in allowing the Marathas to be crushed his own usefulness as an equal ally was being reduced, the treaty gave him no loophole, as the Hyderabad forces were under the effective command of British officers. The permanent nature of the alliance also tended to give the executive decisions of the British Government the force of finality, as the method of settlement open to fully independent States was denied to the Ruler of Hyderabad.

The second feature, the establishment of a 'subsidized force' within the territory of the Ruler, was of even greater importance. A subsidized force meant an army kept within the allied State by the British Government for the expenses of which a subsidy was given by the protected Ruler.

It was usually stipulated that the subsidy (which generally formed about one-third of the revenues of the State) should be paid annually. The Company's Government knew well enough that so heavy a demand on the States' revenues could not easily be met with

any regularity, especially in India, where revenues shrink or expand according to the monsoon. The result was, as the Duke of Wellington foresaw, that the States fell into arrears. This gave the Company the opportunity to annex the most valuable portions of the territory of its allies. The principle on which the commutation of subsidy was generally negotiated is put in the following words by the Marquis of Wellesley himself in a Dispatch to the Secret Committee of the Board of Directors. In advising the Court of Directors to follow the Hyderabad precedent in the Oudh negotiations, Wellesley stated:

> 'In commutation of 40 lakhs a country rated at the annual value of 62 lakhs of rupees was taken away in full sovereignty in the Nizam's case.'

The third characteristic was the stipulation that the State in subsidiary alliance should have no foreign relations. It was only in 1787 that this clause was introduced in the treaty with the Nawab of Arcot. But with no other State had the Company so far insisted upon this restriction. In the treaty with the Nizam, Wellesley introduced it as an essential feature of subsidiary alliance.

Thus with the Hyderabad Treaty the Indian State system came into formal existence in all its essential features, and the main problems of the States including internal intervention, restriction of sovereign powers, forced appointment of Ministers and control of succession began to agitate Anglo-Indian statesmen even at the beginning of the nineteenth century. But it should not be thought that the elaborate system of control and supervision and the vast body of usage and practice

governing practically the entire sphere of administration came into existence at once, or that the imposing structure of the political law of India was promulgated by a single person or within any specified period. They grew up slowly as a result of practice, by the impact of economic forces, by strategic necessities, no less than by adherence to fashionable theories like feudalism (in the period immediately following the researches of Fustel de Coulanges) and suzerainty. In the period between the final destruction of Maratha power in 1818 and the Mutiny in 1857 the Company had not claimed to be 'the paramount power' in India, but the lineaments of the trading corporation were slowly assuming the majesty of an Empire and getting transfigured in the process. The addition of a very large number of small States in Central India and Kathiawad during this period and the avowed anxiety of the Company not to forgo any honourable opportunity for acquiring territory, as Dalhousie put it, led to the assertion of many new claims like *lapse* and assumption of administration as in the case of Mysore. Also the Company's commercial interests (which, though abolished in regard to India, continued in China) led to the formulation of economic policies in relation to the States, the most notable example of which was the pressure put on the States to reduce the production of Malwa opium for the benefit of the Company's produce.

Transfer of Relations to the Crown

In the Act of 1858, which transferred India from the Company to the Crown, it was specially delared that

the treaties made by the Company were binding on the British Crown. Queen Victoria's proclamation also announced the same fact. The transference of the Company's possessions to the Crown could not, it is obvious, make any difference in the legal theory of the position of the States and the British power. And yet in 1861, almost immediately after the Mutiny was put down, mainly owing to the loyal exertions of the Princes, the claim was put forward that such a change had taken place. Paramountcy, not only as a historical fact, i.e. the unchallenged power of Britain in India, but as a legal principle capable of interpretation and expansion, was promulgated as an essential feature of the new system. Lord Canning expressed the principle thus in his address to the Princes of Rajputana:

> 'The last vestiges of the Royal house of Delhi from which, for our own convenience, we had long been content to accept a vicarious authority, have been swept away. The last pretender to the representation of the Peishwa has disappeared. The Crown of England stands forward the unquestioned ruler and paramount power in all India and is for the first time brought face to face with its feudatories. There is a reality in the suzerainty of the sovereign of England which has never existed before and which is not only felt but eagerly acknowledged by the chiefs.'

Claim of Suzerainty

This theory of suzerainty on the one hand and feudal subordination on the other, which was put forward as a uniform principle in relation to all the States for the first time, was further expanded, annotated and under-

lined by Lord Mayo. In his speech to the Princes assembled at Ajmer, Lord Mayo spoke as follows:

> 'If we respect your rights and privileges you should also respect the rights and regard the privileges of those who are placed beneath your care. If we support you in your power, we expect in return good government. We demand that everywhere throughout the length and breadth of Rajputana, justice and order shall prevail; that every man's property shall be secure; that the traveller shall come and go in safety; that the cultivator shall enjoy the fruits of his labour, and the trader the produce of his commerce; that you shall make roads and undertake the construction of those works of irrigation which will improve the condition of the people and swell the revenues of your States; that you shall encourage education and provide for the relief of the sick.'

The objects which Lord Mayo had in view were undeniably noble, but the claim that it was the duty of the paramount power to ensure the achievement of these objects in the States was in violation of the clear and unequivocal declaration in most of the treaties that 'the British Government shall have no manner of concern whatsoever' with the administration of the States and that in internal government the Rulers 'shall be absolute', etc. The claim put forward was that the Government of India had the right to look after the welfare of the people of the States and that in giving up the policy of annexation, they had introduced in its stead the policy of considering all the States as uniformly dependent on the British Government with the correlative right of interference in Scindia's territory as much as in that of a minor Kathiawad estate. In view of the differences in

the relationship between the States and the Crown such a uniformity of obligation could not be maintained, and for many decades the doctrine was no more than a pious resolution of the Government of India. But the theory was there, and from it emerged the present theory of paramountcy in all its ramifications. As a result of the slow operation of this principle, so clearly laid down by Lord Mayo over seventy years ago, the States, though independent and autonomous in varying degrees, have become integral parts of the Indian political system.

Growth of Economic Unity

Economically the period that followed the Mutiny also witnessed the welding of India into a single unit, to some extent as a result of conscious policy, but largely as a result of irresistible economic forces. The conscious aspects of that policy were the development of railways and other forms of communication, like posts and telegraphs, the abolition of local currencies in many States, the establishment of opium and salt monopolies, etc. More important in view of later developments was the restriction of the right of levying external customs and the gradual establishment of an effective customs union in India. Even the maritime States which had natural facilities for the development of trade were brought into this union.

Among the factors that operated imperceptibly may be mentioned the growth of international trade and the consequent development of banking and finance and the tendency towards money-economy in agriculture, resulting from the necessity for raw products for the industries which grew up in British India and the creation of

new markets as a result of railway, road and sea transport, and, in recent years, the policy of protection adopted by the British Indian Government. All these operated to unite the economic life of the States and British India. In fact, generally speaking, the rural economy of the States became dependent on the markets and industries of British India. It may be noted, however, that in recent years there has been considerable industrial development in some of the States like Mysore, Baroda, Travancore, Hyderabad, Bhopal and Rampur.

Effect of Fiscal and Financial Policies

The fiscal and financial policies of the Government of India, especially after the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, have emphasized the dependence of the States on British India. It will be remembered that till after the last war India, following the wake of Britain, was wedded to the doctrine of free trade. In consequence the rights of protective and revenue customs which the States enjoyed were abolished in many cases and restricted in the case of the maritime States (except Cutch). Though in many cases these restrictions seriously affected the revenues of the States, they were forced to follow a uniform policy in the interests of India. Hyderabad, for example, was not allowed to impose duties higher than 5 per cent. After the war, India became a protectionist country, and customs duties were charged both for protective and revenue purposes. The States however were not given the benefit of this change, with the result that during the last twenty years the States have been contributing many

crores by way of indirect taxation to the coffers of British India.

Further, the customs tariff of India, though it affects all the States (with the exception of Cutch), is determined solely by the interests of British India. The effects of the protectionist policy have, therefore, been far-reaching so far as the economic life of the States was concerned. Since protective duties were meant to foster Indian industries, and as these were concentrated mainly in British India, the interests of the States came in a measure to be sacrificed to the interests of the industrial development of British India. A further important result was that the States in the hinterland which depended a great deal on inland customs for their revenue found that with the imposition of heavy duties at ports their own customs policy had to be adjusted in order to relieve their people from the effects of double taxation.

With the abolition of local currencies in most States and the acceptance of what may be called the currency union giving to the British Indian rupee a pre-eminent position even in States which had their own currencies, the monetary policy of the Government of India, determined solely in consideration of British Indian interests, came to affect the States in an ever-increasing manner. The cumulative effect of all this was that the economic life of the two Indias gradually became one.

Moral Domination

A further factor of even greater significance is the moral domination that British India has exercised during the last half a century through its educational institutions.

Until recently, education in all the States was controlled by the universities of British India. The Allahabad University had till quite recent times educational jurisdiction up to the borders of Bahawalpur and the opening of even a high school had to be approved by its Inspectors. The result was that the new generations in the States grew up with what may be called 'British Indian' minds. Hyderabad, Mysore and Travancore have now their own universities, but the rest of the Indian States are educationally under the control of British Indian bodies.

Growth of Central Authority

The gradual development of central authority over the States, which took place side by side with these economic changes, has been alluded to already. Immediately following the Mutiny, Lord Canning had declared that India was 'a single charge'. The assumption of Imperial title in 1877 revived, at first in a nebulous form and later on with increasing insistence, the rights which the Moguls had asserted and in certain cases enforced. Claims to intervene in the affairs of the States and to depose, degrade and otherwise take action against Rulers were put forward and enforced. A table of salutes was established to determine the ranks of the States, and Orders and Decorations were created with which to reward and to honour the Rulers. Limitations were introduced in regard to the armies that the States could maintain and the arms they could possess. The construction of railways, except with the permission of the Government of India, was absolutely prohibited. The great all-India departments like Posts and Telegraphs

extended their activities into the territories of the States, and jurisdiction was taken over in railway lands. In numerous other ways the rights of the States were curtailed to the advantage of the Central Government.

This expansion of the powers of the Central Government, no doubt inevitable where a strong partner, who also claims overriding authority, co-exists with weaker units, was rendered easier by the political and economic backwardness of the States. The interspersing of State territories with British Indian areas and the impossibility of separating State interests in wide tracts from those of adjoining British Provinces made such a development inevitable. And it may frankly be recognized that compared with the growth of central power over a similar period in a country like the United States, or during fifty years of Imperial Germany, the encroachments of the Government of India on the States have not been very great or such as to render the States merely nominal sovereignties.

Paramountcy

While the claims, practice and policy of the Government of India have undoubtedly eaten into the substance of the treaties, the States have preserved wide powers of autonomy, and their claim to sovereignty within their own territories remains in practice unchallenged at least in the case of the major States. It must, however, be recognized that there is a wide variation in the extent of these powers. Generally speaking, all the States which are members of the Chamber of Princes in their own right enjoy full or practically full powers; that is, they have at least in theory full rights of

legislation, jurisdiction and executive government. It would, however, be incorrect to say that the 135 States which have the right of membership of the Chamber of Princes all enjoy equal powers of autonomy. States like Hyderabad, Baroda, Kashmir, Gwalior, Travancore, Udaipur, Indore, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Patiala enjoy full authority in every respect subject only to a general supervision by the Crown, which in normal circumstances remains in the background. Their administrative machinery moves without the least friction with the Crown's authority. They and many others can make whatever laws are necessary for their government, carry out whatever economic policies they decide upon so long as such policies do not conflict with agreements in force, and introduce changes in the form of their government without any intervention from the paramount power. There are others, however, whose administration is subjected to stricter supervision, whose legislation requires informal approval and whose judicial powers have limitations imposed on them. This supervision and control is exercised by the unseen and undefined power of paramountcy. It is the theory of paramountcy which is the distinguishing mark of the Indian political system. No such theory is known to French political authorities in their relation to subordinate Rulers like the Bey of Tunis, the Emperor of Annam and the King of Cambodia, to the Dutch Government in its relations with the Sultans and Regents in the East Indies and to the British Empire itself in Malaya, where local Rulers exist as instruments of imperial government.

What is Paramountcy? It can only be described as

the complex of Crown rights, both general and particular, which limit the sovereignty of the States. In its general aspects it applies equally to all States, from Hyderabad down to the smallest jagir in Kathiawad. This is what may be called Basic Paramountcy and covers such prerogatives of the Crown as the determination of succession where it is contested, the sanction of adoption, the decision of disputes between States, intervention in cases of gross misgovernment and the conduct of relations with foreign States. In Lord Reading's letter to H.E.H. the Nizam, a document which was textually approved by His Majesty's Government, this basic paramountcy is stated in unequivocal terms. In its *particular* aspects paramountcy is the practice and usage which have developed in regard to each State or group of States. Thus, for example, the Crown claims in regard to certain States the right to approve the appointment of Dewans. In others certain specified classes of Jagirdars, guarantee-holders, etc., have the right of protection by the Crown. In regard to each State this aspect has to be determined by the practice and usage prevalent over a period, and is, therefore, not capable of clear definition.

Obligations of the Crown

As against this body of rights of the Crown, compendiously known as paramountcy, there is its counterpart, the obligations of the Crown to the States. These are also general and particular. In their general aspects they cover:

(1) Maintenance of the territorial integrity of the States.

(2) Protection from outside aggression and internal commotion.

(3) Maintenance of the dynasty and the continuation of the rights, privileges and *izzat* of the Rulers.

In its particular aspects it includes the maintenance of the special rights of each State which the Crown has guaranteed, as, for example, the right of the Gaekwad of Baroda to receive certain payments from Rulers who are said to have been his tributaries.

It is obvious that the rights of paramountcy originated from the obligations which the Crown undertook towards the States, and it is, therefore, claimed that, so long as those obligations continue, the Crown cannot divest itself of the powers which it possesses over the States, which must perforce remain undefined. Whatever may be the validity of this argument, all attempts which have so far been made to define paramountcy have failed, and the Butler Committee which was appointed to inquire into the relations between the States and the Crown had to take shelter under sententious statements like 'paramountcy must remain paramount' and 'usage lights up the dark corners of treaties'.

The hamber Cof Princes

The growth of a feeling of common interest among the Princes has, however, led to some of the extensions of this right being questioned. It came also to be recognized that there has been much unnecessary attempt to interfere in the States and cripple the initiative of the Rulers and restrict the independence of their administrations, without any reference to their rights

and merely for the sake of the uniformity which had been deemed desirable in the heyday of Lord Curzon's regime. As a result of discussions with some of the leading Princes and of conferences of States held first by Lord Hardinge and then by Lord Chelmsford, a Committee for the Codification of Political Practice was established in 1917. When the war was over the Conference was transformed by a Royal Proclamation into a permanent body known as the Chamber of Princes, and the work of the Codification Committee was taken over by the Standing Committee of Princes elected by the Chamber. The creation of the Chamber was the work of a group of forward-looking Rulers led by His late Highness Madhava Rao Scindia of Gwalior and His late Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner, who realized that if the States are to maintain their position unimpaired in a new India they should have a collective organization which would enable them to discuss matters of common interest to India as a whole and to the States generally.

The Chamber of Princes, after undergoing the vicissitudes inevitable in political organizations of this character, arising mainly from a conflict of interests between larger and smaller States, which resulted at one time in the dissociation of most of the major States from its work, has now been reorganized with a Standing Committee of 35 Princes in which permanent and semi-permanent seats have been allotted to the 18 major States and the rest of the seats thrown open to election by regional groups. A Standing Committee of Ministers, to which the more technical work is entrusted, has also been constituted on a similar basis.

External Problems Facing the States

The problems that face the Indian States are both external and internal. The external problem, apart from the relations with the Crown, relates to the nature and character of their association with the India of the future. The Princes recognize the pressing claims of Indian nationalism and realize that a constitution will soon have to be evolved giving to India her due position in the family of Nations. What will be the position of the States in such a constitution? In what way will their treaties and agreements and the rights guaranteed by or arising from them be protected? Naturally the States could not be considered merely as an 'interest' or as a minority. They are autonomous units whose consent and co-operation are necessary for bringing into existence an all-India constitution, as it is now recognized that the States have a vital interest in all-Indian concerns, especially in defence, maritime customs, transport, currency, etc. The problems that have to be faced and solved in the creation of an all-India Government are numerous, varied and complicated. They are, however, outside the scope of this pamphlet.

Internal Problems Facing the States

Internally the States are faced with the necessity of adjusting their constitutions to the changed conditions of modern life. The association of the people of the States with the Government, modernization of laws and the establishment of a proper and suitable machinery for the consideration and promulgation of laws, clear definition of rights in land, rearrangement of taxation to meet the

increasing demands of modern administration, the guarantee of a free and independent judiciary and a system of finances in which the Privy Purse and Civil List of the Ruler would be rigidly separated from the expenditure of the State—these are the problems to which every State has had to turn its attention in recent times. In many of the more important States, the association of the people with the Government, through Parliamentary institutions and local bodies, has already made great progress. In others the problem has forced itself on the consideration of the Rulers. The events of the last few years have given a great impetus to the improvement of administration and the modernization of the machinery of the States. The question of the separation of the private expenditure of the Ruler from the expenses of public administration, a problem which many Rulers including Their Highnesses of Baroda, Mysore, Travancore and Bikaner had foreseen and settled many years ago, is being tackled seriously both by the Princes individually and by the Chamber of Princes in an advisory capacity.

There is the further question of the rights of the people of the States. Most progressive Rulers have accepted the view that an increasing association of their people with the Government is desirable in the changing circumstances of modern life. In many of the larger States, like Travancore, Mysore, Cochin and Baroda, representative institutions of an effective character are already in existence, while many other Rulers have taken steps to bring their States into line with democratic principles. The issue cannot be evaded, and as time goes on constitutional adjustments, giving to the people

of the States rights similar to those enjoyed by their neighbours in British India, will become unavoidable.

Co-operative Grouping

But the main question which faces the States as a whole is the lack of resources of the vast majority to run a modern administration. Of the 135 States in the Chamber of Princes, 80 have an income of less than 15 lakhs of rupees, and 50 among them have an income ranging from 7 to 3 lakhs. It is obviously impossible to have an administration worth the name with such slender resources. The Princes themselves have for some time come to the realization that some kind of grouping of such States was both necessary and desirable in order to improve the standards of administration and to provide the people with the benefits of civilized life. This is one of the major problems now engaging the attention of the States, and when a solution for this is found much of the present backwardness of States will disappear.

The problem of the grouping of States has an internal as well as an external aspect. Internally, without a pooling of resources it is obvious that many States will be unable to face the problems of modern administration, especially the provision of an independent High Court, an efficient police force and facilities of transport. So far the weaknesses of the judicial system in the smaller units were sought to be remedied by the extra-judicial authority of the Political Officers. But that is a position which cannot be maintained, as it is at best a survival of the 'rough and ready methods of justice' of the earlier days. Common High Courts for geographically suitable groups seem to be the only possible solution.

These considerations apply with even greater force to police administration. A succession of tragic occurrences in the Eastern States Agency and elsewhere in 1938–9 demonstrated the grave danger to the peace and tranquillity of India arising from inadequate and inefficient police arrangements in some of the minor States. The establishment of a Crown Police Force to guard against such a breakdown of the machinery for the maintenance of peace and order was the outcome of the realization of this danger. But a Central Police Force under the Crown Representative's direct orders, however necessary as a last resort, could not take the place, nor could it be intended to take the place, of local police arrangements. A common police force for groups of States cannot, therefore, be avoided.

Another aspect of the question which has escaped notice is the enormous wastage of money involved in the duplication of administrative machinery in these States. Thus, whatever be the size of a State, it must have all the paraphernalia of administration, a director of education, a chief medical officer, a chief of police, etc. If a common organization for groups could be evolved by which the sovereignty of the States in a contiguous area could be pooled, not only could better service be ensured, but considerable savings effected.

Externally, the problem is of great importance, because one of the main difficulties of evolving a satisfactory solution of the constitutional problem in India has been the large number of State units whose rights and privileges had to be guaranteed. If by the grouping of the smaller States, units could be evolved which will compare favourably with at least the smaller

provinces, then the problem of federation would become considerably easier.

These are by no means new suggestions. As early as 1919 the present writer suggested[1] the grouping of States for administrative purposes. In 1930, in a book entitled *Federal India*, the suggestion was revived of grouping the States in certain areas as sub-federations. This is the immediate problem which faces the States, and though there are many difficulties in the way of evolving a satisfactory scheme of grouping, the problem has to be faced with courage and resolution, alike in the interests of the smaller as of the larger States.

The States as Laboratories of Social Experiment

That the States are not merely dead weights on Indian progress but are political entities pulsating with new life and endeavouring in every way to contribute to the general welfare of India by finding their own solutions to the problems that will have one day to be solved on a wider and all-India basis is a fact which deserves to be emphasized. The vast mass of social legislation enacted in the Baroda State is proving a model to such efforts in British India. The reform of Hindu religion carried out in the orthodox State of Travancore by the abolition of untouchability is a fact of fundamental importance to the whole of India. The great experiment of a modern university teaching in an Indian language which the State of Hyderabad is carrying on with remarkable success is an indication of the line of our development in educational

[1] *Modern Review*, January, 1919.

matters. The industrial policy of Mysore no less than its political advance has been a model for other parts of India. These are only a few of the more outstanding examples. As against the few instances of misrule or extravagance which find publicity in the press, numerous examples can be mentioned, even in the lesser States, of policies consistently carried out, meant not only for the immediate welfare of the people but for the inauguration of a new and more progressive life.

The Role of the States

Nor should we forget the role that the States have played and are playing in maintaining the martial traditions of India. As His Excellency the Viceroy justly remarked in his opening address to the Chamber of Princes (1942), the Princes are 'the hereditary wardens' of this aspect of national life. They can provide, and in fact in the stress of the present war are providing, in an increasing measure, the leadership necessary for officering a national army.

The conservative tradition of life which they, in the main, embody also cannot be said to be without value in the adjustment of our conditions to the changing circumstances of the modern world. Apart from their position as Rulers of ancient States, the Princes also provide in relation to India a major aristocracy which has never failed India in any important matter. Most of the great public institutions of India, whether they be universities, colleges, or hospitals, have been built up by the unstinted support of the Princes. They have volunteered their patronage to great national under-

takings like the National Airways. They have not held back from any movement for the uplift of the country or the betterment of the Indian people. The fact that they jealously guard and uphold their rights in respect of their States should not make us forget that the Princes and their people have never put any barrier between themselves and their brethren in British India in matters affecting their common welfare.

Conclusion

The value of political units of convenient size is easily forgotten in a world impressed by immensity. But it is not only Aristotle who has emphasized the importance of states where the life of the community is not governed by mere organization. In a very thoughtful essay on the value of small states, a leading historian of modern times, the Right Honourable Herbert Fisher, has remarked as follows:

> 'Almost everything which is most precious in our civilization has come from small states—the Old Testament, the Homeric poems, the Attic and the Elizabethan drama, the art of the Italian Renaissance, the common law of England. Nobody needs to be told what humanity owes to Athens, Florence, Geneva, or Weimar. The world's debt to any one of these small states far exceeds all that has issued from the militant monarchies of Louis XIV, of Napoleon, of the late Emperor of Germany. . . .
>
> 'Indeed one of the advantages flowing from the existence of smaller states consists in the fact that they serve as convenient laboratories for social experiment, a point likely to be appreciated in America, in view of the great mass of material for the comparative study of

social and industrial experiments which is provided by the enterprise of the American State Legislatures. Such experiments as women's suffrage, or as the State prohibition of the public sale of alcoholic drink, or as a thoroughgoing application of the reformatory theory of punishment, would never be seriously discussed in large, old and settled communities, were it not for the fact that they have been tried upon a smaller scale by the more adventurous legislatures of the New World. . . .

'The truth is that the quantitative estimate of human values which plays so large a part in modern political history, is radically false and tends to give a vulgar instead of a liberal and elevated turn to public ambitions. There is no virtue, public or private, which cannot be practised as fully in a small and weak state as under the sceptre of the most formidable tyrant who ever drove fifty army corps of conscripts to the slaughter. There is no grace of soul, no disinterested endeavour of mind, no pitch of unobtrusive self-sacrifice of which the members of small and pacific communities have not repeatedly shown themselves to be capable.'

Every word of this eloquent passage can with justice be applied to the position of Indian States. They fulfil a function which is of immense value to the diversified life of the motherland.

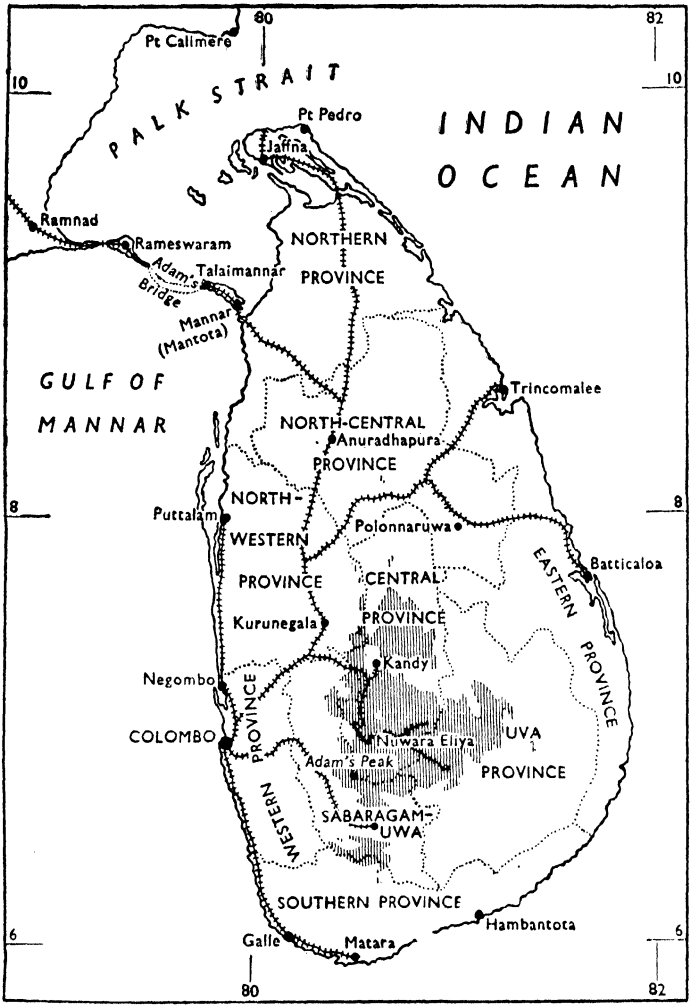
No. 6 As. 6

CEYLON

H. A. J. HULUGALLE

Third edition 1946

OXFORD PAMPHLETS
ON INDIAN AFFAIRS



⇒ Land over 3000 feet

Scale: 65 miles = one inch

CEYLON

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No. 6

CEYLON

BY

H. A. J. HULUGALLE



GEOFFREY CUMBERLEGE
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

CEYLON is India's nearest neighbour by sea. British Indian subjects make up a sixth of the Island's population, while 95 per cent of the remainder are descended from Indian immigrants. It is not surprising, therefore, that India should have influenced Ceylon for 2,500 years. The recent (1945) re-examination of Ceylon's constitutional position has once again brought to the forefront of discussion the subject of the status and rights of the Island's Indian population. When the new constitution (leading directly to Dominion Status) begins to function, it can hardly be doubted that the Indians in Ceylon will gain a substantial proportion of seats in the Legislature, and this must lead to a fuller understanding of their point of view. Further, Ceylon will continue to look to India for a permanent anchorage, provided India also recognizes the interrelation of the cultural, economic and political futures of both countries.

As editor of the *Ceylon Daily News* since 1931, H. A. J. Hulugalle has been in close touch with all recent developments in Ceylon and particularly with the Island's 'Indian problem'.

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CEYLON

Geography

ANCIENT writers exaggerated the size of Ceylon. Even Ptolemy, the Greek astronomer who lived in Egypt in the second century A.D. and who published the earliest map of Ceylon we possess, made the Island as large as Sumatra or Madagascar. In A.D. 1292, Marco Polo gave it a circumference of 2,400 miles. Writers of a still earlier period apparently believed that the west coast of Ceylon extended almost as far as Africa.

The Island's extreme length from north to south is only 271 miles and its greatest width is 140 miles. It has an area of 25,332 square miles, which is nearly the same as that of Holland and Belgium together, or approximately half the area of England without Wales. In size and population the nearest parallel in India is the State of Mysore. The shape of Ceylon on the map is familiar. The Dutch thought it resembled a Westphalian ham: hence 'Ham's heel', the name of the Dutch fort in the north.

The greater part of Ceylon is low-lying and flat, but the south-central portion is a mass of mountains and hills, with a few peaks of 7,000 feet and more. The Island is relatively well-watered by many rivers and streams, a few of which are navigable in their lower reaches by small craft. The average rainfall varies from 40 inches in the north-west and the south-east to over 200 inches in the hill country. The climate varies, without reaching extremes, from the warmth of the seaside and the plains to the temperate atmosphere in the hills. Like other countries situated in or near the equator, the seasons are not well-defined and there is no winter.

CEYLON.

Ceylon is a country of great natural beauty. The Brahmins called it Lanka—the resplendent island. After the Sinhalese settlement it was styled Sinhala-dvipa from which is derived the current name Ceylon.

Colombo, the capital, with a population of approximately 330,000, is the only large city. It is one of the great commercial ports of the East. Trincomalee on the east coast is an important naval base. At the time it was captured by the British from the Dutch, Trincomalee was described as 'the finest and most advantageous bay in the whole of India in which a whole fleet may safely ride and remain in tranquillity, a bay which is of such importance to the English that it assures their sovereignty over the west of India and places them in a position to defend their possessions against all European powers'. Ceylon's strategic position has scarcely altered with the centuries.

Other towns include Kandy, the seat of the last Sinhalese king; Galle in the south, the principal harbour until the 'seventies of the last century; Jaffna in the north; and Anuradhapura, the ancient metropolis of the Sinhalese. These towns, as well as the important hill resorts which draw visitors from all parts of the world, are connected by a State-owned railway track of 950 miles. There are over 16,500 miles of road in the Island, of which 4,200 miles are metalled and motorable.

History

The early history of Ceylon reveals a continuous Indian influence. The distance between Point Calimere in southern India and Point Pedro in the north of Ceylon is only 36 miles. Yet it was this narrow sheet of water more than anything else that was responsible for Ceylon's existence as an independent country.

There is little reliable information about the earliest

inhabitants of the Island. The discovery of palæolithic stone implements buried in caves indicates that man has inhabited Ceylon for thousands of years. It is probable that a branch of the same stock which in pre-Aryan times colonized the Deccan extended its migrations to Ceylon.

The first Aryan settlers arrived in Ceylon about the year 500 B.C. The best known of them was Vijaya who was accompanied by a band of seven hundred followers. Tradition claims for Vijaya a noble lineage in Vanga (Bengal) but it is probable that he set sail from a port near Broach in the province of Bombay. It would appear however that there was a second stream of immigration from the Ganges valley which formed the substratum of the Aryan population of Ceylon.

The Sinhalese kings, beginning with Vijaya, ruled Ceylon, with few interruptions, until the arrival of the Portuguese in the sixteenth century A.D.; and the Kandyan kingdom in the central part of Ceylon lasted until the Kandyan territory was ceded by the Chiefs to the British Sovereign in 1815.

During this period of over two thousand years, Ceylon was often menaced by invaders from South India, chiefly from the kingdoms of Chola and Pandya, and the greatest Sinhalese monarchs were those, like Dutugemunu (161–136 B.C.) and Parakrama Bahu the Great (A.D. 1153–86), who either successfully resisted the invader or carried the war into the enemy's camp.

Ceylon first came under the direct rule of a foreign power when the Chola king Rajendra I (A.D. 1014–44) brought the whole Island under his rule. There was also a Tamil kingdom in the north of Ceylon, with its capital at Jaffna, in the thirteenth century and later; during a part of its existence it was a tributary to the great continental empire of Vijayanagar. In general, however, the kings of Ceylon

were Sinhalese, of the Buddhist faith, and it was only as late as A.D. 1739 that the royal line of Sinhalese kings became extinct, giving rise to a new dynasty from the Nayakkars of South India.

Buddhism appears to have been the cohesive agency of the Sinhalese kingdom, whose literature and art owe an incalculable debt to the erudition of the Buddhist priesthood and the piety of its kings. The main industry was agriculture, and the Aryan settlers inhabited for many years only the wide and well-watered plains where the cultivation of rice was easy. The greatest engineering achievements of the Sinhalese were the construction of large storage tanks, often fed by the surplus waters of rivers, some of them covering an area of several thousands of acres. Anuradhapura, the first capital, founded about 450 B.C., and Polonnaruwa, its successor, which was made the capital of Ceylon by the Cholas, probably in A.D. 1217, abound in ancient monuments bearing ample evidence of the civic virtues and enlightened conceptions of the monarchs who built and lived in them.

As Professor Geiger, the well known orientalist, has written, 'for hardly any part of the continent of India is there such an uninterrupted historical tradition as for the island of Ceylon'. The Buddhist religion, which declined in influence in India, retained its hold on the people of Ceylon and coloured every phase of their life. Her island position on the main sea routes, ancient as well as modern, has been another reason why Ceylon has not been caught up in the political network of India.

The first European power to secure a footing in Ceylon was the Portuguese. There is evidence that the Greek subjects of the Roman Empire traded in the exports of Ceylon and large quantities of Roman copper coins of the fourth century have been excavated in many parts of the

Island. But they were only merchants and had no colonial ambitions. It appeared at first that trade was the chief concern of the Portuguese who set foot on the Island, driven thither by a gale, in 1505. Already established in the south-western coast of India, they took advantage of political dissension among the Sinhalese to entrench themselves in the maritime districts of the Island.

The Portuguese ruled the coastal areas of Ceylon from 29 May 1597, on which day Philip I of Portugal was proclaimed king of Kotte, and continued to do so until they were expelled by the Dutch in 1658. The Portuguese introduced the Roman Catholic religion and made many converts. Under the Dutch the country prospered, and during their rule of the maritime districts was introduced the Roman Dutch law which continues to be the common law of Ceylon. The breach between the British and the Dutch in 1795 led to the annexation of the Dutch settlements in the next year.

The newly-acquired British possessions were administered by the Governor of Madras until, in 1802, the Crown Colony system was introduced and the administration was directed from Downing Street. But there was still an independent kingdom with its capital at Kandy. Various attempts were made by the British to get the Kandyan king to agree to the terms of a treaty. The Kandyan nobles intrigued with the foreign power and one of them at least made an attempt to seize the throne. On the king's death in 1798, a Nayakkar prince, who was a relative and who was born in Ceylon—the royal Sinhalese line having become extinct in 1739—was crowned as Sri Wickrama Rajasinha.

The tussle between the Kandyan chiefs and the court continued during the eventful reign of Sri Wickrama Rajasinha, and the Governor, Sir Frederick North, was not slow to take advantage of the situation. He sent military expedi-

tions against the Kandyans, whose king carried out a 'scorched earth policy'. The Kandyan wars did not create a good impression in England, and Governor North relinquished office in 1805 to be succeeded by Sir Thomas Maitland. The new Governor had the assistance of a man of brilliant parts, Sir Alexander Johnston, Advocate-General and later Chief Justice. Sir Alexander urged the development of agriculture and the repair and restoration of irrigation facilities. He established trial by jury and secured the abolition of slavery. He also formulated a liberal scheme of representative government, including the establishment of a Legislative Council, but his proposals in this respect did not prove acceptable to the Secretary of State.

The annexation of the kingdom of Kandy to the British Crown was effected in 1815, a consummation that was hastened by disunity among the Kandyan nobles, treachery, and the growing unpopularity of the king. After the capture of the king by the British forces, the Kandyan chiefs, claiming to act on behalf of the inhabitants, ceded the kingdom to the British.

The People

The Sinhalese.—The Sinhalese comprise roughly two-thirds of Ceylon's population of approximately seven million. They trace their descent from the earliest Aryan settlers who intermarried freely with the indigenous inhabitants. They are a mixed race, the resultant of several waves of immigration, with much Tamil blood in their veins. From very early times they have had a distinct language which was at first an Aryan dialect written in the Brahmi script. The vocabulary has been enriched with Sanskrit and Pali words, and Tamil influence is reflected not only in the vocabulary but also in the structure of the language.

The Sinhalese brought their first political institutions from India. Every village had its council (*gansabhawa*) for the administration of its affairs. The village council has survived through all the vicissitudes of twenty-four centuries and is part of the modern constitution of Ceylon. The Sinhalese also adopted the social system of the Hindus, though it suffered modification under the influence of Buddhism. The caste system has never been as rigid as it is in India, and child marriage and *purdah* are unknown.

The large majority of the people are peasants or small farmers, but with the rapid increase of population an increasing number seek employment as daily-paid labourers and artisans. The trade of the country has always been largely in the hands of foreigners, but in the south of Ceylon there are indigenous trading communities whose enterprise and skill in business have not been confined by the Island's shores. This exceptional aptitude for trade among a section of the Sinhalese is traceable to a time when Galle was a commercial capital and harbour known to traders in all parts of the world.

The upper and middle classes even when they are landowners show a partiality for town residence. The goal of most educated young men until recently has been a career in professional life or in Government service. The rapid spread of English education has fostered a cosmopolitan outlook. The Sinhalese readily adopt the habits and customs, the culture and clothes, and even the language and religion of the ruling power. It is not inconceivable that if Ceylon entered an Indian Federation or Union, Hindi would become as common among the people as English is today. Up to a few decades ago a Portuguese patois was the home language of many upper-class Sinhalese families.

The Sinhalese can be roughly classified into two divisions; the up-country and low-country Sinhalese. The up-country

Sinhalese are loosely called Kandyans. The division has a historical basis as the majority of the Kandyans would be those whose forbears owned allegiance to the last Kandyan king. The caste system, which is partly based on occupation, may have had a racial origin. Its grip on the people is weakening and inter-caste marriages are not uncommon.

The great majority of the Sinhalese profess the Buddhist religion, although there is a considerable minority which is Christian. Missionaries of the emperor Asoka brought Buddhism to Ceylon in the reign of King Devananpiya Tissa whose rule of forty years from 247 B.C. saw the religion firmly established in the Island. As the Pali chronicle the *Dipawansa* has it: 'Mahinda, going forth with four companies to the most excellent island of Lanka, firmly established there the faith and released many people from their fetters.' Buddhism exercised a vital influence on the life and character of the people, shaping their culture and civilization and providing a focus for their national unity.

At the census of 1931 there were 3,267,457 Buddhists, 1,158,522 Hindus, 523,066 Christians, 356,888 Muslims and 938 others.

Ceylon Tamils.—Next to the Sinhalese the most numerous are Tamils. Of these over half a million are 'Ceylon Tamils', inhabiting the northern and eastern parts of the Island but also settled throughout the rest of Ceylon. They have been in the country almost as long as the Sinhalese and, as we have seen, they have had their own kings. They came from many parts of the mainland including Chola (an area which included the Tanjore district) and Pandya (which included the greater part of the modern Madura and Tinnevelly districts). The Tamils occupied a prominent place even in the Sinhalese kingdom, especially from the seventh to the

eleventh centuries. 'They filled every office, including that of Prime Minister, and they decided the claims of competing candidates for the crown.'

The Ceylon Tamils are an industrious community, very much alive to the benefits of education and, in their native setting, given to more frugal ways of life than the Sinhalese. The majority are peasants, but the Ceylon Tamils have manned the Public Services in great numbers and given to the learned professions many of their leaders. There are many Christians among them, but the majority are Hindus. The existing differences between the Sinhalese and the Ceylon Tamils have a historical foundation which is well explained by Dr G. C. Mendis in his *Early History of Ceylon*: 'The rise of the Tamil kingdom created problems to which Ceylon was not hitherto accustomed. In Ceylon so far Sinhalese had been the chief language and Buddhism its main religion. In the Tamil kingdom Tamil became the chief language and Hinduism its main religion. Before long a distinction arose also in economic conditions. The Tamil kingdom arose in the Dry Zone and the Tamils followed the methods of cultivation suitable to this area. The Sinhalese, on the other hand, gradually abandoning the Dry Zone, began to occupy the Wet Zone, which was more productive and suitable also for the cultivation of products other than rice. These differences created a gulf between the two peoples, and they are partly responsible for the present divisions between the Sinhalese and the Tamils.'

The Indian Community.—Of the Indian community in Ceylon, whose number is estimated at about a million, the great majority are Tamil estate labourers from South India. We shall examine the position of estate labour in a later part of this pamphlet. They number about 700,000 and have been recruited chiefly from the Madura, Pudukkottai, Trichino-

poly, Tanjore, Salem, Coimbatore, Tinnevelly and Ramnad districts. They are in the main Hindus.

A numerically important Indian community represented in Ceylon are the Malayalis. They come from the Malabar coast—from Travancore, Cochin and British Malabar—and are engaged in skilled labour in factories and workshops, as domestic servants, small traders and toddy-tappers. The majority are Hindus. They are not unlike the Sinhalese in appearance, are well conducted, industrious and intelligent. They do not in general engage in heavy manual work. Their preference for the same kind of work as the Sinhalese labourer chooses, when there is a choice, makes them formidable competitors with local workers. Conditions now prevailing, however, have gone far to break down the prejudice which the Sinhalese labourers entertained for what were once deemed to be unworthy and menial occupations.

Indian Tamils too are engaged in many of the occupations shared by the above class of labourer. They undertake domestic service, road labour, rickshaw-pulling, scavenging, and also skilled work as tailors, barbers and gold and silversmiths.

A substantial part of the trade of Ceylon is in the hands of Indians. The financiers and contractors include many Nattukottai Chettiars from Pudukkottai State and Ramnad district. The cloth business is handled by Memons from Kathiawar and the trade in finer articles of clothing, such as silk and brocades, is largely in the hands of Sindi merchants. A small number of Gujeratis from Bombay Province are to be found doing business in Ceylon. The Borahs who also come from western India are mainly large importers and exporters of foodstuffs. The Barathas from South India are usually small shopkeepers and coal-yard workers while the Nadars are petty traders. The so-called Coast Moors are

Muslim traders from the Malabar and Coromandel coasts. There is a small Parsi community but neither its numbers nor business interests show any signs of expansion. A small number of Baluchis are itinerant money-lenders.

Others.—At the 1931 Census, there were roughly 330,000 Moors in Ceylon. The word 'Moor' was introduced by the Portuguese, who doubtless borrowed it from the Spaniards who described the Moroccans as Moors. Moors are first heard of in Ceylon in the early eighth century and when the famous traveller Ibn Batuta visited Ceylon in the fourteenth century, Colombo was in the hands of a Muslim 'wazir and ruler of the sea' called Jalasti who had a garrison of Abyssinians. The larger number of the Ceylon Moors are agriculturists, especially in the Eastern Province, but many are engaged in trade. They are all Sunnis and the women-folk of the well-to-do classes and town-dwellers observe strict *purdah.* It is probable that the Moors are descendants of Arab traders who intermarried with the Muslims of South India and Ceylon.

Another small Ceylonese community, which till recently enjoyed a large share of the plums of the professional and public life of the country, is the Burgher. Most of them are descendants of those who served under the Dutch East India Company. There have been and are many brilliant men in this small community which numbers less than 40,000. They continue to make a full contribution to the life of Ceylon though the rapid spread of higher education among all communities has affected the privileged position they once held.

The Malays of Ceylon, numbering about 18,000, are also Muslims by religion. They are descended from soldiers of the Malay regiments employed by the Dutch and the British.

We come finally to the small British community, the representatives of the ruling race. They number about 11,000. There is a diminishing number of Government servants among them. The majority of male Europeans are merchants, planters and assistants in the European-owned stores. They hold a dominant position in the commercial life of the Island, with British capital controlling the majority of the large plantations, banks, export and import houses and engineering workshops.

Resources

The greatest exertions of the Government at the present time are directed to the task of increasing the area under food crops, especially rice. There was doubtless a period in her history when Ceylon produced sufficient food for her needs. The many civil wars and invasions, however, disorganized the Island's intricate irrigation system and created conditions favourable to the spread of malaria. At present two-thirds of the Island's area are undeveloped while more than half its normal food requirements are imported.

About a million acres are cultivated with paddy. The other main crops are coconuts, tea and rubber. The last three account for over 90 per cent of the export trade of Ceylon. The Island stands next to India as a producer of tea. The majority of the tea estates are worked under joint-stock management and are owned by British capital, but there are no less than 54,000 small holdings.

As a rubber producer Ceylon comes third, after Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. The area planted with rubber is 605,000 acres. The proportion of planted rubber owned by British capital is about 45 per cent. There are some 140,000 acres owned by 90,000 small holders.

Ceylon's best customer has always been the United King-

dom. In 1939 she exported goods to the value of Rs. 1,500 lakhs to Great Britain, while she bought from her goods to the value of Rs. 450 lakhs. In the same year Ceylon sold to India goods to the value of Rs. 107 lakhs while importing goods from India to the value of Rs. 522 lakhs.

The Island's industrial resources have not been fully exploited. A hydro-electric scheme is under construction and, with the return of more stable conditions after the war, many new industries will be started. Graphite is exported in large quantities and coconut oil and desiccated coconut have been manufactured according to the demands of the foreign market.

There can be no doubt about the economic progress of the country, from the evidence of facts and figures. In 1811 Ceylon's exports were valued at Rs. 20 lakhs. Now they are nearer Rs. 30 crores and in a boom year like 1927 they reached Rs. 50 crores. But how, it may be asked, has all this affected the peasant who is the backbone of the country?

A Peasant Economy

In ancient times food production was the main form of agriculture followed in Ceylon. Although there were occasional famines, due to dislocation of irrigation facilities or neglect of crops as a result of invasions and civil war, the Island was more or less self-sufficient in its food supply. The king had the supreme disposal of land but he was not above the law. Title to land based on royal grants and long possession could not be disturbed. The land in the village was often held in shares and worked under a family system. To a considerable extent the village was both self-supporting and self-governing. When a colonial system was introduced the old conditions suffered a gradual process of disintegration.

The new conditions undoubtedly brought great prosperity to the country. The thriving coffee, tea and rubber industries brought wealth, increased employment, and enriched the public coffers. Communications were improved and large sums of money were available for education and the social services. But the balance of the rural economy was altered. The coffee boom earlier in the nineteenth century led to a stampede for land. Indiscriminate alienation resulted not only in the clearing of vast forests but also in the absorption of whole villages. No margin was left for normal village expansion and no pasture for village cattle. Referring to these changes, Sir Emerson Tennant, who was Colonial Secretary at a later period, wrote: 'The Governor and the Council, the military, the judges, the clergy, and one-half of the Civil Servants penetrated the hills and became purchasers of Crown lands. Bidding was suppressed during sales and the land was purchased by speculators.'

The prosperity of the agricultural industries which exported their products left very little land in the so-called Wet Zone to meet the demands of a rapidly expanding population. The rate of increase of the population may be gauged by the fact that under British rule it has increased from about a million to nearly six millions. There are still vast tracts of undeveloped land but these are mainly in the malaria-infested Dry Zone.

Since the inauguration of the State Council in 1931 much attention has been paid to the development of the Dry Zone. Vast irrigation projects have been undertaken. Colonization schemes are being pushed ahead with a view to settling landless villagers and encouraging middle-class agriculturists. The war emphasized the weakness of an economy whereunder half the normal food supply is imported from foreign countries.

The Ceylonese have generally preferred Government Service, the professions and agricultural pursuits to trade. This seems to have been the case even in early times when the ports of Galle and Mantota (Mannar) were the centres of a large entrepot trade. The Ceylon Banking Commission, which was presided over by the well known Indian banker Sir Sorabji Pochkhanawala, wrote: 'It is no exaggeration to state that 80 per cent of the Ceylonese population holds land and is dependent partly or wholly on income from the produce of the land for their maintenance. . . . The history of Ceylon records the exploitation of its commerce by the Portuguese, the Dutch, the British and the Indians for over three hundred years. Even at present its entire trade is being run by foreigners, with foreign capital, foreign labour and foreign brains. The non-Ceylonese element has kept a strong hold on the business, trade and industries of the country and few opportunities have been allowed to the average Ceylonese to engage in trade and industries either by Government or by business firms.'

There is some reason to think that the Ceylonese have at length realized the weakness of such an economic system and are trying to correct it.

Evolution of Self-Government

In the Sinhalese kingdom each village council sent its delegate to the district council (the *rata sabha*); above the village council and the district council were the supreme council of the Ministers of State and the king, who was also the head of the judiciary and alone had the power of life and death.

The foreign powers who gained control of Ceylon did not seek to build on the foundations of the past, and until very recent times even the village council was little more than a name. Much could not be expected while the Island was

governed by the Dutch East India Company and the British East India Company. The benevolent despotism of a Crown Colony administration was introduced in 1802, but there were many complaints of misrule, and the British Government sent out a Royal Commission in 1829. This body, which is known as the Colebrook Commission, made a series of very important recommendations, including the abolition of caste distinctions in the civil administration, the admission of Ceylonese to the Civil Service, the extension of education and the encouragement of a free press. The most important practical measures which resulted from the investigations of the Commission were the establishment of an Executive Council to control the acts of the Governor, and a Legislative Council to ensure free discussion of public questions and the enactment of laws. The Commissioners added: 'The peculiar circumstances of Ceylon, both physical and moral, seem to point it out to the British Government as the fittest spot in our Eastern Dominions in which to plant the germ of European civilization, whence we may not unreasonably hope that it will spread to the whole of those vast territories.'

It is a strange fact that, notwithstanding the above declaration, the Constitution granted in 1833 remained unchanged for nearly eighty years although the country had made great progress in the interval. The reason is that the politically-conscious minority was composed mainly of European settlers and, broadly speaking, their interests were well looked after by a Government whose principal officers belonged to the same race and class. There was a continuous demand for a substantial reform of the Constitution, and in 1910, for the first time, the principle of election was conceded in a somewhat niggardly spirit. Provision was made for the election of one Ceylonese to represent those 'educated on European lines',

two members for 7,500 Europeans and one member for the Burghers numbering about 25,000. The other members of the Legislature were nominated by the Governor.

During and after the first world war, representations were made to the British Government for a further extension of self-government and various instalments of constitutional reform were granted within a comparatively short period. The principle of territorial representation was introduced, though at the start the electorate did not consist of more than six per cent of the population.

But it soon became obvious that the Crown Colony system, whereunder the Governor was a benevolent despot, could not function with an elected majority. A Commission was accordingly sent out in November 1927, presided over by the Earl of Donoughmore. The commissioners' proposals for a new Constitution were revolutionary in many respects. They recommended an adult franchise, the abolition of communal representation, and government by seven Executive Committees. The committees were to be elected by the State Council from among their members, and the chairmen of the committees, together with the Chief Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Legal Secretary, the three officers appointed by the Secretary of State, would form a Board of Ministers.

The seven Ministries were grouped as follows: Home Affairs, Agriculture and Lands, Communications and Works, Health, Labour and Industry, Local Administration, Education. The Ministers have no collective responsibility except as a finance committee.

After a keen debate, the Legislative Council decided to accept the new reform scheme, but only by the narrow margin of 19 against 17. The General Election of 1931, the first experiment in adult franchise in an eastern country, made a

promising beginning and saw the introduction of the Donoughmore Constitution.

The weaknesses of the new form of government became apparent despite a very real transfer of power. Without collective responsibility it was often difficult to discover where responsibility lay, and in the absence of a party system, based on live political issues, the formulation of a Government policy was almost impossible. It would not, however, be correct to conclude that the State Council and the Board of Ministers could not or did not undertake and carry out work of national importance. Nor can it be said that the Constitution did not confer a real measure of responsible government.

The politically-conscious majority, however, favoured a Constitution on British lines and it became increasingly clear that the Donoughmore Constitution was not a step towards that goal. 'The scheme', said a critic, 'would appear not to be a step at all, but at best an end, and a dead end.' With experience of its working, the Ministers sought to change the Constitution so that it might conform more closely to the British parliamentary type; but as the Secretary of State was only prepared to consider such a change if it were urged upon him by a unanimous demand, no progress in this direction was possible until the electorate and the Legislature could be provided with an opportunity of considering the issue.

After the General Election of 1936, the second to be held under the Donoughmore Constitution, the majority party secured one hundred per cent membership of the Board of Ministers, thus demonstrating incidentally that the Committee system did not provide the safeguards which the minority Ministers of the outgoing Board had claimed for it. The seven Ministers, as we have seen, were the elected

chairmen of the seven Executive Committees. The new Board of Ministers were not only, every one of them, in favour of a reform of the Constitution, but also Sinhalese.

The formation of this 'homogeneous' Ministry, despite much good work it did, was a setback to political progress, and its homogeneity was not broken down until in December 1942 a Tamil member of the State Council succeeded the late Sir Baron Jayatilaka as Home Minister.

When Sir Andrew Caldecott was appointed Governor in October 1937, the Secretary of State instructed him to examine the constitutional position carefully after he had had time to acquaint himself with the views of all shades of opinion in the Island. The new Governor, an administrator of great ability, wrote his dispatch in June 1938 recommending 'a cabinet of the normal type', the elimination of the system of Executive Committees and the retention of territorial representation. The outbreak of war held up further action, but on 26 May 1943 His Majesty's Government issued a Declaration, the first article of which said: 'The post-war re-examination of the reform of the Ceylon Constitution, to which His Majesty's Government stands pledged, will be directed towards the grant to Ceylon by Order of His Majesty in Council of full responsible government in all matters of civil administration.'

The Secretary of State requested the Ministers to frame a Constitution which would be examined by a Commission or Conference. In September 1944, His Majesty's Government announced the appointment of a Commission with Lord Soulbury, a former Cabinet Minister, as Chairman, and including Sir Frederick Rees, Sir Frederick Burrows (now Governor of Bengal) and Mr Trafford Smith of the Colonial Office as Secretary. The Commission visited Ceylon from December 1944 to April 1945 and its *Report*

was published on 9 October 1945. The Leader of the Ceylon State Council, Mr D. S. Senanayake, was invited to London for consultations by the Secretary of State who also had before him various representations made by minority leaders.

On 31 October, His Majesty's Government published its decisions. The Government had reached the conclusion that a Constitution on the general lines proposed by the Soulbury Commission (which also conforms in broad outline, save as regards the Second Chamber, to the constitutional scheme put forward by the Ceylon Ministers themselves) will prove a workable basis for constitutional progress in Ceylon. The scheme provides for a bicameral Parliament: a First Chamber of 95 members elected on a territorial franchise and six nominated by the Governor; and a Second Chamber, to be called the Senate, of 30 members, 15 to be elected by the members of the First Chamber and 15 to be nominated by the Governor in his discretion. With a view to safeguarding minority interests, the Governor will be empowered to 'reserve' certain specified classes of Bills.

With regard to the demand for Dominion Status, the White Paper said that 'experience of the working of parliamentary institutions in the British Commonwealth has shown that advance to Dominion Status has been effected by modification of existing constitutions and by the establishment of conventions which have grown up in actual practice'. It added that His Majesty's Government 'earnestly hope that all those with the future interests of Ceylon at heart will co-operate by giving their support to the new Constitution now offered as a foundation upon which may be built a new Dominion of Ceylon'.

On 9 November 1945, the Ceylon State Council accepted a resolution in favour of the British Government's White

Paper by an overwhelming majority. The statesmanlike speech of the Leader of the Council only just failed to secure a unanimous vote. In a House of 54, the only dissentients were one Sinhalese and two Indians. All the other minorities supported the resolution, and one of the three absentees has since expressed publicly his gratification at the result.

Education and Development

Under the ancient kings of Ceylon the Buddhist priesthood was responsible for education. It conducted colleges for higher education and the king 'established a school in every village and charged the priests who superintended the same to take nothing from the learners, promising that they should be rewarded for their trouble by himself'. With the decline of the monarchy the system was undermined and the standard of literacy deteriorated. The European powers which gained control of the maritime provinces, from the sixteenth century onwards, opened schools; but they were primarily concerned with making converts. The Portuguese established Roman Catholic schools; and when the Dutch came on the scene, they organized a system of parish schools which laid emphasis on the spread of Protestant Christianity. Their example was not lost on the British who were 'determined that education which is offered should be essentially Christian in character, and accordingly enacted as a fundamental rule to be followed in all schools that one hour should be devoted to Christian instruction'. There were also other Christian missions at work. The Baptists started their schools in 1812, the Wesleyans in 1814, the American Mission in 1816 and the Church Missionary Society in 1818.

Yielding to pressure the Government adopted an impartial attitude to all denominations and supported with meagre grants such schools as were approved by it. Much later the

Buddhists and Hindus formed their own educational societies and founded schools wherever there was a demand for them. The Government grant was paid to all assisted schools which fulfilled certain requirements laid down in the education code.

With a foreign power in control of the country the most profitable form of education was one which gave first place to a knowledge of the language of the ruling race. More stress was thus laid on English schools than on education for the masses. Parents regarded English education as an investment, and the younger generation was led to believe that it offered the means of escape from rural life and from manual labour which youth had begun to regard as degrading. Thus there came into being a minority which was cut off from the mass of people and purely English education had a denationalizing influence. The language of the country and its history and traditions were neglected, and those who were supposed to be educated were often unable to speak or write correctly their mother-tongue. Their home language was English, they said their prayers in a foreign tongue, and their children were deprived of the opportunity of knowing any other.

The gulf between the English-educated minority and the masses is still wide, notwithstanding the existence of an adult franchise. The drift of the educated and wealthier sections of the community from the country to the towns has led to absentee ownership of land and a dearth of leadership where it is most needed: at least 85 per cent of the Island's population live in rural areas.

The Legislature has recently committed itself to a revolutionary scheme of free education from the kindergarten to the university. It is proposed to make the mother-tongue the medium of instruction up to the fifth standard with

English as a compulsory second language. No school which receives any grant from the Government will be allowed to charge fees. The scheme is not yet fully in operation and has already had an unsettling effect on the well-established secondary schools in the Island. Its financial implications are still unplumbed. Many fear that it will lower the standards all round while its supporters foreshadow an educational millenium. Time alone will prove its worth.

But when the weaknesses of the educational system are acknowledged, we must recognize that solid progress has been made in many directions. The standard of literacy among males rose from 29·8 per cent in 1881 to 56·3 per cent in 1921, the last year in which a complete census was taken. Among females it rose from 3·1 per cent to 21·2 per cent in the same period. The past twenty years will have shown an even more spectacular improvement. There are over 800,000 children out of a total population of seven million in over 6,000 schools. The Government expenditure on education has risen from Rs 9 lakhs in 1901 to Rs 457 lakhs in 1945–6. The denominational schools, Christian, Buddhist and Hindu, have borne a large share of the responsibility for elementary and secondary education. The University grants degrees in science, mathematics, languages, history and medicine. The high standards of the Public Services and the professions reflect well on the work of the colleges and schools in Ceylon. The leadership in politics, in cultural movements, in social services and commercial enterprise is supplied by the educated minority, as would be expected. Above all, public health has made quite remarkable progress not only in the elimination of such infectious diseases as smallpox, cholera and bubonic plague, but in the preventive measures based on a proper appreciation of the fundamental principles of nutrition and sanitation.

Conditions have arisen which create the problem of the educated unemployed. This can be solved by a bold and imaginative policy directed towards the provision of facilities for training in industry and commerce and the creation of opportunities for the younger generation to find new work and adopt new careers.

Indians in Ceylon

The outsider is often puzzled by what he has heard and read about the existence of an 'Indian problem' in Ceylon. Are not the Ceylonese, he asks himself, of Indian origin and are not their religion and customs the outcome of Ceylon's long and intimate association with India? Proximity by itself is insufficient to foster a common outlook; nor do racial kinship and religion always make for harmony. Ceylon, moreover, is not the only part of the British Empire which has had an 'Indian proplem'. Similar causes have produced similar results in Burma and elsewhere. And it is by no means easy to analyse in detail a situation which contains many imponderables.

Roughly one-sixth of the population of Ceylon is described as Indian. Unlike the French and German immigrants to Great Britain this minority has not been assimilated in what is commonly described as the Ceylonese population, although there are today many hundreds of Indians whose permanent home is Ceylon. The best evidence of assimilation is the existence of inter-marriage. Inter-marriage between Indian Tamils, the majority of whom are Hindus, and Sinhalese, the majority of whom are Buddhists, is very rare. But inter-marriage between Hindu Indian Tamils and Hindu Ceylon Tamils is not less rare, despite the ties of language, race and religion. A second powerful factor which makes the Indians a community apart is the feeling common to the

large majority that India is, and must remain, their permanent home.

The large majority of Indians in Ceylon are labourers in tea and rubber estates. There is little direct competition between Indian labour on estates and indigenous labour, and it is recognized by the Ceylonese that for the working of the estates Indian labour is essential. Notwithstanding their preference for peasant agriculture, Sinhalese labour comprises an appreciable percentage of the workers in tea, rubber and coconut estates in the low country. There is apparently enough work for both classes, save in times of depression.

Outside the estates, Indian labourers are often prepared to accept less favourable conditions of work than Ceylonese labourers and their standard of living is lower. Their attendance is more regular and they are not handicapped in the same way by frequent social and domestic obligations as the Sinhalese are, since in many cases their families are in India.

The Indian business community has succeeded in securing a large part of the Island's trade. By comparison it is less useful to the Ceylonese than the British capitalist, because British business houses provide much employment to Ceylonese in subordinate positions and Indians do not. The purchase of lands, large and small, by Indian financiers is another source of resentment, although it must be recognized that the improvidence of the Ceylonese landed proprietor and peasant is the ultimate cause of it.

The validity of the Ceylonese grievances on moral grounds is difficult to assess but the fact remains that a people who are easygoing and accustomed to a certain standard of living fear that they may be submerged by the unrestricted competition of Indian capital, Indian trade and Indian labour.

So much for the economic and psychological causes. What are the political repercussions? It must not be assumed by the

reader that the Ceylonese are antagonistic to Indians. They would indeed wish them to be more Ceylonese than Indian. But if there are many Indians in Ceylon who regard Ceylon as a temporary home—as unquestionably there are, and in large numbers—to what extent are they to be allowed to influence the political and economic future of the Island?

Politically Ceylon's 'Indian problem' began with the grant of manhood suffrage by the Donoughmore Constitution. The question arose whether those Indian labourers who did not have an abiding interest in the Island, who regarded India as their permanent home and who comprised a more or less floating population, should possess the vote. The then Governor of Ceylon wrote in a dispatch to the Secretary of State: 'In the interests of our future good relations with the Government and people of India, it seems to me of the highest importance that this question should be faced and, if possible, settled before it becomes acute.' He suggested a formula, subsequently accepted by the Secretary of State, to provide what he thought was a convenient means of proving a Ceylon domicile. One of the grievances of the Ceylon politicians is that the condition laid down by the Order in Council for proving domicile and 'permanent interest' has not been observed strictly in the registration of Indian immigrants as voters, and that large numbers of names of unqualified persons have been admitted to the register.

Indians on their side have protested against restrictions on their full rights of citizenship. The Village Committees Ordinance of 1923 excluded Indian estate labourers from its scope because, as Sir Henry Gollan, then Attorney-General, said, 'It will look as if there was manifest danger of these village committees and councils becoming rather Indian village councils than Ceylon village councils'. The new Ordinance enacted a few years ago excluded both Indian and

Sinhalese labourers on the ground that the estate population did not have anything in common with the life of the village. Another grievance of the Indians is that they are not entitled to receive free grants of land under the Land Development Ordinance. Supported by their Government, Indians in Ceylon are pressing for 'equality of rights over the whole field of rights'.

Pressed to do something by public opinion in India, which is keenly responsive to the grievances of Indians overseas, the Indian Government now imposed checks on the flow of labour from India to Ceylon and there was a definite deterioration in Indo-Ceylon relations. Increase of unemployment among Ceylonese labourers aggravated the situation and although there was no public demand in Ceylon for any interference with recruitment of immigrant labour for the tea and rubber estates, there was a movement directed towards a reduction of Indian labour employed on public works.

At the request of the Governor of Ceylon, the Government of India agreed to an 'exploratory' conference to secure a satisfactory basis for formal negotiations on all problems of common interest which required adjustment. The conference was held in New Delhi in November 1940, but it concluded without anything substantial having been achieved. The substance of the Ceylon delegation's proposals was summarized as follows in a Government of India statement:

(1) Indians in Ceylon in the third generation, as also Indians in the second generation whose parents had a domicile of choice, would have a domicile of origin and be treated as Ceylonese in all respects.

(2) Indians in Ceylon with a domicile of choice would be entitled to the State franchise but all other rights over the whole field of employment would be subject to such

restrictions as the Ceylon Government might find it necessary to impose.

(3) Indians in Ceylon with no domicile of origin or of choice, that is with less than five years' residence on a date to be specified, would be entitled to earn their living but would have no citizenship rights and could not at any time acquire them.

The Indian delegation's counter-proposals were summarized as follows:

(1) That full citizenship rights should be conferred on all Indians who could furnish proof (*a*) of five years' residence in Ceylon and (*b*) of a permanent interest in the Island, both tests to be satisfied by some set of easily ascertainable facts.

(2) That persons who did not complete five years' residence on the prescribed date would, on fulfilment of this requirement and also of the tests that might be laid down of a permanent interest in Ceylon, acquire domicile of choice and be on an equal footing with those in category (1) above.

The Ceylon Ministers, after the failure of the New Delhi conference, promptly initiated legislation for controlling immigration fearing that it would otherwise be resumed without restrictions. The Governor in a message to the State Council immediately reminded it of certain 'undertakings' given by the Ceylon Government to the Government of India on immigration and cognate matters, which undertakings, the Governor said, could not be set aside by unilateral action.

Once more, in August 1941, the method of conference was tried, this time with more fruitful results. At the invitation of the Ceylon Government, the Government of India agreed to resume the informal conversations which had ended inconclusively at New Delhi. The delegation which came to

Ceylon was again led by Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai, who was assisted by two unofficial colleagues, Sir Mirza Ismail, now Dewan of Jaipur, and Mr T. R. Venkatarama Sastri, a former Advocate-General of Madras. Agreed conclusions were reached after a fortnight's deliberations. They represented a middle way between the two divergent policies. The effect of the two Governments accepting the Agreement will be that those Indians who satisfy a prescribed test for proving a permanent interest in Ceylon will not be treated differently from members of the indigenous population.

Considerable opposition to the terms of the Agreement manifested itself both in India and Ceylon but the intensification of the war in Asia left the whole question in abeyance.

The re-examination of the Island's constitutional position by His Majesty's Government with a view to the early grant of full responsible government in internal affairs once again brought the subject of the status and rights of Indians to the forefront. Those who constituted themselves leaders of the Indian community in Ceylon, while repeating the slogan of 'independence', supported a scheme of so-called 'balanced representation', the effect of which would be to establish parity in the Legislature and the Executive between the minorities and the Sinhalese who form two-thirds of the population. These proposals have not made the Indian claims more acceptable to the majority of the people. Nor is the attempt to over-draw the picture of the disabilities suffered by Indians calculated to produce an early settlement of the dispute. The fact that any Indian in Ceylon can secure the franchise by taking out a Certificate of Permanent Settlement after five years' residence is seldom mentioned in the speeches and writings of the critics of the Ceylonese attitude. It can hardly be doubted that when the new Constitution begins to function the Indians in Ceylon will gain

a substantial proportion of seats in the Legislature and this must lead to a fuller understanding of their point of view.

The Future

Any political developments in the future must be influenced by two facts, namely, Ceylon's place in the British Commonwealth and her proximity to and cultural and economic ties with India. It seems likely that Ceylon will continue to be a separate entity when India becomes a Dominion or independent country. Imperial interests as well as local sentiment favour such a course. Ceylon already has the promise of Dominion Status, with all that it implies, as soon as she is ready for it. In her insular position she is brought into daily contact with only certain isolated features of Indian life, mainly cheap labour and the competence and shrewdness of business men and small traders. A predominantly agricultural population clinging to its land is jealously on its guard against slow expropriation resulting from uncontrolled economic causes. During the past century and a half the population of the Island has increased from one to seven million. These are some of the causes which produce an insular outlook among the Ceylonese. But Ceylon must in the long run look to India, in the future as she has done in the past, for a permanent anchorage. India must, however, put her own house in order and show Ceylon that there is a place for her, consistent with her dignity and independence, in the Union or Federation of Greater India.

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No. 7

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

BY
S. NATARAJAN



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THE social problems of India have been hitherto problems of synthesis—the harmonious blending of the Hindu, Muslim and Western European ways of life—rather than problems arising out of economic inequality. The Indian National Social Conference, founded in 1887 soon after the Indian National Congress, always insisted that healthy political and industrial organizations must be rooted in healthy home and social conditions. In recent years there have been great changes in the status of women, the rigidity of the Hindu caste system is bending under the stresses of urban life, and the other characteristic feature of Hindu society, the joint family, is rapidly dissolving under the influence of increased individualism and personal ambition: new problems are rising. The author of this pamphlet surveys the present attitude towards marriage, divorce, the education of women, birth-control, prostitution and professional mendicancy, and concludes that social legislation on a national scale—for reforms in one community, province or State are inadequate—must be the task of the coming Central Government.

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SOCIAL PROBLEMS

'SOCIAL PROBLEM' does not mean quite the same thing in India as it does in Western Europe. In the West the phrase is used mostly to indicate problems which arise out of the relations between the economic classes, and it is only in recent years that social studies in Europe and America have come to include questions concerning the structure of society and the family. In India it is the other way round. It was only in 1919, thirty-two years after the Conference was set up, that the General Secretary of the Indian National Social Conference, Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, suggested that the Conference should include in its programme questions relating to labour, to sanitation and so on. Twenty-one years later, speaking at Baroda, Sir Raghunath Paranjpye made the same suggestion in almost the same language.

The reasons for this are to be found in the conditions which brought about the impulse for social work. In Europe it was the early cruelties of the industrial system which roused the more sensitive minds to action; in India it was contact with the West which awoke a conscious desire to change. Moreover, as the Poet Rabindranath Tagore once remarked, in India in the nineteenth century inequalities of wealth did not mean very great differences in social standards or in ways of living. But privilege, i.e. inequalities attendant on birth, was rendered galling by the new ideas that came into the country from Britain.

INFLUENCE OF WESTERN IDEAS

Today, however, the old enthusiastic preference for a society based on contract as opposed to the society built on status is not so confident as it was a hundred years ago. The five years of war too have made a difference. The two obstacles to any ordered progress in the first century of social reform from Raja Ram Mohan Roy have been an exaggerated importance placed on individual liberty and a desire to practise economy even in matters relating to national well-being. Now people, not alone in India but everywhere, have accepted a good measure of state interference in the life of the individual. The old prejudice against active participation of the state in the affairs of the citizen has died. Though wartime restrictions are necessarily of an emergency nature, they have had an educative effect. The difference between control and lack of control as shown in the field of food rationing, for instance, has softened the distrust of bureaucracy which is inherent in the pre-war democratic system. As for the financial aspect, the colossal sums expended on war have accustomed people to think in terms of greater spending. It is difficult to think of beneficial schemes being rejected in the post-war world for lack of money. This implies too in another way that the state will have to do much more in post-war India. At least it will be expected to, and in the conditions fast arising it will not be possible for the State to ignore public expectations.

This short survey of social problems begins with a statement of the position which the social, no less than any other, movement faces in the meeting of three different streams of culture in India. It goes on to

consider the channels through which modern thought has come to this country; the differences that mark out Indian society from other societies; Indian reactions to Western thought and institutions; the status of women and the problems arising out of their education; the marriage institution and the family; industrialization and its attendant complications; the altered attitude to legislation and to the law; and lastly the kind of government which will facilitate progress without reaction.

A characteristic feature of social movements in India, whether Hindu or Muslim, is that again and again there is a tendency to refer back to sacred texts to justify a reform, and scriptural sanction is sought to strengthen the argument for change though the problems which have made themselves felt since the days of Raja Ram Mohan Roy among the Hindus and Sir Syed Ahmed among the Muslims are the direct result of contact with the West. Among the Hindus the social movement for two notable periods stagnated in arid controversy over sacred texts. The first period was just before the setting up of the Social Conference, when progressive Hindu leaders frittered away their energies on shastraic discussion and debate; the second, when Mr Gandhi engaged the pundits on the untouchability issue.

Curiously, if one turns to the political field, one finds that Muslim leaders, who might as easily repudiate the leadership of what they call the largest Hindu organization on the ground that it is not sufficiently Western in its outlook, invariably raise the protest that it does not allow Muslims to develop the principles of Islamic Law. This is all the more notable in view of the tendency in other Muslim countries towards modernization.

Progressive elements in Indian society had to stress their policy of assimilation of Western ideas; they sought to prove to the parent communities that it was not a libertine desire to break all restraints that inspired them, nor were they trying to bring about a blind and complete imitation of Western institutions. 'Young Bengal', says a Bengali publicist, 'was baptized in whisky.'

A Problem of Synthesis

In fact, *the* problem of social life in India, as of every other aspect of national life, has been the great task of synthesis — of working out the harmonious blending of the three streams of culture which have historically a place in this country. Though at the moment the differences loom large almost to distraction, it is inconceivable to think of the India of today, much less the India of tomorrow, as completely free from any one of the three forces of national life. And it is most clearly visible in the social field, because the influence of their interaction is clearest in the things that affect everyday life. This is irrespective of political developments in the future. After all, the mere fact that the United States of America left the British system has not in any way reduced the Anglo-Saxon element in the culture of that country.

British Rule and English Literature

As social movements in modern India have been greatly stimulated by the impact on Indian society of ideas which had their origin in, or were associated in some way with, modern Europe, it is useful to consider the three main channels through which these ideas

found their way to India—British rule, English education and Christian missions.

The direct influence of British rule has been to stereotype existing institutions rather than to favour change. As Sir Henry Maine observed: 'The dominant theory has always been that the country ought to be governed in conformity with its own notions and customs. It is by its indirect and for the most part unintended influence that the British Power metamorphoses and dissolves the ideas and social forms underneath it.' There would seem to be a distinct difference in the official attitude, behind the continuity which the phrase 'religious neutrality' suggests, before and after the devolution of responsibility to Indians.

When one talks of the influence on social life of British rule, one is apt, generally speaking, to speak in terms solely of social legislation. But it would be unwise to ignore the effect of British Indian Courts of Justice. Judicial interpretation has been the traditional Indian method of change. The king was interpreter of the laws rather than the maker of them. For this reason, Hindu law was at its best more liberal in its working than the written texts. In the British Courts of Justice, naturally the English judge fought shy of liberal interpretations. And as a result the trend was towards reactionary decisions.

The direct influence of British rule may be described as being opposed to social progress. But it introduced English education, and English literature and history opened out to Indians long vistas of political and social freedom.

Missions and Social Consciousness

Christian missions have indirectly done much good to the country. The deficiencies of the Government in serving the social needs of the community left wide gaps which were excellently filled by mission workers. Their example was an inspiration to Indians. What was equally important was that their crude methods of proselytizing were instrumental in rousing Indians to provide social relief themselves. 'The fear of Christian missions', Mr K. Natarajan has observed, 'has been the beginning of much social wisdom in India.'

The weakness of the mission is its excessive emphasis on organization, which does not appeal to Indian minds. This is clearly seen in the difference between social service, which in India has grown out of missionary beginnings, and social reform. Social reform concerns the worker as vitally as it does the society for which he exerts himself. More, in fact, since in all matters affecting personal life, he has invariably to test his ideas in his own home.

Law and Legislation

So much then for the influences through which the West came to India. What of the people to whom these ideas filtered through the course of two centuries? Hindu society has proved very adaptable and open to new ideas. Many of the reforms which agitated the Social Conference in its early years are accepted today in the Hindu community. The old illusion tends to revive every time the East fails to come up to some expectation of ambitious individuals, that the East is unchanging, that the people of India are rendered

inactive by fatalism which sacred and profane literature has driven deep into them, and that the doctrine of reincarnation makes them lethargic even under intense suffering—but it is no more than an illusion based on a misunderstanding of the Indian character.

It is true that the possibilities of effecting a change in the laws were not appreciated in India because the law-giver was conceived of as some remote sage or prophet. The experience of one generation, however, has brought a difference in outlook which one must take into account. On its obverse side, it shows itself in a growing disrespect for law. After all one does not fear what one can change. As for the fatalism, even a cursory glance at *Mahabharatha* and *Ramayana* stories will dispel the idea that a passive fatalism is preached. If the emphasis is on destiny, it is also equally impressed on the reader that action, exertion, is essential. As for reincarnation, if it brings on a feeling of acquiescence in one's misfortunes, it should equally prevail as an influence against wrong-doing and for good deeds. As a matter of fact, *karma* and *kismet*, the two illusions of many European writers, have little to do with the passivity of the Indian outlook on life. If there is such a passivity, the reason must be sought for in the economic field. There must be a minimum of satisfaction of bodily wants before the mind can revolt.

THE STRUCTURE OF INDIAN SOCIETIES

The Caste System

The differences between the structures of Western and Hindu societies which strike the observer most are, first, the caste system and, almost equally, the joint

family. As all Indian societies reveal in some form these two influences, it is well to consider their force today. Sir Edward Blunt, formerly of the Indian Civil Service, in *The Caste System of Northern India* gives a working definition of caste. He writes:

> 'A caste is an endogamous group, or collection of endogamous groups, bearing a common name, membership of which is hereditary, arising from birth alone; imposing on its members certain restrictions in the matter of social intercourse; either
>
> (i) following a common traditional occupation, or
> (ii) claiming a common origin, or
> (iii) both following such occupation and claiming such origin;
>
> and generally regarded as forming a single homogeneous community.'

The theory is that originally there were four castes differentiated by functions—the Brahmins being teachers and priests, the Kshatriyas soldiers and administrators, the Vaishyas merchants, and the Sudras manual workers. But two significant qualifications emerge from the earliest records of Hindu social conditions.

In the four classes there never seems to have been a hard-and-fast dividing line. The breaking away from caste tradition is nothing new in India.

Blunt observes that

> 'constant intercourse in the course of business drew divergent elements together, and also separated them from communities of which they were formerly part, till at last a new caste, occupational in nature, is formed. This process still goes on at the present time.'

However, it is not a process assisted by the census practice of insisting on members of the public declaring their castes, and it is to the credit of the Jat Pat Torak Mandal of Lahore that for the 1941 census it secured the right to the public of ignoring the caste column of the census papers.

The second point is that at no period in Hindu history are we shown the four castes and nothing more. It is not impossible that men of the first two castes—the others do not figure prominently—longed for a larger community and could think of no more than the abolition of sub-castes; and what they hoped for in the future, they found no difficulty in postulating of a past forgotten golden age, which they sought to restore.

Modern Imitations of Caste

Some Western writers have been attracted by the caste system as a fourfold division. What is more significant, some countries in Europe after the last war adopted many restrictions similar to those found in Hindu society. It is possible to argue that Hindu society after the Kurukshetra battle went through the same trials as, say, Germany and all Europe after the last war. At any rate the resemblances are striking.

In the totalitarian states we see the germs of many Hindu customs. Both Labour and Capital are controlled by the state; foreign contacts are discouraged; in status, education and social duties distinctions are made between the sexes; and sections of the population, divided either economically or by religion from the rest of the population, are declared outcastes.

The point has been made that the Indian caste is hereditary while Western classes are more fluid. The

severe restrictions which arose in Hindu society, however, would rather seem to indicate that the divisions were less there than in societies which have not legislated against intermarriage. The tendency for children to follow in the trade or profession of their parents is so universal that one wonders at the Hindu law-giver's enforcing it in the code. The stable-door, in social matters, is always locked after the steed has bolted. Hitler would not have troubled to penalize all relations between Jew and German had there not been evidence to show that differences between the two were being obliterated.

If developments like these help one better to understand the Indian social system, nevertheless today, whatever might be the process of social evolution in other lands, it is largely true that caste has broken down in Indian cities. This can be seen from the numerous instances of men and women pursuing occupations outside those indicated by their hereditary castes.

Where Caste Survives

Occasionally one reads of reaction even in the city, as when recently in Bombay and its suburbs admittance to the burning-ground was refused to funeral parties bringing in the bodies of persons of the lower castes for the last rites. There are still cases of petty tyranny by caste panchayats in urban areas. But in the main these are survivals which will in the near future be wiped out. More serious is the sectarian spirit, survival of caste, which is deeply entrenched. I was told once by the late Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola that there was nothing wrong in communalism in the matter of Government jobs because, after all, a man could naturally depend

most on persons who had been brought up in his way of thinking, and a popular minister had to guard against intrigue. While few individuals adopt so candid an attitude, this consideration is not altogether absent. It is weak even as an argument, because experience shows that jealousy of the man in power is often strongest within his own community or caste. In the words of Shakespeare's Cassius, 'I had as lief not be as live to be in awe of such a thing as I myself'. But even the European official in India has not been free of the defect of exclusiveness; and caste, which is everywhere crumbling, can claim its greatest influence in the administrative sphere.

It is in the rural areas that caste still maintains its early strength. British-Indian law has largely deprived the caste councils of their disciplinary powers, though even now they have not altogether fallen into disuse, especially in the villages where modern individualistic notions have not yet penetrated. But a gradual influence for change is to be seen in the migrations of populations from rural to urban areas in the industrial period, and, as it has been well said, 'he who builds a railway through the countryside plunges a dagger into its very heart'.

The attack on caste has never been direct. The late Sir Ramakrishna Bhandarkar, one of the great names of Western India in the reform movement, thought that only the development of a strong national consciousness could overthrow caste, and until ten years ago it was possible to believe that such a consciousness was growing. Matters look less promising now, though the externals of caste are not more in evidence.

The Outcastes

Sir Edward Blunt suggests that there are accidental excrescences which must disappear without harming the substance of the caste system. 'What is required', he remarks, 'is a pruning-knife, not an axe.' This leaves untouched the most difficult problem arising out of the caste system, the position of the Depressed Classes. In his presidential address to the Indian Social Conference in 1927, Mr K. Natarajan pointed out that the only final solution of the depressed classes problem was the abolition of caste: 'So long as there are castes, there must be outcastes.'

The members of this heterogeneous community, for there are many castes comprised in the depressed classes, suffer from varying degrees of disability in Hindu society. All of them are excluded from temples where caste-Hindus worship; till recently they were not allowed into schools and places of public resort; and some of the ugliest incidents have arisen out of restrictions placed on their use of the village well. The custom is enforced in its most inhuman form in South India and in Malabar. One obvious explanation of the growth of this class is that its members were penalized for generations for infringing some caste rule. Their social degradation has driven them to the worst trades and sometimes to habits which are now charged against them by caste-Hindus. There is no fundamental ethnic difference between them and caste-Hindus. Thurston, in his *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, says that the Nayadis of Malabar, the most despised class of untouchables in all India, are the descendants of some families of Nambudiri Brahmins who were excommunicated centuries ago for the breach of some caste rules.

Untouchability

The movement for the abolition of the degrading custom of untouchability has had a curious history. In its earlier phase it was a movement for the education of the members of these classes and was necessarily slow. When in 1932 Mr Gandhi took up their cause with a characteristic fast, the movement moved from the rational to the emotional plane. Efforts were concentrated on getting the 'Harijans', as they were named by Mr Gandhi, admitted to Hindu temples, and these efforts received wide publicity. But temple-entry is only one aspect of needed change. The pace of progress may be expected to grow more rapid now that leaders from within these classes are coming forward. The Hindu community is, as a whole, intellectually convinced that untouchability must go. But, significantly enough, the orthodox are more amenable to legislation on this matter in the Indian States than in British India. Travancore, which threw its temples open by a proclamation made by the Maharaja, provides a striking contrast to Madras where the Congress ministry's attempt to achieve the same result roused a certain amount of opposition from the conservative. The acquiescence of Travancore subjects is all the more noteworthy since the Hindu sovereign does not traditionally possess powers of legislating but is regarded as the upholder of the law; while in British India the public is accustomed to social legislation. The inference might well be drawn that the people in the Indian States look to their ruler as the final authority; while in British India power and responsibility are not completely vested in the ministers.

The influence of more equalitarian and democratic peoples on Indian society has not been what it might have been expected to be. On the other hand, it is not incorrect to state that up to the present period foreign elements were absorbed into the social system. As the chief feature of this was caste, the invaders were at a disadvantage. If they mixed with the population freely, they had to compromise with existing institutions; if, on the contrary, they held themselves aloof, they formed themselves into a separate caste, however much they repudiated the fact. What the equalitarian religion of Islam failed to do, the Christian missionary has not been more successful in achieving. The wheels of progress, said the Lindsay Commission on Christian Education, are dragged back by the heritage of mass conversions. When under the Congress Governments concessions were given to the depressed classes, there was a clamour for granting sums out of amounts allotted for this purpose to the members of these classes converted to Christianity. In the circumstances, to be effective a change had to commence within the Hindu system itself. That has already begun, and it is likely that it will release forces, so far held in check, outside Hinduism.

The Joint Family

We now come to the second, much-commented on, peculiarity of Hindu society, the joint family. Possibly there are no family systems quite on the scale of the Indian joint family. But the family concept is often wider than it is in Western Europe. To a certain extent, too, it is a case of economics. Prosperity promotes individualism; depression often herds people

together. Even from a national point of view, the state will not bother itself with too many inquiries when funds are ample and help has to be given to the unemployed, for instance. But in darker days a tendency creeps in to scrutinize claims and to see whether applicants have tapped other sources before coming to the state official. The nephew or brother-in-law of a rich man cannot be welcome either to his less fortunately placed fellow-sufferers or to unemployment boards. The successful man, who has received his education in England out of family funds, is apt to feel home obligations irksome, but such men are few.

The joint family is going and no one will lament overmuch at the fact. But it is not generally recognized that it served a purpose during the difficult transition period which our fathers and grandfathers had to face. It is said to have had a cramping effect on initiative. There is another side to the picture. Perhaps politics and other forms of public life may in the future be followed as a profession, but that has certainly not been usual in India in the past. The joint family has enabled many public men in India to ignore personal needs and to leave domestic cares to another member.

But we may leave the joint family to dissolve under the influence of increased individualism and personal ambition. It is a problem which has for some mysterious reason perplexed economists more than social workers. But in India, at any rate, it will be some time before the idea underlying the joint family fades out: that is, a feeling of responsibility for others besides those in the immediate circle of the home, on the one side; and, on the other, a tendency to cash in on this feeling. It has served both for provision for the old and destitute

and for unemployment relief; for India, though the poorest-placed economically in the world, has known no other. The state doubtless will assume a more direct responsibility in the future.

STATUS OF WOMEN

From the agitation started by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in the third decade of the last century to the recent recommendations on inheritance and marriage of the Hindu Law Reform Committee set up under the chairmanship of Sir B. N. Rau, there can be traced a continuity in the social movement. The concern of early reformers was mainly with improving the status of women in Indian society. The first social legislation was for the abolition of suttee and it met with very little opposition, though the orthodox engaged Raja Ram Mohan Roy in a vigorous controversy on the subject. But the next step in the improvement of the Hindu widow's lot, the Widow Remarriage Act, was hotly contested. The prejudice against the remarriage of widows was deep-seated and, strange to record, not confined to Hindus. The late Begum of Bhopal writes in her autobiography:

> 'My mother's remarriage was an act contrary to the customs of the Afghan race . . . the Muhammedans of India had rigidly adhered to the custom of the Afghans and this had now taken such a hold on society that any breach of it was regarded as a heinous sin. This feeling was shared by men and women alike; even those whose ideas had been modified by Western education, never permitted second marriages in their own families and up to the present day the practice is viewed with disfavour by nearly all Muhammedans of Afghan descent.'

Neither second marriage nor the remarriage of widows is looked on with disfavour by Islam, and the deep feeling recorded by the Begum must be ascribed to the influence of Hindu customs on Indian Muslim society. Even the reformers who worked for the Remarriage Act were concerned largely with the case of child widows. And from this to the Sarda Act of 1929, which fixed the marriage age of males at eighteen and of females at fourteen, was a logical step though long in being taken. The Sarda Act was mainly an educative act, and now after thirteen years the time is ripe for making marriages under these ages void.

Inheritance and Monogamy

There is curious evidence of Raja Ram Mohan Roy's wide outlook and prescience in the manner in which he argued the case for abolishing suttee. In discussing the origin of this custom, the Raja maintained that it was largely due to the inequitable laws relating to succession to property among Hindus; that the Hindu widow found herself practically destitute, and, in the few cases where she owned some property, she was harassed by the relatives of her deceased husband, and that the despair created by these conditions and the humiliating practices to which she was subjected was the principal cause of her deciding to immolate herself on her husband's funeral pyre.

The Rau Committee's two Bills, which are now before the country and are to come into force from 1946, aim at securing for the Hindu wife her due position in the family and her right to inherit property. The more important of the two is the measure introducing monogamy in Hindu marriage, both civil and sacramental.

There has been of late an agitation among Muslim women for the introduction of monogamy in Muslim marriage as well. Islam permits polygamy to the extent of four wives but it is conditional on the husband's ability to deal equitably or justly with them. Sir Edward Blunt, writing of the United Provinces, makes the interesting observation that

> 'as early as the ninth century, there were Muslim jurists who held that monogamy alone was lawful . . . in this province Muhammedans rarely contract a second marriage unless no son has been born of the first.'

Divorce

When the Rau Committee's monogamy measure is adopted, it will stabilize the position so far as post-1946 Hindu society is concerned. The question naturally arises, What is to be done for women who have suffered from a second marriage before that date? Their position might lead to the introduction of a divorce law for Hindu sacramental marriages and for those forms of the civil marriage, like the Anand Marriage Act and the Arya Marriage Act, which do not enforce monogamy. From this it may extend gradually. But to argue, as is now done, that the introduction of monogamy for Hindu men—marriage was always most strictly monogamous for Hindu women—makes divorce also imperative, is to say in effect that it is too much to expect men in the community to be loyal to one wife. In fact it is the very type of men who resorted to a second marriage who would abuse a divorce law. Even if divorce is introduced, it is doubtful whether there would be very great resort to it. The experience of

Baroda State, which has the credit of having adopted both a Divorce Act and a Monogamy Act ahead of other parts of India, is instructive. In the ten years that it has been in force, only thirty-four cases have been filed from castes in which divorce is not permitted by custom. Some of them have in fact been made by persons who acquired a Baroda domicile for the specific purpose. This should itself be an index of the effect which a divorce law in British India is likely to have on Hindu marriage.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that ideas on marriage are changing. So far as Bengal is concerned, the change is evident even in middle-class families where new ideas enter more slowly. Frequent reports appear in the newspapers of women becoming converts to Islam in order to obtain dissolution of the marriage tie. The common element in all these cases has been unhappiness in the home and cruelty from the husband. Hindu society, it would seem, has now no choice in the matter. Since the procedure involved is conversion, notice to the husband to follow into the new faith and a declaration of dissolution in Court, it may be said that divorce has already come into Hindu marriage. What remains is to recognize the fact by adopting a divorce law.

Education

A custom like *purdah* tends to give way with the education of women. In fact the All-India Women's Conference does not even worry to adopt resolutions asking for its abolition. There is also the dowry problem, which exists in an intense form in some parts of the country and against which there has been some

attempt at legislation. But the ways of surmounting legal barriers are easily seen, and more change is essential in the mental attitude of men and women with girls to be married off than in the laws of the land.

This is why the attention of reformers was first drawn to women's education. Referring to the early days of reform towards the close of the last century, Mr K. Natarajan said in his presidential address to the Social Conference in 1927: 'The subject which most engaged our attention then was naturally the education of women, for it is the master-key which unlocks all the doors of progress.' There was a conflict in ideals among the reformers so far as the content of that education was concerned. Professor D. K. Karve of Poona had conceived the idea of starting a separate Women's University with curricula widely differing from those of men's institutions, and with characteristic energy he threw himself selflessly into his work. But the general tendency in India has been in support of giving women the same education as men.

Birth-control

Another social problem which has risen of recent years is birth-control. In the West the movement has encountered some resistance from the Churches, but in India organized religion has not taken any stand on this subject. Unfortunately the birth-control enthusiast begins where the American propagandist now stands and urges birth-control as a cure for many things, not excluding the population problem. Birth-control started in the West as a relief for women whose health was shattered by excessive child-bearing and with the object of avoiding this. Within that sphere it has a definite place. The

over-confident advocate might consider, before he urges it as a method of restricting population, why Holland, which was the first country to allow birth-control education, should have had the record of the highest birth-rate in Europe; why Russia, with all its propaganda for birth-control, has maintained a steady increase in population. There are many ardent workers who are convinced of the great influence which birth-control will have on population, but earnestness is no substitute for study.

Religious Prostitution

When the social reform movement was started, it had to deal with the problem of the *devadasis*. These women, who were dedicated to lives of singing and dancing, were engaged to perform at domestic and social festivities. Around them was built what is known as the 'family system' in contrast to commercialized prostitution. The anti-nautch movement was started in 1894-5 in Madras and the pioneers of the movement were attacked as vandals bent on destroying the ancient arts of music and the dance. The movement attained a large measure of success, and the criticism has been answered by the fact that today these arts are being studied by respectable members of society. The knowledge which was kept restricted to a caste is now being diffused through schools throughout the country. Dr Muthulakshmi Reddy successfully introduced a Bill in the Madras Legislative Assembly in 1928 to put an end to the practice of dedicating girls to temples. Similar measures have been adopted throughout the country, in British India and some of the more progressive States.

PROBLEMS OF INDUSTRIALIZATION

There has been at the same time an extension of the brothel system. The worst localities where the system has taken root are the great sea-towns like Calcutta, Bombay and Rangoon. Legislation has been introduced to put down brothels, but clandestine prostitution varying with economic conditions is widespread. In Bombay a great effort is being made with the co-operation of all communities. The League of Nations in its report on the *Rehabilitation of Adult Prostitutes* bracketed together as equally successful the 'Houses of Bethany' conducted by Dominican nuns and the Prophylactoria in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The first of these is incapable of general adoption as it hinges on the Christian doctrine of sin and redemption, which is not only not acceptable to non-Christians but is repugnant to many modern thinkers. Vigilance Societies have done good work, but the 'marked coin' method, which is resorted to at times, smacks somewhat of the *agent provocateur* and has its obvious defects.

The evil in India is mostly confined to the large manufacturing cities, where large numbers of adult males are attracted by the prospect of employment and have to live in conditions which prevent their leading a healthy family life. The great disparity between the male and female population in industrial cities is in itself a reason for the growth of prostitution in such conditions. In the interior marriage is general, but the Indian peasant is often forced to seek employment in towns, and as these men visit their villages periodically, there is a tendency for life in the village to be affected by city complications.

Prohibition and Temperance

Like the social purity movement, the agitation for the prohibition of alcoholic liquor consumption was one for restrictions on the freedom of the individual, not for greater expansion of liberty. It had the sanction of both Hinduism and Islam and it was taken over by the Congress Party as one of its main planks. The subject has become a live issue since that party tried to introduce it during its administration in several provinces. The most successful attempt was in the district of Salem in the Madras Presidency, where much propaganda for the cause had been done previously. It was at its weakest in the city of Bombay, where the cosmopolitan element did not take kindly to the reform. It must be admitted, too, that the ministry was not judicious in its methods. The reform was linked with a property tax which enabled the two vested interests to combine in an agitation. It is wrong in a sense to speak of the liquor interests as 'vested' in India, as the licensing system introduced by the state prevents the growth of vested interests round liquor.

The argument for prohibition is that it is in the interests of the labouring classes. In the early propaganda days, it used to be argued that the evidence and practice of insurance companies showed that abstainers had a longer expectation of life than even moderate drinkers and that experimental tests had shown that most accidents were due to indulgence even abstemiously in liquor. It has been stated that in the past fifty years, insurance companies have decided that moderation in liquor is more healthy than abstinence. If sobriety is the aim, would it not be better, it is further urged, to work

for temperance than for prohibition? The fact that it is not those who are keen on temperance who urge this argument need not deter the social worker from considering it seriously. But the serious drawback in the theory is that, like voluntary sterilization, it only influences those who have the capacity to think out things for themselves. Prohibition has been marred as a cause by the futile, irritating, effort made by politicians in power. In Bombay the permit system reduced prohibition to a farce. The suggestion that the Congress Party should enforce a pledge of abstinence on its own members was never seriously considered.

The two main objections, from the administrative point of view, to prohibition are that it involves a heavy loss of revenue to the Government, which in turn means the starving of essential public services; and that it is easily flouted as a law. Those who have studied the colossal sums of money spent on the present war will not be impressed by the first contention. If a society can be made to contribute large amounts for munitions, surely it can be even more easily asked to give for the promotion of national well-being. The objection that it is easily disregarded is a feeble one. There are offences in the Penal Code which can as readily be set at naught, yet no one has suggested that that code be repealed. What is necessary here, as in other spheres, is to get over the bureaucratic tendency to find, the moment a change is suggested, a thousand and one reasons for not doing anything. The mistakes of the past will prove a necessary corrective to policies framed when prohibition efforts are renewed.

The Beggar Problem

An important problem is set up by the vast numbers of beggars in India. Dr P. Kodanda Rao of the Servants of India Society has been doing pioneer work in this field in Nagpur. In its worst form, it prevails as religious mendicancy, against which there is no strong public feeling. Even modern sects have been exploiting the credulity of the public by organizing house-to-house sales of tracts prophesying the end of the world and other dire evils. State action can only come with the growth of public opinion. Secular beggars thrive on indiscriminate charity, and it is not easy to press for measures driving them off the streets without adequate provision to take care of them. Bombay has made a notable experiment in this direction with the Beggars' Home established under Mr K. M. Munshi's lead at Chembur, a suburb of Bombay. Calcutta, under the threat of Japanese raids, attempted to remove its beggars outside the city limits and take charge of them. The attempt was admittedly a failure. If something on the lines of the great Chinese Industrial Co-operative experiment is attempted in dealing with beggars, it should yield excellent results.

Political Influences on Society

I have given above a rapid survey of the reforms which represent the reaction of Indian society to the impact of modern ideas. The Amritsar Social Conference in 1919, at which Sir Narayan Chandavarkar delivered the message to which I referred at the outset, marked a turning-point in the history of the Indian national movement. The social reform movement, as

Sir Narayan said, had merged into the national movement. The reforms to which he wanted social reformers to extend their interest are all reforms which can be effectively carried through only by the machinery of administration. The position today is that real social progress cannot be achieved unless there is political power. In fact, this has been the position for some time, and every advance in reform has been accompanied by greater social activity. But there has been an unfortunate feature of Indian political development which has weakened national life. The Morley-Minto Reforms gave the first element of representation in the Councils; they also introduced separate electorates. The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms conceded the elective principle; they also brought in weightage. The Hoare scheme of 1935 conferred a great measure of control over internal affairs; it also injected provincial autonomy. The Cripps plan offered Dominion Status with the right to secede; it also contemplated the creation of more than one Dominion out of the India of today. A free India, it seems, cannot be a whole India. In consequence, much of the national energy which would have been spent otherwise in constructive service is frittered away in counteracting the fissiparous tendencies in the public life of the country.

Literacy and Industrial Life

In education, our leaders are fortunately conscious of the need to have more than literacy. But the cry against 'wastage', which has been frequently raised in recent years, is deplorable. The Sapru Committee Report on unemployment, published ten years ago, had a bias

against general education, yet even that report had to admit that prospects of employment are brighter for men with an Arts degree than for technically trained men. And this is putting it at the lowest. India will need technical men and we cannot have too many of them. But the humanities should not be neglected. What is necessary is a removal of the artificial distinction between technical training and liberal education. There is no reason why a man who is quick with his brain should not be taught to be deft with his hands.

In the industrial field, India has been particularly unfortunate. Not only has the Government been averse to setting up large-scale industry, but the best-organized political party in the country has declared its dislike for industrialization on any effective scale. The energies which should have been concentrated on a single-minded agitation for developing the vast natural resources of the country and for usefully employing its colossal man-power have been diverted to other channels. It is dangerous to be drawn by fear of the very real evils of modern industrialism into a championing of medievalism. India, if she has the disadvantage of being fifty years behind Western European countries, has also the advantage of being in a position to profit by their mistakes. Electricity, which ushered in the second industrial revolution, eliminates the disadvantages of a civilization built up on steam-power.

When Mr G. K. Gokhale started his drive for primary education, it was felt that self-government could only come to a people with the spread of education. Now it is being increasingly felt that industrialization requires general literacy at least. The Grady Mission from the United States of America has paid a

high compliment to the efficiency and teachability of the Indian industrial worker. If he is educated, and to educate a man who is quick to learn his work should not be very difficult, he will be a more competent member of society.

THE STATES AND BRITISH INDIA

The social reform movement was one which took in all communities, and covered the whole of India, British India and Indian States. It had overcome the distinction between official and non-official. Even in 1927 when the Government had begun to look askance at popular movements, it was officially declared that Government servants might participate in the Social Conference. The only organization which to a large extent shares this catholicity today is, significantly enough, the All-India Women's Conference. The merging of the social movement in the national movement, to which Sir Narayan referred in 1919, does not today appear to be the unmixed blessing it seemed then. From the point of view of the largest political organization, it led to an unfortunate disproportion in its attitude towards reforms, so much so that it has been charged with being a Hindu body. From the social side, it resulted, as any movement dealing with numbers must, in developing the emotional attitude to the exclusion, or at least the detriment, of the older rational outlook. In place of the earlier concept of society as a whole, there have grown up sectional interests concentrating on their own difficulties.

An interesting study is the progress of social reform and legislation in Indian States. The problems are the same as in British India. Baroda has been the pioneer in

legislating against child marriages, in providing for divorce and recently in making Hindu marriages monogamous. Not all States, however, have shown themselves enthusiastic for reform, some of them lagging fifty years behind British India. This is due to the absence of public opinion. I have referred to Travancore's Temple-entry Proclamation. Cochin, though conservative in regard to temple-entry, pursues a policy of helping education among the backward classes by remission of fees. The setting up of representative institutions in most of the progressive States serves as a brake to the very real danger of rulers succumbing to reactionary impulses. The recent case of H.H. the Maharaja of Mysore, a State with the highest traditions of social reform, marrying a second time during the lifetime of his first wife—and that, too, only a month before the Rau Committee's recommendation for making Hindu marriages monogamous—is a grievous disappointment.

THE FUTURE

Social reform ceased in 1919 to be a movement concerned solely with social institutions. It had become a method which—let us be frank about it—found no place in the arid controversies which began in the political sphere and soon spread everywhere. But stalemate is not a permanent condition, and signs are not wanting to show that constructive policies will once more take the field. India will have to unlearn the lessons of the last twenty years in two important respects. In the first place, there is a great amount of constructive work waiting to be done and all of it requires study. The danger is that the people will be screwed up to a

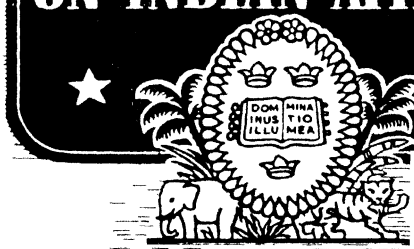
high pitch in some tremendous effort and that no care will be taken to see that the inevitable reaction that follows on the heels of every moral drive is also utilized to push forward the country as a whole. Without such care, the history of the next few decades will be aimless drift. Secondly, it is essential that the Central Government is strong, with, if necessary, the largest powers given to the provinces by devolution. For this has from time immemorial been the only way leading to stable conditions and to security. Recent developments in countries like the U.S.A., Canada, Australia and China have shown that the natural trend is towards an effective central administration. It is useless to build up an unsuitable political structure and then develop it into working order by safeguards or emergency provision. And lastly, India will have to develop techniques more suited to present-day conditions and to a modern progressive state. The revolutionary in office must become a reformer or he will not long stay in office. Without political power and responsibility, there is small hope of widespread realization of these facts. And power in the political sense is not far distant from us.

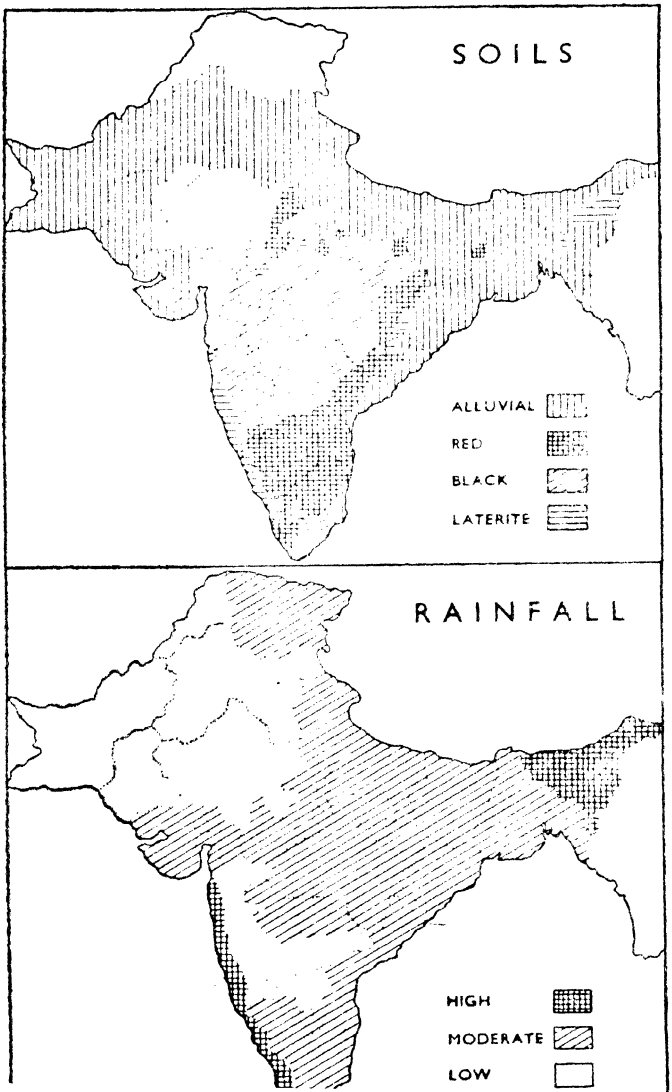
No. 9 As. 6

THE LAND AND ITS PROBLEMS

SIR
T. VIJAYARAGHAVACHARYA

OXFORD PAMPHLETS ON INDIAN AFFAIRS




SOILS
ALLUVIAL
RED
BLACK
LATERITE
RAINFALL
HIGH
MODERATE
LOW

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No. 9

THE LAND

AND ITS PROBLEMS

BY

SIR T. VIJAYARAGHAVACHARYA





HUMPHREY MILFORD

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AGRICULTURE—which includes cattle-breeding and dairy-farming as well as the production of crops from the soil—is India's most important industry, in which nearly three-fourths of the people are directly engaged. Even the basic factors—geography, climate, soil and the cultivator—vary enormously from place to place, and every general statement needs qualification; but India is already one of the foremost agricultural producers of the world, and it is clear that, if the twin dangers of soil erosion and unrestricted cattle-breeding can be overcome, there is great scope for improvement, mainly through the evolution of new varieties of existing crops.

Sir Tiruvalyangudi Vijayaraghavacharya, with his wide and varied experience, is well fitted to survey the situation. He has been a District Officer, Secretary in the Survey and Settlement Departments, Director of Land Records, Director of Industries, Director of Fisheries, a Member of the Indian Legislative Assembly and Diwan of two Indian States. He was the leader of an Indian delegation to the International Agricultural Conference at Rome (1930), Chairman of an All-India Conference on Rural Reconstruction at Indore and Vice-Chairman of the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research for the first six years of its life.

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THE LAND AND ITS PROBLEMS

The Importance of Indian Agriculture

NEARLY three-fourths of the people of India are directly engaged in or dependent on agricultural and pastoral pursuits. Nearly ninety per cent of the people live in villages, and even those living in cities, except perhaps in the northern provinces, look back to the villages as their homes. The mill operative in Bombay, when there is a strike or lock-out, goes back to his village in the Konkan. To own a field or acquire one is the aspiration which gilds the daily monotony of many a townsman's life. Ploughing, sowing and harvesting are occasions of semi-religious significance. In many parts of India at weddings the bride and bridegroom sow and grow in pots two cereals, three pulses and two oil-seeds during the festive week as a symbol of the immemorial art on which the country's life depends and of the strong, almost sacred ties which bind the man and the woman to the land. Farming is not a business, it is a tradition.

The importance of Indian agriculture arises not merely from the fact that it furnishes the means of subsistence of one-fifth of the human race. From the point of view of world production and supply of materials for the world's industries, India is one of the foremost countries today, and it is not at all unlikely that it will in the not distant future occupy the first rank. An example of what may happen is ready to hand. As recently as 1929 India in the matter of sugar was an importing country. It imported as much as a million tons of sugar from foreign countries, mainly Java, for its home consumption. Today, and this position was reached five years ago, it not only produces all the sugar it needs, but has an exportable surplus. India

is the largest cane-sugar producing country in the world. What is true of sugar is true of other important commodities. India shares with China the primacy for production of rice. In cotton it ranks next only to the United States. It leads the world in the production of groundnut, and ranks next only to Argentina in linseed. In jute and in lac it possesses almost a monopoly. In millets India ranks with China and Africa as one of the three main producing regions. Of tea it is one of the largest exporters to the United Kingdom, ranking next to China as the world's biggest producer. India holds the world's record for its cattle population, the United States coming in second at a great distance.

Possible Expansion of Cultivation

The figures of India's agricultural operations are impressive. The total area of India is estimated at 1,006 million acres of which 512 million acres lie within British India, 445 million acres in Indian States and the rest in tribal areas and in Baluchistan. Of the 512 million acres in British India, 158 million acres are not available for cultivation being occupied by forests, roads, buildings, water, etc. This leaves 354 million acres, of which 210 million acres are actually cultivated. Current fallows are estimated at 47 million acres. The balance of 97 million acres is classed in the official statistics as 'uncultivated area'. This area is what is usually referred to in discussions about food supplies and agricultural colonization as land available for expansion of agriculture. No systematic investigation has been made into the nature of this area with a view to ascertain how much of it could be cultivated with a reasonable capital expenditure. Calculations made by Provincial Governments have indicated that 10 million acres of this area are definitely known to be culturable. In the last one hundred years, thanks to internal security, freedom from external invasion,

development of communications and the rise of domestic and foreign trade, the population has expanded at a rate which causes pleasure to a few and lively anxiety to many, who consider that India's teeming millions are outstripping the means of subsistence. As a result, in most parts of India all the land suitable, or easily made suitable, for cultivation has been taken up, and what remains is, generally speaking, land on the margin of fertility or land which is potentially fertile, but which can be reclaimed from 'culturable waste' only at an expense which is beyond the means of the ordinary individual of the middle classes. It is possible that with the vast wealth accumulated by enterprising industrialists during the war years and the scarcity of means of profitable investment, capitalists may, when peace once more returns, turn their attention to the reclamation of large tracts of land which are now malaria-infested jungle. Virgin land, particularly land under prickly pear, is often marvellously fertile. The chief difficulty is want of information about the extent and nature of the land fit for tillage but now unoccupied. In the absence of private enterprise, the state must step in and, before inviting colonists to settle on the land, it must clear the jungle, sink wells for irrigation, make roads, start anti-malarial measures and provide expert agricultural advice.

Factors determining Indian Agriculture

The striking feature of Indian agriculture is its amazing variety. The cropping and agricultural practices vary to an extraordinary degree; to such a degree indeed that it may seem impossible to lay down any general rule or make any general statement which cannot immediately be contradicted by examples to the contrary. Though the differences are at first sight puzzling they can be explained, and general principles of a simple nature can be formulated. Like agriculture in every country, India's agriculture is determined by four

factors, her geography, climate including rainfall, soils and the type of population. Only India is such a vast country, comprising territory both in and out of the tropics, continental land and peninsular land, rainfall varying from less than five inches to five hundred inches, hot, damp country with vegetation of tropic luxuriance and country which is a bleak desert with a climate of almost North European severity, that observations which are true of one region may not be true of another. And even within these large, natural divisions, conditions vary from district to district, subdivision to subdivision, one village circle to another, so that before giving advice as to possible agricultural improvements, minute regard must be had to local circumstances.

Natural Agricultural Divisions

The main division that emerges from a study of the geographical and climatic conditions of the country is that between northern India and southern India, between continental India and peninsular India. The former has a winter which in the Punjab, Kashmir and Baluchistan exceeds sometimes the European winter in severity, and a summer which the dweller in the southern provinces finds as hard to put up with as the native of western Europe. The flowers, fruits and vegetables of the temperate regions of the world flourish in the winter on the plains of northern India, and in the spring and summer many of the products of the tropics appear in an abundance and cheapness that the vegetarian from the south may well envy. In southern India, on the other hand, there is no winter; the season is practically uniform all the year round and conforms to the dictum of an old Governor of Madras who, when asked what the climate of Madras was like, is supposed to have replied, 'Nine months hot, three months hotter'. The fruits, flowers and plants of the temperate region grow

only on the hills or on the elevated tablelands and in quantities which make them unavailable at popular prices. While many crops are common to both northern and southern India, certain of them predominate in the north, and certain others in the south.

Rice and Wheat

Roughly speaking, northern India is the home of the wheat, and southern and north-eastern India are the home of rice. Rice is a negligible crop in the Punjab, just as wheat is in Madras. There is a debatable border-land in central India where rice and wheat contend for mastery and the consumer prefers either according to prevailing prices. But it will be a mistake to suppose that rice is negligible either from the point of view of production or of consumption in the United Provinces. The United Provinces produce what are considered by Indians to be some of the finest rices, Dehra Dun rice having an India-wide reputation.[1]

Rice is a popular crop practically throughout India (always excepting the Punjab), even as far north as the Kashmir valley; it is the country's favourite food, and an average of eighty million acres are under rice cultivation, while wheat is a poor second with an average area of thirty-two million acres. This is partly due to the fact that the rice plant in general thrives however heavy the rainfall. In eastern Bengal and Assam there is a deep-water variety of the plant which literally keeps its head always above water; after heavy rains and flood, which would have submerged other plants, this rice-plant grows overnight to a height to overtop the water. Another reason for the cultivator's preference for

[1] It may be observed in passing that there is a curious difference in the judgement of Indian and European markets as regards rice, the European preferring the bold, translucent grain while the Indian prefers a small, fine rice.

rice is that land under rice seems to be able to manure itself provided the supply of water is adequate. In the great deltas of India rice is hardly ever manured, yet year after year the same land produces large yields.

Other Crops

Similarly, barley, gram, mustard, rape-seed and linseed predominate in the north, while ragi, horse-gram, groundnut, castor seed and gingili take their place in the south. Mustard oil is the favourite edible oil of northern India, while gingili (*til*) oil and coconut oil are the popular oils of south-Indian cookery. All the three oils are first-class culinary oils, and to the poor man who cannot afford to use *ghee* they are excellent substitutes. In fact, in the preparation of certain dishes they are preferable to *ghee*. Oil-cakes, obtained after the oil has been pressed from the seed, are an important cattle food all over India and are also valuable as manures, particularly for sugar-cane fields. The cane cultivation on the Deccan canals in Bombay, which produces yields as heavy as anything in Java, Cuba or the Hawaian islands, owes its productiveness to the application of groundnut cake to the fields.

The pulses are an important range of crops. They help to fertilize the land and supply the organic matter of which the soil is often destitute. They are also an important element in human and animal nutrition, particularly valuable to the vegetarian, whose food, consisting mainly of carbo-hydrates, is normally deficient in proteids. Gram (*channa*) or Bengal gram — though, curiously enough, Bengal hardly produces any — is the main pulse crop of northern India, while red gram (*arhar* or *tuar*) is the leading pulse of southern India.

It is believed that there is not a single coconut tree in the Punjab. The nature of the soil, the low temperatures in the

winter, the extreme dryness of the atmosphere, and the absence of sea air are probably accountable for this.

Sugar-cane is essentially a tropical plant, but paradoxically enough the northern provinces lying outside the tropics are responsible for 97 per cent of the total cane-production of India. The tract of country lying north of the Ganges and east of the Gogra, forming the modern district of Gorakhpur and the districts of north Bihar, is the ancient home of the indigenous cane of India, the manufacture of white sugar dating back to Vedic times. This cane is a thin reed-like cane, while the cane of peninsular India is the thick variety known as the 'noble' cane, which not only yields a larger quantity per acre, but is much richer in sucrose content. The noble cane has been imported from New Guinea. The improved varieties of cane bred at the Research Station at Coimbatore, which have replaced the *deshi* variety in three-quarters of the sugar area in northern India, are of medium size, intermediate between the thin and thick varieties. They have been evolved by crosses between the noble cane and the wild cane of northern India, the *Saccharum spontaneum*, the *kans* grass. It is a curious fact that research workers in both Java and India have discovered that without a mixture of wild blood, a variety immune to disease cannot be found.

Crop Seasons

The two well-marked seasons in northern India naturally lead to two well-defined crop seasons. The commencement of the monsoon rains in June inaugurates agricultural operations. The sowings made in the rains lead to the harvest in the autumn which is known as the *kharif* crop. The second crop season begins in the autumn. The winter is usually a rainless period, and in the absence of artificial irrigation the crop matures in the moisture left in the soil by the monsoon,

the heavy dews of the winter and any occasional or casual rain that the cultivator's good luck may bring. This crop is harvested in the spring and is known as the *rabi* crop. The principal *kharif* crops are wheat, rice, juar (*cholum*), bajra (*cumbu*), maize, cotton and gingili (sesamum or *til*), while the principal *rabi* crops are wheat, barley, gram, linseed, rape-seed and mustard.

In the south of India the words 'spring', 'summer' and 'winter' are practically meaningless. It is one long summer, and the distinction between the two crop seasons, if it is anything more than a distinction in time, is based on the fact that the earlier crop in certain areas depends on the south-west monsoon (June to September), while the later one depends in certain other areas on the return or north-east monsoon (October to January). The *kharif* and *rabi* of southern India are mere early and late sowings of the same crops, but, generally speaking, the second crop is more valuable than the first.

Rainfall and Protected Areas

The vital factor with regard to Indian agriculture is the rainfall, which must be described in some detail. The greater part of the rainfall of India is received between June and October from the south-west monsoon. This is the chief season of rain over most of the peninsula and over almost the whole of northern India. Over a great part of the western half of peninsular India, including nearly the whole of the Bombay province, the Portuguese territory of Goa, that part of the Madras province lying between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea, and the States of Cochin and Travancore, the rainfall is practically confined to this season. In the south-eastern portion of the peninsula the season of heaviest rainfall is from October to December, the period of the north-east monsoon. In most years the

Central Provinces, Berar and Hyderabad also receive during this season some showers of rain which, though usually small in amount, are of great agricultural value, especially to the wheat-growing districts. The winter is usually a rainless season in northern India, but the North-West Frontier Province and the extreme north-western districts of the Punjab receive at this period about half of their average rainfall. In some years the winter rains extend to the submontane districts under the Himalayas, the plains of the Punjab and the north-western districts of the United Provinces.

From the point of view of rainfall, India can be divided into three zones:

(1) *The zone of heavy rainfall*, with a minimum of 100 inches and going up to 250 inches in one section and to nearly 500 inches in the other. The first lies along the west coast of the peninsula where the south-west monsoon, striking the Western Ghats, precipitates on their outer slopes a rainfall of 100 to 250 inches. The second extends along the outer ranges of the Himalayas, widening out south of Sikkim to include Bengal and Assam, where Cherrapunji on the Shillong hills holds the world's record.

(2) *The zone of moderate rainfall*, ranging from 40 to 70 inches. This region lies in four sections. The first extends from the Bay of Bengal on the east to the western boundary of Bhopal in central India. The second stretches from the Himalayas in the north to the Godavari river in the south. The third section is the east coast of the peninsula from the north of Madras to the south of Tanjore. The fourth lies along the eastern side of the Western Ghats and goes north up to Baroda. To the traveller nothing in the way of rainfall is more amazing than the rapidity with which the rainfall decreases as the clouds drift eastward from the

summits of the Western Ghats: on the top of the Ghats anything like 250 inches or over, between the Ghats and the sea 100 to 160 inches, and east of the Ghats 40 inches and below.

(3) *The zone of low average rainfall*, below 40 inches. The whole of India not comprised in the first and second zones lies in this class. In many parts of this area the rainfall is both scanty—never exceeding 25 inches—and precarious. In western Rajputana, western Punjab, Sind and Baluchistan the rainfall in many years is five inches and below.

The average rainfall over the whole of India, excluding the Himalayas and the Western Ghats, has been computed at 42 inches in the year. At first sight it may seem a surprising statement, but it is true that, taking India as a whole, the rainfall varies but little from year to year, the greatest variation amounting to never more than seven inches in excess or defect of the general average of 42 inches. What really matters to the farmer is not the all-India average rainfall, but the unequal distribution of it throughout the seasons, its still more irregular distribution over the surface of the country, and its liability to failure or serious deficiency. The only parts of the country which are naturally more or less secured against famine by an assured and abundant rainfall are eastern Bengal and Assam and the country between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea.

State Irrigation Works

Where Nature has not been kind to the cultivator, the great irrigation works constructed by the state have granted a protection which Providence has denied. I refer to the numerous large works which make the supplies of the larger rivers of the country available to the fields. A few of these were made before the present Government came in. The

Grand Anicut across the Coleroon in southern India is the oldest of them, dating from the days of the Chola kings of Tanjore. Some of the inundation canals on the Indus and its tributaries were constructed by the old Muslim and Sikh rulers of the Punjab. More important were the two canals made by the Mughal emperors of Delhi, one on the right or western bank of the Jumna and the other on the left bank. However, little was done in this direction till the present Government stepped in. The agricultural prosperity of the Punjab is really a creation of British rule. At the present day 33 million acres of land in India are irrigated from state irrigation works and the annual value of the crops raised by them is 1,100 crores of rupees.

Famine

Between these two areas, one protected by Nature and the other by the wit of Man, lies a vast tract of a million square miles, no portion of which can be said to be secure against the uncertainties of the seasons and the spectre of famine. Probably the tracts most exposed to famine in India are the Indian States of Rajputana, the British districts of Sholapur, Ahmednagar and Bijapur in the Bombay Deccan, and next to them the Deccan districts of Madras. Some broad propositions in this connexion can be laid down, namely:

(1) Speaking generally, the lower the rainfall in a given tract the greater is its liability to serious deficiency from the average.

(2) Famine is not usually the result of one dry year. The worst famines have been the result of two or even three dry years in succession.

(3) Tracts in which the suffering from famine has at times been most intense are not necessarily those in which the rainfall is most liable to periodical defect. On the contrary, the effects of drought

when it does come are felt acutely in tracts like Gujarat, Malwa and part of the Central Provinces, which owing to the sufficiency of the rainfall over a long series of years have come to be regarded as immune, and where protective irrigation works have in consequence been neglected and the people have become softened by prosperity.

(4) The quality of the soil, the classes of crops cultivated and the character and resources of the people are factors which modify the effects of a deficiency of the rainfall. The last great famine was that of 1899–1900. It demonstrated the soundness of every one of the above propositions. This famine affected an area of half a million square miles with a population of sixty millions; at its peak four and a half million persons were under state relief, and fifteen crores of rupees were spent by the state.

Thanks to the building of a network of railways, the improvement in communications and the expansion of irrigation, famines have ceased to be the spectre which haunted the Revenue Officer and the cultivator in the last generation. It is now possible to move grain rapidly from a tract of plenty to a tract of scarcity; present-day famines are famines more of money than of food; the Famine Codes have standardized relief measures, and, given District Officers of energy and humanity, deaths from starvation should not occur. The old-time Revenue Officer was accused of postponing the evil day of declaration of famine. His present-day successor is more liable to the accusation of pauperizing the countryside by over-generous gratuitous relief. Deaths which now occur during famines or after them are due to two causes: (1) Cholera epidemics break out, for, in a season of prolonged drought which dries up the ordinary sources of water-supply, people are driven to drink any kind of water. Owing to much more careful sanitary administration cholera

does not now visit famine relief camps or their vicinity, but villages in the districts are still subject to its visitation. (2) Famine weakens the resisting power of the people affected by it, and the malaria that breaks out after the rains which end the famine finds easy victims.

While human mortality has thus been eliminated or reduced, the problem of cattle mortality still persists. In the three years' drought that visited Rajputana in 1938–40, thousands of cattle perished, and it was a familiar sight to see on the sides of the railway lines that run through the country the skeletons of dead cattle. The adjacent States of Central India generously threw open their grass lands to cattle emigrating from the afflicted tracts, but only a fraction of the cattle-owners could take advantage of this, in spite of the very efficient arrangements made by the State authorities for facilitating the movement of the animals.

Soils

The soils of India may broadly be classified under four heads:

(1) The alluvial soils (3) The black soils
(2) The red soils (4) The laterite soils

Alluvial tract. The alluvial soils are the most important from the agricultural point of view and the most fertile. They cover the greater part of northern India between the foot of the Himalayas and the northern slopes of the Vindhyas, and extend in a narrow fringe round the coast-line of the peninsula, increasing in width at the deltas of the great rivers which flow down from the Western Ghats or the tableland of central India. Territorially, they occupy the greater parts of Sind, northern Rajputana, the Punjab, Delhi, the United Provinces, Bihar, Bengal and half of Assam and of the East and West Godavari, Kistna and Tanjore districts

of Madras. The whole of the vast Indo-Gangetic plain is comprised in this area of 300,000 square miles, its width varies from 300 miles in the west to less than 90 miles in the east, and the depth as far as can be ascertained exceeds 1,600 feet below the ground surface. The soils are derived mainly from the Himalayas and are deficient in phosphoric acid, nitrogen and humus, but not in potash and lime. They are of marvellous fertility, consisting of heavy rich loams producing under irrigation splendid crops of rice or sugar-cane, in fact a wide variety of crops. One has only to visit the districts in north Bihar to see for oneself how generous the soil is and what a dense population it supports. Sugar-cane grows in this area without irrigation; indeed even outside this tract, throughout the eastern districts of the United Provinces and Bihar, three or four waterings are sufficient to mature the crop, while in Bombay and Madras thirty to forty waterings are required.

The alluvial tract is a vast, level plain and presents a drab monotonous appearance to the traveller accustomed to the rolling, mountainous country in the peninsula. But what it lacks in outward seeming it gains in substance. The subsoil water is generally close enough to the surface to place the cost of lifting it within the means of the cultivator. Wells are numerous and cheap, the two provinces of the Punjab and the United Provinces owning ten million wells out of the fourteen millions or so in the whole of British India.

This tract is traversed by all the great perennial rivers whose sources lie in the snow and glaciers of the Himalayas or under the assured and abundant rainfall of the Western Ghats. The level country and the absence of hills make it easy and comparatively cheap to make canals and distribute the water over the length and breadth of the land. No wonder that within this tract are found all the great

canal systems of India. But the very physical conditions which facilitate canal irrigation constitute an obstacle to the construction of reservoirs for the storage of water for use in the dry season. Tanks, which are so important in southern India and Mysore, are practically absent here. The large area classed under 'tank irrigation' in the United Provinces is really irrigation by water lifted from the *jhils*, natural depressions which are found in large numbers, more especially in the eastern districts of the submontane and central tracts. In some of the rice districts of Bengal, the slightly undulating nature of the country admits of the water being stored in shallow tanks to tide over a break in the rains.

Red soils. These cover the whole of peninsular India outside the area of the Deccan trap (described below under black soils) and of the narrow strip of coast alluvium. They comprise the whole of Madras, Mysore and south-east Bombay and extend through the east of Hyderabad and the Central Provinces to Orissa and Chota Nagpur. Northwards the red soil area extends into and includes the greater part of the Sonthal Parganas and the Birbhum district of Bengal, the Mirzapur, Jhansi and Hamirpur districts of the United Provinces, the Baghelkhand States of central India, the Aravallis and the eastern half of Rajputana. In this widely dispersed tract, the red soils differ greatly in consistency, depth and fertility. They vary by intermediate stages from the poor, thin and gravelly, sandy or stony and light-coloured soils of the arid uplands, where only a poor crop of bajra (*cumbu*) can be grown, to the rich, deep, bright-red, dark-brown, or black coloured fertile loam of the lower levels and the bottoms, which under irrigation produce a wide range of excellent crops, sometimes as good as the products of the yellow loam of the alluvial tract of northern India.

The red soil tract is traversed by the great rivers rising in the Western Ghats and flowing eastward into the Bay of

Bengal, but for the most part their channels are too deep and their gradients too small to admit of their being utilized for irrigation outside of their narrow valleys. Even when the water can be raised to the level required for commanding the country, the broken and uneven surface renders it impossible to construct at a reasonable cost systems of canals at all comparable in size to the great canals of the alluvial tract. On the other hand, the broken and undulating nature of the surface is admirably suited for storage of the local rainfall in tanks. Madras has 36,000 tanks and Mysore 23,400 tanks. The northern provinces have no tanks worth speaking about. Nearly all the irrigation from tanks is in the red soil area. As regards wells, there is no permanent underground flow as in northern India, and the wells, being usually dependent on mere local percolation, have to be of large diameter. Their size and the rocky nature of the substratum render their construction much more expensive than in the alluvial tract. Two-thirds of the well area is comprised in the alluvial country. Nearly two million wells are used for irrigation in the United Provinces and the Punjab as against two-thirds of a million in Madras, one-fourth of a million in Bombay and a mere 15,000 in the Central Provinces. As a set-off, the wells in Madras and Bombay have a much longer life than those in the United Provinces and the Punjab where, especially in the former province, a large number of wells are temporary in character. An interesting fact is that while the area irrigated by a well is two to four acres in Madras, in the Punjab the average is eleven acres; there are many irrigating double that area, and incredible as it may seem there are individual wells which water as much as fifty acres.

Red soils are deficient in nitrogen, phosphoric acid and humus, but potash and lime are generally sufficient.

Black soils. The black cotton soil, which is the name

usually given to this type of soil because of its colour and its suitability to the cultivation of cotton, extends over the greater part of the Bombay province, and also Kathiawar, the whole of Berar, the western parts of the Central Provinces, central India and Hyderabad, large areas in the four Deccan districts of Madras, and the Ramnad and Tinnevelly districts of the extreme south. The tract is usually divided into two sections, (i) what is called the Deccan trap area, which comprises all the 'black' area outside Madras, and (ii) the Madras black area. Both are usually uninteresting in appearance, being a vast treeless plain, what trees there are being the *babul* and the neem or *margosa*. Low ranges of bare denuded hills bound the horizon, and isolated crags, fantastic in appearance, sometimes poised perilously on bigger rocks, dot the landscape. Where a large hill rises in the middle of a plain of black soil, it will nearly always be found surrounded by a fringe of red land. The soils are highly retentive of moisture and extremely sticky when wet. In the dry season the damp soil contracts, producing wide and deep fissures which house the scorpion and the snake. Recent investigations show that the cracking of the soil results in an improvement in its physical properties, due to the fact that by means of these fissures quantities of soil material are carried down from the surface to lower depths during the hot summer months and the early June rains and that the first showers of the monsoon are followed by the swelling of the colloidal masses from below. There is thus set up a pronounced circulation of soil material, a process which may be called self-ploughing and sub-soiling. One good rain is necessary before the stiff heavy soil allows itself to be ploughed by the deep Deccan plough, and when this holds off the ryot can do nothing except wait on the pleasure of Providence. But with good rains, without much effort on his part this rich soil produces magnificent crops of cotton and jowar (*cholum*).

The black soil is generally believed to be unsuitable for artificial irrigation; there are practically no canals or tanks in it and the area watered from wells is inconsiderable. The failure of the Kurnool-Cuddapah canal is the stock instance quoted in favour of this belief. But in the Bombay section, the response to irrigation has been more favourable, and soil investigations made by the Madras Government in connexion with the Tungabhadra project seem to point to the conclusion that, with suitable precautions, the response may be equally favourable in Madras.

The black soils are generally deficient in nitrogen, phosphoric acid and organic matter, but not in potash and lime.

Laterite soils. Laterite is a porous clayey rock found on the summits of the basaltic hills and plateaus of central India, along the Eastern and Western Ghats of peninsular India and in Assam. The mechanical weathering of this rock has given rise to extensive areas not only of sedentary but also of alluvial soils which, owing to their character and composition and the peculiar agricultural problems associated with them, must be placed in a category different from the great alluvial soils of India. The plantation districts of southern India, Bengal and Assam come within this category. The distinguishing peculiarity of these soils is their acidity, and the main agricultural problem is the correction or amelioration of this acidity. Tea, however, loves an acid soil and sometimes the problem is to make a particular soil acid enough for it.

These soils vary in quality. On the higher levels they are exceedingly thin and gravelly, with little power to retain moisture. On lower levels and in the valleys they are dark, heavy loams and clays which readily retain moisture and produce good crops, particularly rice. The soils are deficient in potash, phosphoric acid and lime, but humus is present in quantities decidedly higher than in most other Indian soils.

Diminishing Fertility

A statement often made is that much of the most valuable agricultural land in India has been cultivated for centuries, the continuous process should be exhausting its fertility, and consequently there should be progressive deterioration of the soil. But observed facts do not support this view. Take, for instance, the Tanjore delta which is perhaps one of the oldest cultivated tracts in India. That the delta in the upper reaches of the Cauvery river must have been under continuous rice cultivation for at least a thousand years is proved by the fact that the Grand Anicut was built by a great Chola king a thousand years ago. In all likelihood, the culture of rice in that tract was centuries anterior to the building of that dam. The most fertile portion of the delta, known popularly as the 'breasts' of the Chola kingdom, still continues to produce as heavy crops as it used to do in old days. Unfortunately, there are no records of crop out-turn over a long period of time, but as far as can be gathered from local inquiries there was no proof, not even an allegation, that there had been a diminution in the fertility of the soil. What is the explanation?

The Royal Commission on Agriculture in India made an elaborate inquiry into the question of general progressive decline in fertility. It was a most important point, as, if true, it would have pointed to an alarming state of things. Doubtless the remedy is not beyond the resources of science, but the poverty of the mass of the ryots precluded the application of any expensive fertilizers. The Commission came to the conclusion that where land is cropped year after year, when the crop is removed and no manure is added, natural gains balanced the plant food materials removed by crops, a stabilized condition was reached, and a low but permanent standard of fertility is established.

To the above conclusion I would add the following facts. The Indian ryot, who though often illiterate is certainly not deficient in shrewdness, intelligence and practical wisdom, through ages of inherited experience has learnt to appreciate the value of a regular rotation of crops and knows that the fertility of his soil cannot be maintained at the same level if the same crop is taken too often in consecutive years. He knows too which crops are particularly exhausting and which exercise an ameliorative influence on the soil. In this matter, there is nothing which an expert agricultural officer can teach him. As an example of the ryot's skill, let me mention the system, so common, of growing mixed crops, usually of gram or pulse with a cereal. Nothing has upheld the fertility of soils more than this. The scientist's explanation is that Indian soils are normally deficient in nitrogen and that the roots and the leaves which fall from the pulse plants, mainly the *arhar* or *tuar*, are rich in that element.

Manuring

The majority of the cultivated Indian soils are well above the average in fertility. Particularly is this the case if due weight is given to the heavy cropping to which they are subjected and to the small quantity of manure that is applied. Their chief defect is the low content of organic matter. Given a supply of this material in a suitable condition for rapid nitrification the response both in the rate of growth and in the total yield is marvellous. The highly manured lands round the villages yield crops luxuriant in comparison with those of the outlying unmanured fields. What manuring on a liberal scale can do is exemplified on a large sugar-cane farm in the Nasik district of Bombay. Till a few years ago the land covered by the farm was in the hands of ordinary ryots who raised just the ordinary crops of

the district on it. An enterprising industrialist bought the land, put 1,500 acres under cane, and manured it at the rate of Rs. 200 to an acre with farmyard manure, oil-cakes and ammonium sulphate. The cane yield over the whole area now averages per acre 53 tons, on 700 acres 67 tons, and on 20 acres as much as 100 tons. These figures are as good as any country's in the world. There is nothing exceptional about the quality of the soil. This only shows that if the ryot has the means and the enterprise, Indian soils will respond generously. There is no question of permanent deterioration.

The manurial problem of India is mainly one of nitrogen deficiency. India depends almost exclusively on the recuperative effects of natural processes to restore the nitrogen annually removed in the crops, as little is returned by the cultivator. Much of the farmyard manure is burnt as fuel and the nitrogen contained in oil-seeds, grains, hides and bones goes out of the country in exports. But nitrogen is still left in green manures, such as *sann*-hemp and *dhaincha*, oil-cakes, where the seed is crushed in India itself, and in leguminous crops such as gram or pulse grown in rotation with cereals, in composts and night-soil. The value of the first three sources has always been recognized and is now getting increasing recognition; but there is considerable room for expansion in the use of compost and night-soil. In this respect we may well copy China, where artificial fertilizers are as little used as in India, but where organic refuse of any kind, be it town or village sweepings, leaves, other decomposed vegetable matter, waste of men and cattle, of horses, swine and poultry, herbage, straw, garbage and sewage, all finds its way to the field as a fertilizer. Whatever may be the sanitary objection to the use of fresh night-soil, the use of it in the form of poudrette is unobjectionable.

As to the form in which the nitrogen should be given, the

predominant opinion is for giving it as organic nitrogen, though, if the ryot could afford it, some would prefer to give part of it in the inorganic form.

Soil Erosion

The seriousness of the problem of loss of soil by erosion has not been adequately realized till recently. Spectacular evidence of this loss is afforded by the United Provinces, where villages once surrounded by valuable, fertile fields now lie in a network of ravines carved out of the soft mud of the Jumna by uncontrolled drainage. Less striking, but even more serious, losses of soil have taken place by the action of floods in the Chambal and other rivers flowing through central India, Gwalior and the Central Provinces. A great deal of soil belonging legitimately to these territories is now at the bottom of the Bay of Bengal. The loss is not confined, however, to these or any other special tracts. It is taking place all over India, except perhaps in the rice-fields where ridging has conserved the soil. Reckless felling of forests by the cultivators has intensified the evil by producing floods where none existed before. Much of the infertility of districts like Bellary and Anantapur is attributable to the criminal felling of trees on the hills. The process may be seen today at work on the Aravallis; the smiling fields of Udaipur will in another fifty years be lodged in the sea as surely as the blown sand of the Sind desert will engulf the fair city of Jodhpur. The process was going on unchecked till recently in the plantation districts of Bengal, Assam, Madras and Mysore. The traveller in the black cotton soil districts of the Deccan during the rains can see the universal scouring of the fields and the wholesale loss of what is the ryot's most valuable asset. The loss on a single acre of even moderately sloping land has been anything from 50 to 150 tons per annum. The remedies for this are:

(1) Afforestation, as of the Jumna ravine lands in the United Provinces.
(2) Terracing and drainage of sloping land, as in the tea estates of Assam.
(3) Bunding of fields, as in the Bijapur district of Bombay.

Dry Farming

The first remedy suggested is in the hands of the state. The second and third are for the farmer, with encouragement where necessary from the Government. What an enthusiastic Collector can do to stimulate private action can be seen in Bijapur, where the name of the late Mr Naik will for long be held in honour. The two latter remedies serve a dual purpose. They prevent erosion and conserve moisture, which is of the essence of the dry farming schemes now in progress in Hagari, Sholapur, Bijapur, Raichur and Rohtak. These schemes are based on methods devised in the dry agricultural areas of the United States and are intended to save farmers from famine in areas of precarious rainfall where irrigation is not possible. The methods adopted in the Bombay Deccan, which has practised them longer than elsewhere, are:

(1) Ploughing the land with a turn-wrest plough at least once in three years in medium and deep soils.
(2) Bunding or terracing the land, and division into compartments to control the movement of rain-water.
(3) Application of farmyard manure at five cartloads per acre, or a green manure like *sann*-hemp every year.
(4) Four or five harrowings during the monsoon before sowing.
(5) Sowing at a moderate seed rate of 4 to 5 lb. per acre with a wider drill, so as to keep a space of 18 inches between rows.
(6) Stirring of the surface soil by bullock-hoes worked between the rows.

The Holding—Subdivision, Fragmentation, Consolidation

India is a country of small holdings. The number of cultivated acres per cultivator was computed in the Census of 1921 to vary from 2½ acres in the United Provinces to 3 acres in Bengal and Bihar, 5 acres in Madras, 8½ acres in the Central Provinces, 9 acres in the Punjab and 12 acres in Bombay. In the 21 years that have elapsed the average size of the holding has in all probability decreased owing to the law of equal partition amongst Hindus and Muslims. The figures are averages. A detailed inquiry made in 2,400 villages of the Punjab revealed that 18 per cent of the holdings were under one acre, 25 per cent between one and three acres, 15 per cent between three and five acres, and a further 18 per cent between five and ten acres. It is extremely probable that similar inquiries in other provinces would not disclose results markedly different.

When people talk of 'subdivision' this is what they refer to. 'Fragmentation' is a different thing. It refers to a single man's holding being scattered in several parcels separated by other men's holdings.

Both subdivision and fragmentation are objected to on the ground that they are impediments to improvements in cultivation. Another objection, which applies only to subdivision, is that it reduces the size of the holding to an 'uneconomic unit'. It is certainly true that in areas where land is valuable and population is rapidly on the increase, as for instance in deltaic areas, holdings are often a few cents in extent and cannot by themselves support the cultivator and his family. The remedy is to establish primogeniture in place of equal inheritance—which does not seem to be practical politics.

As regards fragmentation, in only two provinces, the Punjab and the Central Provinces, has any action been taken to consolidate holdings. It seems to have achieved a fair

measure of success, particularly in the Punjab. In Bombay fragmentation has been condemned as an unqualified evil, but a law to put an end to it was dropped as opposed to public feeling. Three factors have contributed to the success of consolidation in the Punjab—uniformity of tenure, uniformity of soil and adequate district staff in touch with the public. These are held to be absent in Bihar, which recognizes the evil but feels it is powerless to deal with it. In Madras fragmentation is not a serious problem, and it is pointed out that rice cultivation is best carried on in small plots to secure an even level over the whole land, and a man's land is often split up into smaller plots for convenience of cultivation. A small beginning has however been made by the formation of a few consolidation co-operative societies.

The Ryot and Agricultural Improvements

The ryot is unlettered, but this by no means amounts to saying that he does not know his business and is lacking in practical intelligence or shrewdness. Like cultivators all the world over he is conservative, but he knows a good thing when he sees it and will quickly take it up if he is satisfied that it is a useful proposition not beyond his slender means and his tiny holding. Mere theories propounded by the expert agricultural officer or by the learned townsman do not appeal to him unless visibly demonstrated. That is the use of demonstration farms. Look at the way in which in the opening years of this century the indigenous groundnut of Madras was replaced by a better variety from Mauritius and spread from the lighter soils of Madras to the heavier ones and from thence to nearly all over India. An area of 600,000 acres has now expanded into seven to nine million acres, nearly half the world's production. Take a more recent and even a more striking instance. The improved varieties of sugar-cane have replaced over three-quarters of the old *deshi*

canes in the last twelve years, and India is now the world's largest cane producer.

The greatest scope for agricultural improvement lies in the evolution of new and improved varieties of existing crops. In cotton India's average yield per acre is as low as 90 lb., compared with the 150 lb. of the United States and the 450 lb. of Egypt. In rice the Indian average of 750 to 900 lb. compares not unfavourably with that of Indo-China and Siam, but is far below America's 1,500 lb., Egypt's 2,000, Japan's 2,300 and Italy's 3,000 lb. In wheat India's 650 lb. is below Australia's 710, Argentina's 760, America's 850, Canada's 975 and Europe's 1,150. Russia's average is the same as India's. Similarly the Indian average in sugar-cane is below that of Java and Hawaii. Much of the agricultural future of India lies in the hands of the plant-breeder. It must be confessed, however, that while the practical achievements of plant-breeding research in India compare favourably with any of the more advanced countries of the world, the number of skilled breeders is not commensurate with the immensity of the problem. India is poorly provided with plant-breeding training centres, and the personnel capable of giving training is extremely inadequate. The question of providing for the country competent personnel with sound training in plant-breeding in sufficient numbers is one of the problems which demand urgent consideration at the hands of the Central Government.

When once a good variety has been established, it is the work of the agricultural officer to multiply the seed and issue it to growers, care being taken to maintain its purity. A regular organization has been evolved for this and is functioning with success, especially in cotton, for which large grants have been made by the Indian Central Cotton Committee.

Marketing

Next in practical importance is the provision of facilities to the grower for marketing his produce. A wide divergence between farm-gate and retail prices is noticeable in all countries; but in a country like India, where even now villages at a distance from the railway lines are badly served by roads connecting with their nearest markets, the divergence is extreme. The gap widens if a comparison is made between farm-gate prices and the prices not at the nearest market town, but at the large provincial centres from which the products are sent off in the case of internal trade, at the shipping centres in the case of external trade. An agricultural marketing department attached to the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research has been at work for the last eight years, and improvements in marketing in the way of grading, establishment of standard qualities and kindred matters may result in better prices to the grower.

Mechanization

Improvements in agricultural implements suited to local conditions are being made and should continue to be made. But it is doubtful if there is scope for any considerable mechanization of agriculture. Machines are suitable for new countries with a sparse population and large farms, such as Canada, Australia and Argentina, but not for a thickly populated country with small holdings. The serious effects of mechanical cultivation in displacing human labour and driving the peasantry into overcrowded towns should not be overlooked.

Scientific Research

If reference has not been made to the work done by scientific bodies like the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research it is not because the value of that work is not

recognized. The establishment of the Council is one of the landmarks in the history of India's agricultural progress. In the thirteen years of its existence it has justified the expectations of its founders, given a strong stimulus to research work in the agricultural departments and in the Indian universities, and built up an enthusiastic band of indigenous research workers. But both space and the nature of this pamphlet forbid a detailed reference to its activities.

Animal Husbandry

Agriculture includes not only the production of crops from soils, but also cattle-breeding and dairy-farming. The capital fact in English farming is the intimate union of stock-breeding with that of crop-production. In the early stages of the history of English farming, England suffered from what has been called the 'fundamental weakness' of the farming system, that the production of grain for human food was separated from the production of fodder for animal food. But this was remedied in the eighteenth century when the practice common in Flanders was copied, and a system of rotation introduced: first wheat, then turnips, then barley and then clover. The turnips and clover were fed to the animals and the wheat and barley went to the humans. This produced not only much more meat than before, but also much more farmyard manure and so bigger crops of wheat and barley. The result is summed up by Sir John Russell in the saying, 'More cattle, more manure; more manure, bigger crops; bigger crops, more cattle'.

Unfortunately, in India, except in a few special cases, there has been a complete divorce between cultivation of land and breeding of cattle. Instead of there being an ascending scale of improvement, there has been a progressive deterioration in farm cattle. The cattle population of India is the largest in the world, but is probably in general effici-

ency (always subject to the recognition of the fact that there are many excellent breeds of draught and milking cattle) one of the poorest. In the last one hundred years, owing to the enormous increase in the human population of the country, there has been a considerable extension of cultivation. Instead of the extension being met at least partly by an increase in the efficiency of the working cattle, it has been wholly met by an increase in their numbers. Simultaneously there has been a reduction in their quality. The village grazing lands on which animals mainly depend for their food are inadequate, cultivation encroaches on the better pastures whose soil is suitable for conversion into arable land, and consequently cattle have less to eat. And as the conditions for rearing them become worse, their size decreases, and more cattle have to be produced to do the work. A vicious circle has thus been set up, and the task of breaking it is a gigantic one. It is obvious that this lies at the root of the prosperity of Indian agriculture. Fewer cattle and better-fed ones should be our ideal.

Dairying

It will be a long time before the ideal is realized. Animals take longer to breed than plants. India has several excellent breeds of cattle, some suitable for draught, some for milking, and some for both. They have the stamina to stand the climate and their power of resistance to disease has been highly developed. The Hariana (Punjab), the Kankrej (Gujarat), the Amrit Mahal (Mysore), the Malwi (central India), the Goalo (Central Provinces) are good for draught, while the red Sindi (Sind), the Thar Parkar (Sind), the Sahiwal (Punjab), the Gir (Kathiawar) and the Ongole (Madras) are amongst the best milking breeds. In addition there are several good breeds which have a deserved local reputation. Selective breeding from these classes is the method by which we shall attain our ideal.

The average milking capacity of the Indian cow is very poor indeed. It is 525 lb. for a whole year. That it is capable of considerable increase is proved by the fact that special herds of cows of the Sahiwal breed have produced as much as 6,660 to 7,744 lb. It is all a question of selection, proper breeding and management. Cross-breeding with foreign animals is not recommended, except as a quick method of increasing the supply of milk in a large modern dairy serving a large city. As a general policy, it is deprecated.

The Indian buffalo is superior to the Indian cow as a milk yielder, its annual performance being 1,270 lb. as against the 525 lb. of the cow. The buffalo is the Indian dairy animal *par excellence* and the Murra, Delhi and Kathiawar buffaloes have earned a deservedly high reputation. For butter and *ghee* the buffalo is to be specially preferred. The butter-fat in the milk of the Indian cow is 5 per cent as against the English cow's 3·8 per cent; in the buffalo it is 8 per cent.

Conclusion

What Indian agriculture needs, is more brains to be put into the land and more state money to be put into agricultural improvement and research. A large number of young men pass out of the Universities who cannot all be absorbed in existing professions in the towns. Some of these may well be employed, after a short course in agriculture, in propaganda work in the villages. The best form of propaganda would be for men of leisure and means to settle down in the village. Many simple improvements, such as the practice, prevailing in Coimbatore and Salem, of the farmer living on his farm with his family and his cattle, could well be introduced in other areas similarly situated. On the part of the state, the sums allotted by the Central and Provincial Governments for the agriculture and veterinary departments, which now work out to a combined figure of less than 15 pies per head of the population, admit of large and progressive increase.

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LANGUAGES

AND

THE LINGUISTIC PROBLEM

BY
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THE *Linguistic Survey of India* enumerated 179 languages and 544 dialects, but there are only 15 major or literary languages, eleven of them Aryan and four Dravidian in origin; the prehistoric Austric languages also survive in many remote areas, and there are pockets of the more recently introduced Sino-Tibetan speeches. In this pamphlet the author surveys the historical development and present importance of these four speech-families, and goes on to consider whether there is a need for an Indian 'national language'. His prescription is a simplified Hindi or Hindustani, written in the Roman script. This script is in use among the largest number of people in the world, and a combination of the scientific Indian arrangement with the Roman letters will produce a nearly phonetic alphabet, easy to read, write and print: it would also solve the Nagari-Persian script controversy. This simplified and romanized Hindustani would be used in pan-Indian contexts only, and would not in any way displace High-Hindi, Urdu or the culture-language, English.

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LANGUAGES AND THE LINGUISTIC PROBLEM

How far is there a Linguistic Problem in India?

WITH an area as large as Europe without Russia and a population resulting from the commingling of various peoples and forming a fifth of the human race, India is naturally a land of many languages. In earlier times, diversity of language was not much of a problem, as the masses were content with their dialects, and the upper classes who ran things managed with Sanskrit in Hindu India and Persian in Muslim times. The diversity of language was not then so much pronounced. Now the theory of a common language as the basis of nationality is disturbing some of us; the masses have now to be approached in the languages they speak or understand—the English of the intelligentsia is useless for them; and the various provincial languages have been developing their literatures for some centuries past and have now come into prominence. We feel that we ought to have a common language for the whole of India as the symbol of a common Indian nationality, which would both check the centrifugal or fissiparous tendency of the provincial languages and meet the unsympathetic argument that India cannot be a single nation with so many languages. Such a language has actually been proposed in Hindi (Hindustani); and one main problem with many Indian politicians and thought-leaders has been how far and in what way we can make it the 'national language' of India.

As things stand, multiplicity of language is no bar to nationhood, a polyglot state using according to convenience one or more of its languages. Leaving aside the oft-quoted example of Switzerland, we find that some of the most important states have many languages, Britain (with English, Welsh and Gaelic) included. France, Spain, Soviet Russia, China, Mexico and the states of Central and South America,

Canada, South Africa, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Eire and Afghanistan are polyglot states, some of them having two officially recognized languages. So the case is not so hopeless for India; particularly when the tale of her languages and dialects—179 and 544 respectively according to the *Linguistic Survey of India*—has to be taken with a good deal of reservation. For of these 179 'languages' (the separate enumeration of 'dialects' is irrelevant as they come under 'languages') 116 are small tribal speeches belonging to the Tibeto-Chinese speech-family which are found only on the northern and north-eastern fringe of India and are current among less than 1% of the entire population of the country; and some two dozen more are similar insignificant speeches belonging to other language groups, or are really languages not belonging to India. It should always be borne in mind that in a vast country like India it is the languages of the large, advanced and organized groups that matter. Small tribal dialects, or even the languages of some large groups of culturally advanced peoples, have a place only within the tribal or local life; for a wider life, a great cultural language becomes a necessity, like English being indispensable for Gaelic or Welsh speakers in Britain, or French for Provençals, Basques and Bretons in France. For literature, for education, for public life, we have now only 15 major or literary languages in India. These languages are: the two literary forms of the great Hindi or Hindustani speech of north India, viz. (1) High-Hindi and (2) Urdu, which really are one speech split into two by two totally different scripts, (3) Bengali, (4) Oriya, (5) Marathi, (6) Gujarati, (7) Sindhi, besides (8) Panjabi and (9) Nepali, which agree very closely with High-Hindi, and (10) Assamese, which is very like Bengali, and (11) Kashmiri; and the four great Dravidian speeches of the south, viz. (12) Telugu, (13) Kannada, (14) Tamil and (15) Malayalam.

The great fact should be specially stressed that Hindi

(Hindustani) acts as the most natural inter-provincial link among speakers of the different Aryan languages and dialects of the north. Thanks to it, Indians over the whole of north India and a good part of the Deccan do not feel the barrier of speech, at least in elementary conversation, e.g. in travelling, from the Burma border to the Afghan frontier and from Kashmir and Nepal to Goa and Ganjam; a little knowledge of it, acquired without effort, is enough; and this Hindi (Hindustani) speech is understood in the bigger towns and pilgrimage centres of the south as well. It is the real *Lingua Indica* of today.

The above facts and considerations help to mitigate the problems to which multiplicity of language would otherwise give rise in the national affairs of India. The linguistic problems of India briefly are these: the rival claims of English and the mother-tongue in higher education and in administration; the question of a common scientific and technical terminology for as many languages as possible; the place of Hindi (Hindustani) in the inter-provincial life; and the solution of the High-Hindi vs. Urdu controversy, which is just the Hindu-Muslim question on the linguistic plane, embracing script and higher vocabulary.

Race and Language in India: Historical Survey

Probably no kind of man evolved from some type of anthropoid ape on the soil of India, but India became the home of various races which came from outside, and was a great clearing-house for various peoples. The oldest people to have settled in India were a **Negroid** or **Negrito** race from Africa, who died out leaving very little trace: they survive with their language in the Andaman Islands (less than 500 in 1931). The **Proto-Australoids**, long-headed, dark-skinned, snub-nosed, then came into India, probably from the west. They furnished some of the present-day lower classes all over India. They may very well have been speakers of primi-

tive dialects from which originated the languages of the Austric speech-family. Groups of these primitive Austric-speakers found themselves in Ceylon, in Burma and Indo-China, and in Malaya and Indonesia, and even beyond, in the islands of Melanesia and Polynesia. They mingled with Negritos and with Mongoloids, and outside India their language changed to Mon and Khmer and other 'Austro-Asiatic' speeches in Indo-China, into Malay and its sister 'Indonesian' speeches in the islands of the Indian archipelago, and into the various Melanesian and Polynesian dialects. A very early offshoot of the Proto-Australoids passed into Australia, where they developed differently from their kinsmen elsewhere. In India, Austric speakers of the plains have entirely abandoned their original 'Austro-Asiatic' speech for the Aryan language which came to the country after 1500 B.C., the latter itself being modified by them to some extent; and they have been transformed into the present-day masses of northern India—along with the Dravidian-speaking peoples who came to live with them later. Austric dialects survive in India in some out-of-the-way places, in the hills and jungles of central and north-eastern India. Austric speakers now do not form more than 1·3% of the total population of India, numbering some 5 millions in all. Indian Austric languages (which with Mon and Khmer of Burma and Indo-China fall under the 'Austro-Asiatic' branch of Austric) are in three groups: (i) the Kol or Munda group, including Santali (over 2½ millions,[1] the largest tribe in India speaking an aboriginal language), Mundari (650,000), Ho (450,000), Kharia (180,000), Bhumij (113,000), and a few others, beside Korku (160,000), Savara (196,000)

[1] Figures as in the census for 1931, and occasionally on the basis of the *Linguistic Survey of India* estimates for 1921, as 1941 census figures are not available. Total population of India, excluding Burma: over 338 millions in 1931, and nearly 389 millions in 1941.

and Gadaba (44,000); (ii) Khasi in Assam (234,000); and (iii) Nicobarese (10,000). Austric speakers must learn some contiguous Aryan language, Bengali or Bihari, Oriya or Marathi, or Hindi. Their speeches, which have a value for the philologist, were reduced to writing only in the 19th century by Christian missionaries. Santali and Mundari have folk-tales and songs which are quite distinctive. Khasi and Santali have been recognized by the University of Calcutta as 'minor vernaculars', but there has been recent and widespread penetration of most Austric territory by Aryan speakers, and Santals and others are forced to be bilingual. The ultimate disintegration of Austric with Aryanization of the Austric speakers appears to be inevitable, except where comparative isolation and tribal consciousness are operating, as in the case of Khasi.

Following the Austrics, we have **Dravidian** speakers coming to India before 3500 B.C. It is likely that they comprised mainly the Palæo-Mediterranean variety of the Mediterranean race. Other varieties of the Mediterranean race—the Mediterraneans proper and the 'Orientals', are also found in India, but they arrived subsequently, it would seem, and adopted both the Dravidian and the Aryan speeches. These Mediterranean Dravidians are believed to have come from the Ægean Islands and Asia Minor, and were of the same Ægean race as in pre-Hellenic Greece; and in India they built up the great city culture of Sindh and south Panjab (*c.* 3250–2750 B.C.). They spread over western and southern India, and penetrated into Gangetic India also, where they came in touch with the Austric speakers, hostile or friendly. They with the speakers of the latter supplied some of the fundamental bases of Hindu religion and civilization, and when the Aryans came and spread over northern India, the speakers of Dravidian and of Austric both accepted the Aryans'

language, and the three groups of language-communities, Austric, Dravidian and Aryan, were fused into one people, the Aryan-speaking north Indian Hindu of ancient times. The diversity of speech in north India was perhaps the opportunity of the Aryan speaker to spread his language: he was not so successful in the south, with its solid blocs of Dravidian languages. At the present day, the Dravidian languages are mainly confined to the south, with some remnants in northern and central India, and they are current among some 71 millions, forming 20% of the Indian people. There are four great literary or cultivated Dravidian languages, viz. (i) Telugu or Andhra (over 26 millions), (ii) Kannada or Karnata (over 11 millions), (iii) Tamil or 'Dravida' (nearly 30 millions in India + 2 millions settled in Ceylon) and (iv) Malayalam or Kerala with Laccadivian (over 9 millions), besides a number of uncultivated speeches —Tulu (152,000), Kodagu or Coorgi (45,000), Toda (600); and Gondi (1,865,000) in the Central Provinces, Hyderabad and Madras province; Kandh or Kui (586,000) in Orissa; Kurukh or Oraon (1,038,000) in Bihar and Orissa, and Malto (71,000) in the Rajmahal Hills; besides Brahui (207,000) in Baluchistan, a remnant of the great Dravidian bloc of western India. The speakers of all these uncultivated Dravidian speeches must learn some other contiguous language, so that these four literary languages alone count in the Dravidian family—Telugu, Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam. Tamil has a rich and extensive literature, to be mentioned for originality and variety after that of Sanskrit, which goes back to the early centuries of the Christian era; Kannada literature is almost equally old, and Telugu literature goes back to *c.* A.D. 1000; while Malayalam, a younger sister of Tamil, is the youngest of these literary speeches. Tamil has preserved the old Dravidian character best, in roots and in words; but all these four

freely go to the Aryan Sanskrit, the classic and religious language of India, for words of higher culture. Their Sanskrit vocabulary furnishes these Dravidian speeches with a manifest common platform with all the great literary languages of the north, excepting Urdu. Besides, Dravidian has profoundly influenced the Aryan speech in its evolution in India.

Although the **Sino-Tibetan** or **Tibeto-Chinese** speakers, belonging to the **Mongoloid** race, in its long- and short-headed variations, came after the Aryans, it is best to consider them here. They appear to have spread from their primitive home in north-western China about the middle of the first millennium B.C. into Tibet, and later they penetrated through the Himalayas and through Assam into the Himalayan regions and the plains of north and east Bengal and the hills and plains of Assam. They were all in a backward state, and they contributed very little to the evolution of Indian culture. Tibetan and Burmese became literary languages through contact with Indian Aryan literature. In the plains the Sino-Tibetan tribes (e.g. the Bodos) gave up and are giving up their languages for modern Aryan speeches, Bengali and Assamese, and in Nepal the Aryan Nepali is ousting them. Excepting Newari in Nepal and Meithei or Manipuri in Manipur, there has been no literary cultivation of these. Spoken by some 4 millions in the remote hills and mountains of Assam and Nepal, these languages account for only 0·85% of the Indian population; and although Manipuri (392,000), Lushei (60,000), and Garo (230,000) of the Bodo group are recognized by the University of Calcutta as 'minor vernaculars', the bilinguality of the Tibeto-Chinese speakers and the consequent disappearance of their dialects is a matter of time.

Finally, we come to the great **Aryan** speech of India, our great spiritual and cultural link with the West. The primitive Indo-Europeans, of whom the oldest Aryan-speakers

were a branch, developed their language and culture in the Eurasian tracts south of the Ural mountains *c.* 3000 B.C., and one band of them came to the northern Mesopotamian regions *c.* 2500 B.C., from where they passed on to India via Iran. It is believed that the Indo-European speakers who came into India were made up of two distinct races, the long-headed Nordic Indo-Europeans proper, and the short-headed Alpines, Dinarics and Armenoids; but although this short-headed group forms an important element in the population of India, e.g. in Gujarat and Bengal, it is not certain that it spoke a form of Aryan. The Aryan speech came in various waves from the west, and it spread over the Panjab and the Ganges valley, Dravidian and Austric speeches receding before it, so that gradually the whole of north India, including Assam, and a good deal of the northern Deccan, became Aryan in speech. The Aryan speech in its earliest phase in India (*Old Indo-Aryan*) is represented by the language of the *Rigveda*, compiled probably in the 10th century B.C., but portions of it are much older. A younger form of this Old Indo-Aryan speech in India became established as **Sanskrit**, the great religious and culture-language of Hindu India, by 500 B.C. The later spoken forms of the Aryan speech, in the stage known as *Middle Indo-Aryan*, are represented by the various Prakrits (including Pali) and Apabhransas of the period 600 B.C. to A.D. 1000, after which these develop into the *New* or *Modern Indo-Aryan* languages of the present day. Sanskrit became the great vehicle of ancient Indian culture, and it spread into the lands of 'Greater India'—Burma, Indo-China, Malaya and Indonesia, and Serindia or Central Asia of ancient times—and was studied in Tibet, China, Korea and Japan also. It has been the natural feeder of all Indian languages, whenever they wanted new words, for the last 2,500 years.

The Aryan speech-family is the most important in India,

numerically, culturally, and in all other ways. It is current among 257 millions and more, accounting for over 73% of the population of India. The principal Indo-Aryan languages and dialects have been classified as follows:[1]

I. North-Western Group: (1) Hindki or Lahnda or Western Panjabi dialects, 8½; (2) Sindhi (with Kachhi), 4.

II. Southern Group: (3) Marathi, 21 (with Konkani, *1½, and Halabi).

III. Eastern Group: (4) Oriya, 11; (5) Bengali, 53½; (6) Assamese, 2; (7) the Bihari speeches, *37, viz. (*a*) Maithili, *10, (*b*) Magahi, *6½ and (*c*) Bhojpuri (with Sadani or Chota-Nagpuri), *20½.

IV. East-Central (Mediate) Group: (8) Kosali or Eastern Hindi (in 3 dialects, Awadhi, Bagheli and Chattisgarhi), *22½.

V. Central Group: (9) Hindi Proper or Western Hindi (including 'Vernacular Hindustani', Khari-boli with its two literary forms High-Hindi and Urdu, and Bangaru; and Braj-bhakha, Kanauji, and Bundeli), *41; (10) Panjabi or Eastern Panjabi, 15½; (11) Rajasthani-Gujarati—(*a*) Gujarati, 11; (*b*) the Rajasthani dialects like Marwari, Malavi, Jaipuri and Mewati, 14; and (*c*) Bhili dialects, 2 (besides Saurashtri in south India, and Gujari in the Panjab and Kashmir).

VI. Northern or Pahari or Himalayan Group: (12) Eastern Pahari: Gorkhali (Khas-kura, Parbatiya or Nepali), ?6; (13) Central Pahari: Garhwali and Kumaoni, *1; and (14) Western Pahari dialects: Chameali, Kului, Mandeali, Kiunthali, Sirmauri, etc., *1.

[*Extra-Indian Groups: VII.* Sinhalese of Ceylon, with Malidivan; and *VIII.* The Romani or Gipsy dialects of Western Asia and Europe.]

The above are the languages of the Indo-Aryan group of the Indo-Iranian or Aryan branch of the Indo-European speech-family. Another Aryan group is the Dardic (believed

[1] The figure after the name of a language or 'dialect' indicates the approximate number of millions speaking it. An asterisk * indicates *Linguistic Survey* estimates. The disagreement of the total of these figures with 257 millions as the number of Aryan speakers for 1931 is due to the non-inclusion of Iranian and Dardic speeches in the list given here (which is for Indo-Aryan only), and to the disagreement between the Census figures and the *Survey* estimates, which latter have in some cases to be given preference.

by some to be descended from the Aryan dialect of the Alpine short-heads), under which come some speeches of the extreme NW. frontier of India, viz. Kashmiri (nearly 1½ millions) and Shina (68,000), and a few others like Kho-war or Chitrali, Bashgali and Pashai, spoken by much smaller numbers in the almost inaccessible mountain regions between India and Afghanistan. Two languages of the Iranian group of Aryan also belong to India—Pashto (of N.-W.F. Province, over 1½ millions, with more Pashto-speakers in Afghanistan), and Balochi (628,000), each in two dialects. In the north of Kashmir (in Hunza and Nagyr in Gilgit), there is Burushaski (26,000), a mystery language which has not yet been affiliated to any known speech-family.

Four great linguistic families are thus represented in India: the **Austric**, the **Dravidian**, the **Indo-European (Aryan)**, and the **Sino-Tibetan**. There are fundamental differences in structure and vocabulary among these, but contact among them for 3,000 years and more, particularly through masses of Austric, Dravidian and Sino-Tibetan speakers adopting Aryan, has led to the imposition upon each other, or to common evolution in spite of original differences, of a number of common characteristics which may be called specifically Indian and which are found in languages belonging particularly to the three families Austric, Dravidian and Aryan (e.g. the 'cerebral' or retroflex sounds like *ṭ*, *ḍ*, *ṛ*, *ṇ* and *ḷ*; the use of 'post-positions' in the declension of the noun; similarity in the structure of the verb; compound verbs; 'echo words'; etc., etc.). Overlaying their genetic diversity, there is thus in Indian languages at the present day an Indian character, which forms one of the bases of that 'certain underlying uniformity of life from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin', that 'general Indian personality', which has been admitted even by Sir Herbert Risley, otherwise so sceptical about India's claim to be considered as one people.

The Present Position

The Austric and Tibeto-Chinese speeches have no importance—their speakers must be bilingual with some Aryan language, although they might be encouraged to retain and cultivate their tribal speeches. The same may be said for the uncultivated Dravidian languages—for their speakers bilingualism in one or the other of the four Dravidian cultivated languages, or in some Aryan speech, is equally inevitable. Tamil and Malayalam are said to be mutually intelligible to some extent, but it may be said that there is no inter-provincial Dravidian speech for all of these. Among the Aryan languages of India, Hindi or Hindustani is the great inter-lingual link, and that is a great advantage. All the Aryan speeches, again, are not of equal importance. At the present moment, the eleven Aryan literary languages noted above (p. 4) serve people speaking the languages and dialects noted at p. 11. Like speakers of Provençal accepting French, speakers of Hindki (Western Panjabi), Panjabi, Rajasthani, Bhili, Western Pahari, Central Pahari, Kosali or Eastern Hindi, and Bihari have adopted High-Hindi or Urdu as their language of education, literature and public life. As in Provençal in earlier days, there are early literatures in most of the above speeches, particularly in Rajasthani, in Kosali, and in the Maithili form of Bihari; and there is in some cases a desire to set up some of these as literary languages once again, beside the current fifteen literary languages—notably among many Maithili, Konkani and Marwari and even Bhojpuri speakers. Even if these came to be established as literary speeches in their respective tracts, the position of Hindi (Hindustani) as the inter-provincial language would not be seriously assailed.

Hindi (Hindustani) is certainly the representative modern Indian language. It is the natural *lingua franca* of 257 millions, besides being understood by others; and in either

of its two forms, High-Hindi and Urdu, it is the literary language of over 140 millions. It is thus the third great language of the world, coming after Northern Chinese and English. We shall have more to say about it later. After Hindi (Hindustani), we must name Bengali; considering the number of people speaking it as their mother-tongue, Bengali is the seventh language of the world, coming after Northern Chinese, English, Russian, German, Japanese and Spanish. (Hindi or Hindustani is the *home-language* of a much smaller number than Bengali.) Bengali has acquired a certain pre-eminence as the language of Rabindranath Tagore, and it is a well-cultivated and expressive speech, with a rich modern literature. Oriya and Assamese agree closely with Bengali, but they have separate literatures. Assamese is a minority speech in its own province, but the Assamese intelligentsia are carrying on a vigorous literary life. Maithili, Magahi and Bhojpuri are very closely related to Oriya-Bengali-Assamese, but their orientation has been towards Hindi, although a movement for re-establishing Maithili in its home districts seems to be gaining ground. Kosali or Eastern Hindi gave to India a poet like Tulasidasa (16th century), but its literary activity is all but gone, and it is now under the shadow of Hindi (Hindustani). Panjabi and Hindki speakers of the Panjab cultivate a little (Eastern) Panjabi, but otherwise they have declared for Hindustani (Urdu mainly, and a little High-Hindi). The Sikhs mostly cultivate (Eastern) Panjabi in the Gurmukhi alphabet (a script related to the Nagari of Hindi). Rajasthani (specially Marwari) and Gujarati were one language up to 1600. Gujarati became an independent language, but Rajasthani speakers, not having evolved a literary language binding all the dialects, accepted High-Hindi during the last century and are now enthusiastic supporters of it. Gujarati has now one of the most advanced modern Indo-Aryan

literatures, side by side with those of Bengali, Marathi and High-Hindi and Urdu. The Western and Central Pahari dialects, not much cultivated except for songs and ballads, have attached themselves to High-Hindi. Eastern Pahari is the language of Nepal, where it is spreading among the local Tibeto-Burman tribes. In the south, Marathi has a rich literature; and Konkani, closely connected with it, is written in the Roman script by the Christians of Goa. Attempts to set up Konkani as a separate literary language notwithstanding, speakers of the Konkani dialects usually employ Marathi. Kashmiri is a Dardic speech, profoundly influenced by Sanskrit. It is not much cultivated, its speakers easily taking to Urdu (and High-Hindi, among a few Hindus).

If the single spoken language, known variously as Hindi, Urdu, Hindustani, Hindusthani and Khari-boli, as a member of the Western Hindi group of dialects, was not in the unfortunate situation of being split up for literary purposes into two languages, by different scripts and difference in higher vocabulary, the unification of the country by a single common language would have been an easy process. The speakers of Dravidian would not find much difficulty in accepting it for inter-provincial purposes, as Hindi as a New Indo-Aryan speech has approximated itself very largely to the syntactical and other speech-habits of Dravidian; and the large Sanskrit and Prakrit element in the Dravidian languages forms another bond of union between the Aryan Hindi and the speeches of the Dravidian south.

Hindi, Hindustani or Hindusthani, Urdu, Khari-boli

When the Turks and Iranis from Afghanistan conquered north India in the 11th–13th centuries, their onslaught seemed to be breaking up the old cultural tradition of Hindu India. At that time, in the matter of language, there was (in addition to the sacred language Sanskrit) a literary

speech, based on late Middle Indo-Aryan (Apabhransa) as spoken in the Panjab, in western U.P. and in Rajputana-Gujarat, which was current all over Aryan India from the Maratha country to Bengal; and there were the spoken dialects. This literary language, patronized in the courts of the Rajput princes, suffered a check, but its traditions were taken up by Rajasthani-Gujarati and the Braj-bhakha dialect of Western Hindi (Agra, Mathura, Gwalior), which Turki and other foreign Muslim influences could not reach. The Panjab was the first seat of Turki rule in India, and Panjab Muslims and Hindus evidently had some importance after the Turki power was established in Delhi. The Turki Muslim court and its entourage at Delhi used (when they did not speak Persian or Turki) the local dialect of Delhi, which happened to agree with the Panjabi dialects in some important matters. In this way, the speech of Delhi, with a certain amount of influence from the Panjab dialects, developed into a language of some importance. Persian words naturally began to have a place in it, though at first there was no conscious attempt to Persianize the Indian language. At first there was no literary cultivation of it. A Hindu or a Muslim desiring to write in a north Indian vernacular would find ready as a literary medium, Dingal (i.e. Rajasthani), or Braj-bhakha, or Awadhi, or Maithili, according to the area where he lived. But the Delhi speech gradually invaded the domain of literature; and in Kabir's writings (15th century) we find a mixture of it with Braj-bhakha. The way was being prepared for the use of the unmixed Delhi speech in literature. The impetus came from the south in the 17th century.

North Indian Muslims speaking Panjabi and other dialects began to settle in the Deccan as a ruling class from the 14th century onwards, and at Golconda and Bijapur and elsewhere they developed a literary language (16th century), independently of north India, using as its basis Panjabi and

other dialects running close to the speech of Delhi. This came to be known as *Dakhanī* or *Daknī*, the Deccan or 'southern' speech, which was thus a *colonial speech* set up as a literary language. From the beginning, it employed the Persian script, and its vocabulary, at first purely Indian (vernacular Hindi and Panjabi, and Sanskrit), gradually became more and more Persianized. Dakni slowly took Persian literature as its model, both in subject-matter and style. Towards the end of the 17th century, the example of this Dakni speech reacted on the language of Delhi. The Delhi speech, equally with Braj-bhakha and other north Indian dialects, was called, in a general way, from the days of the first Turki conquerors of India using Persian, the *Hindī* or 'Indian' speech, or *Hindawī* or *Hindwī* i.e. 'the Hindu speech'. When it was taken to the Deccan by the Mogul armies in the 17th century, it acquired the name of *Zabān-e-Urdū-e-Mu'allā*, 'the language of the exalted camp' or 'court', which in the second half of the 18th century became shortened to *Zabān-e-Urdū*, and simply *Urdū*. North Indian Muslims discovered the possibilities of this Delhi speech by emulating Dakni, and Urdu as a language for literary purposes then came into being in the 18th century. It is thus an Indian speech using the Persian script, preferring a Persianized vocabulary and seeking inspiration from Persian literature and the atmosphere of Islamic faith and culture. The Moguls had up to this time cultivated and encouraged Braj-bhakha, although latterly they spoke the Delhi speech. In Persianizing the vocabulary of this Delhi speech, foreign Muslims took a leading part in the second half of the 18th century. Quite a movement was started to restrict its native Hindi and Sanskrit words. With this orientation, Urdu came to be established as the 'Muslim' form of a Western Hindi speech. It was a necessary cultural and spiritual compensation for the loss of Muslim political power in the 18th-19th

centuries through the rise of the Marathas, the Sikhs and the British. North Indian Urdu has now reduced Dakni to a *patois*; it is used by the Muslim ruling class in Hyderabad State, which has become an active patron of it.

The Hindus of the Western Hindi districts and elsewhere were familiar with the Delhi speech, and when they took to writing in it they maintained the natural leaning of the language for its native Hindi and Sanskrit words, and employed the native Indian Nagari script. In their hands this Hindu form became what may be called *Nāgarī-Hindī*, or *High-Hindī* (to give its familiar name in English), also during the second half of the 18th century. The old name *Hindī* or *Hindwī*, latterly only *Hindī*, came to be restricted to this Hindu form of the language. At the close of the 17th century the name *Hindōstānī* or *Hindūstānī*, i.e. the speech of Hindustan or the north Indian plains, as contrasted with *Daknī* of the Deccan, came to be applied to the Delhi speech; doubtless this name also first arose in the Deccan. It was quickly Indianized to *Hindusthānī*, substituting the Indian *sthān* 'place' for the Persian *astān* or *istān*, a cognate word with the same meaning. Yet another name for the Delhi speech made its appearance early in the 19th century, viz. *Khaṛī-bōlī* or 'the standing speech', soon after Urdu and High-Hindi literatures came into being. All other spoken and literary dialects of the Upper Gangetic plains became *Paṛī-bōlīs* or 'fallen speeches' *vis-à-vis* this Khari-boli. Outside of these two written styles High-Hindi and Urdu, Khari-boli or Hindustani (Hindusthani) has continued to be used as a spoken language by both Hindus and Muslims. But as it deals mainly with the simpler affairs of daily life, its words steer a middle course between too much Sanskritization by cultured Hindus and too much Persianization by cultured Muslims, leaning just a little more towards Persian words as the result of the influence of the Muslim courts and officialdom in its

evolution. At present, this last trait makes many Muslims of India and most Europeans think that by *Hindūstānī* we should mean *Persianized Urdū*; but many Indian nationalists now seek to use the word *Hindustānī* (*Hindusthānī*) to mean the Khari-boli basis of both, which is to help in bridging the ever-widening gulf between the two.[1]

Like almost all New Indo-Aryan speeches, Hindi or Hindustani is a *borrowing* speech, not so much a *building* one. Sanskrit is its natural source for borrowing, as much as Latin is for French and Italian. But the Muslims of foreign origin, with the *conquistador* spirit, had no knowledge of or use for Sanskrit, and Persian was for them the familiar Islamic speech, with its plethora of Arabic words and its Arabic script. Muslims of Indian origin also took up this ideal, particularly in the centres of Muslim power and culture, but they did so after some centuries of hesitation. It was not so easy to adopt a foreign orientation so quickly. A few Hindus connected with the Muslim courts also accepted (at first in their official life) this new tradition.

In this way, out of the same language grew two literary speeches, alien to each other in script and in higher vocabulary; and they started their rival careers as soon as they developed prose literatures, under English auspices in Calcutta from the very first decade of the 19th century, and began to be employed in schools and in public life. With the entry of those who spoke or used them into the field of politics, and with the ugly development of Hindu-Muslim communalism, High-Hindi and Urdu became symbols of

[1] The Indian term *Hindusthānī* is colloquially current among very many Hindus in the U.P., and in Rajputana, Central India, the Central Provinces and Bihar, although Hindi spelling in Nagari enjoins the Persian form *Hindūstānī*; and *Hindusthānī*, with *th* rather than *t*, is the only form current in Bengal, in Nepal, in Gujarat, in the Maratha country, and in the Dravidian south: and it implies a spoken language nearer High-Hindi than Urdu in its vocabulary.

this conflict. Each is going its own way; intense Persianization on the one hand, and almost equally intense Sanskritization on the other. In their more 'elegant' forms, one would be unintelligible to those who use the other. But while High-Hindi has generally retained a large number of naturalized Perso-Arabic words, Urdu usually does not show that liberal attitude towards native Hindi and Sanskrit.

The speakers of the Aryan languages who do not belong to the Western Hindi area, or have not learnt grammatical High-Hindi or Urdu, besides others (e.g. Austric and Dravidian speakers, Afghans, Europeans, Chinese, Tibetans, Burmese, etc.) when they employ Hindi (Hindustani) as a *lingua franca* or as a *palaver speech*, speak it in a simple form in which some of the knottier points of grammar are omitted (e.g. feminine gender of nouns, adjectives and verbs; plural by inflexion; and the concord of the transitive verb in the past with the object); and it is affected largely by local vocabularies and idioms. This form of simplified Hindustani has been called *Bazaar Hindī* or *Hindūstānī*, or *Basic Hindī*, or *Chaltū* or *Chālū* (i.e. current) or *Laghu* (i.e. simple) *Hindī*; and this Bazaar Hindi is the real inter-provincial speech of the masses. It is also becoming the home-language of certain groups in our polyglot towns, outside the Western Hindi area.

Communication-Speech and Culture-Language: English

The pre-eminence of Hindi (Hindustani) in its various forms is not the result of an accident, but it is due to the cultural and political importance of the area known in ancient times as the Midland (*Madhya-dēśa*), including present-day eastern Panjab and western U.P., from Old Indo-Aryan times. This place was the heart of Aryandom where the first synthesis of the pre-Aryan and Aryan cultures took place through Brahmanism. The speech of this area in ancient and medieval times, as Sanskrit, as Sauraseni Prakrit

and Pali (Pali belongs to this area and not to Magadha or Bihar), as Sauraseni Apabhransa, and as Braj-bhakha, was the natural communication-speech and culture-language for the whole of Aryan India and beyond. The centralized Mogul administration also helped to strengthen the speech of this area, first as Braj-bhakha and then as Hindustani (Hindi). Hindi, however, is not a culture-speech for Bengalis, Oriyas, Gujaratis, the people of the Maratha country or of the Dravidian lands; but it is a great communication-speech, particularly in its simplified Bazaar Hindi form. High-Hindi and Urdu are of course literary languages for Panjabis, Rajasthanis, Biharis and the U.P. people, and others. But for higher culture, Indians go on the one hand to Sanskrit or to Persian and Arabic, and on the other to English.

The place of English in present-day India is unique. It is the language of administration, and of higher education. For this, it is the most potent source of inspiration and influence for all Indian languages. It is the window through which we get air and light from the outside. It is the foreign language now most widely known—3½ millions out of 28 millions of literates (in a population of 338 millions) were literate in English in 1931: the number must have increased considerably in 1941, when we have over 47 million literates in 389 millions. Besides, another 319,000 consisting of British sojourners and residents, and Eurasians, are English-speakers at home. The importance of English is well known: spoken by nearly 200 millions as their mother-tongue, it is the administrative language for nearly 500 millions in the British Empire and some 140 millions under the United States of America: besides, it is studied as a culture language by millions in China, in Japan, and in other countries of the four continents. English is now the most important vehicle of world culture. It has become the second language with most of our intelligentsia, frequently

of greater importance to them for mental and spiritual pabulum than any other speech. It has fostered science and letters, and the struggle for political and economic freedom in India. In our own interest, we cannot abandon English. English must remain the most important language after the mother-tongue (or the literary language adopted in its place) in Indian education, for cultural reasons, even if the administrative necessity ceases.

Some Indians advocate the acceptance of English as the inter-provincial and national speech of India. But that will hardly be possible: a little over only 1% of the Indian people declared itself as literate in English, and both sentiment and practicability are against it. To try to make the masses not going in for higher studies English-speaking would be waste of time, energy and money, while it will be far easier for them to acquire Hindi (Hindustani) for inter-provincial purposes, as they pick it up now. English should be made compulsory not earlier than the high school stage, and it should be taught in such a way that it can lead easily to scientific and technical studies and research. For the ordinary boy or girl, a sound education through the mother-tongue (or the accepted literary speech) will help to develop the faculties better than wasting years over a difficult foreign tongue, access to which nevertheless should be available to all during the high school stage.

Need for a Pan-Indian 'National Language'

In my opinion, such a need really exists: to have an Indian language, over and above English, as the 'national language' of India, will not be a useless decoration, costing the people time and energy. We require an Indian speech, understood and usable by the largest number, as a symbol and expression of the unity of the Indian state. All state business of a pan-Indian character can be carried on in it without duplication,

when its knowledge has become much more widespread than now. Such a language will be very necessary to check the centrifugal forces which, with the setting up of autonomous language states, will certainly become strong and will jeopardize pan-Indian unity. Unless counterbalanced by a certain amount of very necessary centralization, which a pan-Indian language will help, there will be a strong tendency to disintegrate and disrupt the unity of India which is the result of its geography, its economy, its culture. Provincial Autonomy, or Pan-Indian Unity: which is more vital for the well-being of India as a whole? History has shown that centralized empires or states were the background for the greatest periods of India, in political power and in cultural achievement, as under the Mauryas and the Guptas, and under the Moguls. For this, the essential administrative and educational departments should be on a centralized, all-India basis: much along the lines of the present imperial or all-India services, with a far greater degree of inter-provincial posting of officers. One single army, one single system of higher civil service and police, one all-India system of education, and one final authority in the shape of an all-India parliament—these alone will be able to maintain and foster Indian unity. And here we have the need for an Indian language, which we must have for both utility and sentiment. Further, an Indian speech as the official *Lingua Indica* will help to enrich all the other Indian languages, if it keeps up its national character.

Such a language need not (and cannot in the first instance) be a culture-language. English or the simplified form of it, Basic English, or Esperanto (created in an exclusively West European atmosphere) will not be suitable for us in India.

As things stand, Hindi (Hindustani) has the greatest claim to be this national language. If it were the case of Hindu India only, then Sanskrit, as suggested by Dr F. W. Thomas of Oxford, might be employed once again, as it has

been for thirty centuries. A simplified Sanskrit would not be an impracticable thing, as I have seen Arya Samaj preachers from the Panjab speaking simple Sanskrit listened to by Bengali audiences in public squares and understood generally. But Muslim sentiment, and the feeling of many Hindus not attuned to the atmosphere of Sanskrit, would not subscribe to this. Nor can we think of any other modern Indian language—Bengali as the next important language included. Bengali habits of pronunciation, and the fact that Bengali has two styles, literary and colloquial, make it highly unsuitable for the rest of India. A rich literature is no great recommendation for a language to be a *lingua franca*; rather it is the energy of those who use it, and their power to expand and to control things. Its value in commerce is also a great factor. Moreover, Hindi (Hindustani) has already become the symbol of a great idea, the idea of Indian unity, more than Bengali or any other modern Indian speech. And it is largely the national speech of India—the *Lingua Indica—in esse*. Two Indians not knowing English will ten to one address each other in this, in a more or less pidgin form, perhaps, but still it will be Hindi. Talkies in it made in Calcutta and Bombay run for weeks in a hundred towns of India and are enjoyed by Marathas, Bengalis, Sindhis, Nepalis, Oriyas and Telugus and even Kannadigas and Tamilians, almost as much as by people who use High-Hindi and Urdu.

Limitations of Hindi (Hindustani)

Unfortunately, Hindi (Hindustani) suffers from the great handicap of being broken up into two mutually opposed literary languages differing in script and in higher vocabulary, and its grammar is somewhat complicated. High-Hindi and Urdu make it a house divided. The grammar is identical, and the common words are the same; but with different scripts, and attendant diversity of the learned words, a

most harassing reduplication is wasting the time, money, energy and temper of the people.

The crux is in the script. With the Persian script, the Muslim feels his Urdu is an 'Islamic language'; with the native Nagari, it becomes a Hindu speech to which he cannot give his allegiance. The Hindu will not give up his national alphabet. No compromise is possible between the two scripts, so fundamentally different are they from each other. The Congress in despair has declared for *Hindustani* (not *Hindi* or *Urdu*) as the National Language of India, which can be written in either script.

There must be a single script, if a single language is to stand. Since there is no immediate prospect of agreement in favour of either Persian or Nagari—though nationalism should be expected to decide for the national script—the Gordian knot may be cut by bringing in a third script, a neutral one, the *Latin* or *Roman*, to take the place of both: not only as a way out of the impasse, but also on its own merits.

Indian (Nagari), Perso-Arabic and Roman Scripts

The Perso-Arabic script, in which Urdu is written, is a very imperfect system of writing when used for a non-Arab language. Absence of proper indication of short vowels, paucity of necessary vowel letters, mere dots as the most important part of a number of consonant letters, and frequent ligatures of contracted letters—these are its great drawbacks. Arabic (and Persian) calligraphy in its various styles has no doubt a beauty of its own, but the script cannot be read fluently unless one knows the language well: *bnd* does duty for *band*, *bend*, *bond* and '*bund*', and *sld* for *sold*, *solid*, *salad*, *slid*, *sullied*, leaving the reader to find out the proper word from the context. It looks like shorthand writing—it is a quick hand, but sometimes very difficult to decipher. The dots and the curtailed forms of the letters are not good for the

eye. The alphabet is foreign to India, and the major community in India cannot be expected to feel very enthusiastic about it. Outside of Urdu, Sindhi and Kashmiri, Indian Muslims do not use it either for their mother-tongues. Panjab and U.P. Hindus have largely revived the use of the native Nagari during recent years. The Perso-Arabic script should certainly be in use among those Muslims who wish to retain it, but its imposition on the entire Indian body politic cannot be justified. We should note that Muslim Turkey has abandoned it for the Roman. Iran also may follow Turkey in this.

The Perso-Arabic script at a liberal computation cannot claim more than 30 millions, mostly in north-western and north-central India, but the Nagari, or Deva-nagari, the most widely used Indian script, is in use among 140 millions and more. High-Hindi and the various speeches under it, Marathi, and Nepali, are all written in it. The Gujarati script is but a modified cursive form of it. The 55 millions of Bengalis and Assamese, the 11 millions of Oriyas, and the 65 millions of South Indians using Telugu, Kannada, Tamil and Malayalam, and the Sikhs using Gurmukhi, all employ scripts which are but different forms of the Nagari, so to say; and the Nagari is the accepted all-India script for Sanskrit, the sacred language of 240 millions of Hindus (1931). The numbers using it, its origin as being derived from the prehistoric Indian script of Sindh and the Panjab of the 4th millennium B.C. through the Brahmi alphabet of 300 B.C., and its being the most scientific script in the world in the arrangement of its letters on a phonetic basis, are great points in its favour. It is a full alphabet, with letters for all the vowels and consonants of Indian languages. But it has its drawbacks. Strictly alphabetical in its conception, in its use it is syllabic: the unit in a written word is a whole syllable made up of a consonant or consonants combined with a vowel, and not a single sound. Vowels have

two forms, initial and post-consonantal. Ligatures abound, in which fragmentary forms of the component consonants feature: these take a good deal of time to master. Its 50 letters (16 vowels and 34 consonants) in all their combinations require at least 450 separate types in printing: the total number of ligatures is much greater. The shapes of the letters are complicated, and quick writing is not easy, although the script has a sculptural beauty.

The strictly alphabetical principle and application of the Roman script and the simple shapes of its letters are a great recommendation for it *vis-à-vis* the Nagari.[1] The letters are never curtailed, and vowels and consonants have equal footing. A combination of the scientific Indian arrangement with the Roman letters will give us an almost perfect alphabet. We must also remember that the Roman alphabet is used by the largest number of people in the world.[2]

[1] We have to take note of the Roman script in its original application in the strictly phonetic orthography of Latin and Italian, and not in the complex, irregular and unscientific spelling of modern English.

[2] Capped and dotted letters required to extend the Roman alphabet for Indian languages are a great drawback, and this can be removed by having a number of separate symbols to be added to a letter to give the required new letter by combination. This will enable the ordinary 26 letters required for English to do also for all Indian languages. Thus, for the retroflex *ṭ, ḍ, ṇ, ḷ, ṣ* we may have t', d', n', l', s'; for *ś, ñ* we may have s', n'; a:, i:, u:, with two dots for length, instead of *ā, ī, ū*; *n* for nasalization; etc. The letters, arranged on the scientific plan of the Nagari alphabet, will be given Indian names (i.e. k, g, h will be named as *ka, ga, ha* and not *kav, jee, aitch*; kh will be read in Hindi as *ka-har-ha kha*, etc.). I have discussed the matter elsewhere in detail (in 'A Roman Alphabet for India', *Calcutta University Journal for the Department of Letters*, 1935, and in *Indo-Aryan and Hindi*, Gujarat Vernacular Society, Ahmedabad, 1942). With the above devices, and eschewing capitals (using an asterisk before proper names), some 40–50 different letters

A voluntary acceptance of this Indianized Roman script need not hurt our national susceptibilities. It would be just like the metric system, the European clock, the Christian era, and other matters of convenience. The spirit of the Indian script—its scientific arrangement and its names for the letters—will be there: only we substitute letters with simpler shapes, and with the widest currency in the world. The advantages in spreading literacy, and in printing, and in the resolution of the script controversy, are matters to be considered. The solution proposed is well worth trying.

Roman Urdu is the second official language in the Indian army. The All India Radio in its English programmes is using Roman script for all Indian languages.

For the present, the Roman script may be adopted for Hindi (Hindustani), in a simplified grammar if possible, as used in inter-provincial contexts. It will make the language very easy to learn, particularly among the southerners. High-Hindi and Urdu will continue to be written in Nagari and Perso-Arabic as now, as provincial or communal speeches.

But sentiment against a fresh foreign alphabet may be too strong—at least for some time. Failing the Roman script, the next best solution for a pan-Indian Hindustani would be the Nagari as the most widely used script of India.

Higher Vocabulary: Sanskrit, or Perso-Arabic?

As has been said before, most Indian languages are now *borrowing* rather than *building* languages, and they fall into two groups according to their feeder speeches: (i) borrowers from Sanskrit—High-Hindi, Bengali, Oriya, Assamese, Marathi, Gujarati, Nepali, Panjabi (Gurmukhi), and Rajasthani, Maithili and the rest; and the Dravidian

and types will serve all Indian languages in writing and printing; and the types will be available in all presses. With italic forms added, the total number of types will not exceed 100.

speeches, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil (the last keeps to its original Dravidian roots and words to a greater extent than the rest, but still Sanskrit is indispensable for it); (ii) borrowers from Persian (including Arabic)—Urdu, Sindhi, Kashmiri; and Pashto and Balochi.

Although High-Hindi uses freely all naturalized Perso-Arabic words, Urdu generally behaves as if Sanskrit, its own grandmother or grand-aunt, and one of the three great languages of the ancient world with original literatures (Sanskrit, Greek and Chinese), did not exist in India. It would be difficult to persuade the entire Indian people to accept a language which ignores Sanskrit and which goes to Persia and Arabia for its words of higher culture.

The following bases of a compromise for High-Hindi and Urdu should meet with the approval of all: (i) Build necessary words with native Hindi (Hindustani) elements as far as practicable; (ii) Keep all naturalized foreign words of a general or special import—several thousands of them—even when Sanskrit or native Hindi equivalents occur, words which are found in the earlier writers claimed by High-Hindi, e.g. Kabir, and in the best writers of modern High-Hindi who also know Urdu, e.g. Prem Chand; (iii) Do not borrow unnecessarily from any source.

For necessary borrowing, Nagari Hindi and Persianized Urdu must for the present go their own ways, until better sense prevails. For the proposed National Hindi (Hindustani) for the whole of India, the following suggestions are offered: (i) Pan-Indian Hindustani is not an 'Islamic speech' like Urdu: native Hindi elements failing, we should not go to a foreign country for words which can be supplied by Sanskrit; (ii) Names of new *objects* and *processes* may be European and international; for *ideas*, we should have our own words; (iii) The door should be kept open for all Arabic and Persian words relating specifically to Islamic religion and culture.

The growing tide of nationalism is making the Turks get rid of unnecessary Arabic and Persian words from their language, and the Persians (Iranis) are similarly reviving native Aryan words in place of the alien Arabic. Indian Muslims should revise their attitude towards pure Hindi and Sanskrit words, especially when the religious vocabulary of Islam remains untouched. Persianized Urdu would be a real hardship for nearly four-fifths of India; only the people of Sindh, of the Panjab and Kashmir, and of western U.P. will feel at home in it—and even most Hindus and a good many Muslims there will prefer the racier native vocables, as much as the earlier Muslim poets of Hindi and Dakni did.

The principle of *laisser-faire*, after the Roman script has been adopted, should finally settle the question of vocabulary. A single script will make the language a single speech addressed to all the communities, and the widest intelligibility will decide the right course.

Simplification of Hindi (Khari-boli) Grammar

Bazaar Hindustani (p. 20), the real inter-provincial speech of the masses, has so simplified the grammar of the language that it can be written on a postcard. Certain things like the grammatical gender of nouns, adjectives and verbs, so characteristic of Hindustani, are unknown to a good many languages of modern India, and speakers of these languages, as well as even those of languages retaining this grammatical gender (e.g. Marathi, Gujarati, Rajasthani, Sindhi, Hindki, Panjabi, Nepali) find Hindustani habits in these matters irksome. Grammatical gender is eschewed; and the plural forms are similarly not used in Bazaar Hindustani. Then, all verbs in the present and future, and the intransitive verb in the past, refer to the subject, taking gender and number affixes corresponding to it; but the transitive verb in the past has concord with the object in the matter of gender and

number affixes, the subject being put in the agentive case. All this is simplified exceedingly in Bazaar Hindi. Thus, *bhāt* 'rice' is masculine and *dāl* 'lentils' is feminine in Khari-boli: *bhāt acchā banā hai* = 'the rice is well cooked', but *dāl acchī banī hai*. Bazaar Hindustani would say, *bhāt, dāl acchā banā hai*. For so many forms, *main jāūṅgā* (fem. *jāūṅgī*) 'I shall go', *ham jāeṅgē* (fem. *jāeṅgī*) 'we shall go', 2nd person *tū jāegā* (*jāegī*), *tum jāogē* (*jāogī*), respectful *āp* or *āp-lōg jāeṅgē* (*jāeṅgī*), 3rd person *wuh jāegā* (*jāegī*), *wē jāeṅgē* (*jāeṅgī*), Bazaar Hindi has one form only—(*ham*, *ham-lōg*, 2nd person *tum*, *tum-lōg*, *āp*, *āp-lōg*, 3rd person *wo*, *wo-lōg*) *jāegā;* so for *āyā*, *āye*, *āyī*, *āyīn* 'came', Bazaar Hindi uses a single form *āyā*. For *main-nē bhāt khāyā* 'me-by rice he-was-eaten = I ate rice', and *main-nē rōṭī khāī* 'me-by bread she-was-eaten = I ate bread', we have simply *ham bhāt khāyā*, *ham rōṭī khāyā* 'I ate rice, I ate bread'.

By accepting this kind of Hindi with simplified grammar, we give the imprimatur of authority to what is already very largely the practice. Outside of the Western Hindi area, people will be glad to have this simplified Hindi recognized. A body of experts from different parts of India should meet and fix the minimum of grammar. Those who speak correct Hindustani need not feel alarmed that their language will go to ruin. This simplified Bazaar Hindustani will be a 'concession language', the speakers of which will not have occasion to spoil the well of Khari-boli undefiled as they are doing now everywhere outside of the Western Hindi area. The experiment is well worth making, by declaring this simplified Hindi or Hindustani valid in all transactions of an inter-provincial pan-Indian nature.

Conclusion

The proposed solution for the main linguistic problem of India is therefore this: the 'national language' of India should be a simplified Hindi or Hindustani, written in a modified Roman alphabet arranged like the Nagari alphabet, retaining all naturalized Persian and Arabic words and admitting fresh vocables from those sources in specific Islamic contexts, but with a frank affiliation to Sanskrit for necessary words which cannot be created out of native Hindi elements or conveniently borrowed from English. Romanization appears to be the vital point in the solution of the problem.

This simplified Roman Hindi or Hindustani is to be made an optional subject of study in schools and colleges, and for Government officials, with all proper encouragement; it should not be made compulsory in educational institutions, as in that case it will be felt as a burden and a handicap, which would turn enthusiasm to hostility. If this additional language is imposed upon non-Hindustani areas, another Indian literary language should similarly be made obligatory in the Hindustani area.

The problem of language in India, after all, is not of first-line importance. Largely with Bazaar Hindustani, and to a lesser extent with High-Hindi and Urdu, three forms of the same single Protean speech, and with English, (and, to a limited extent, with Sanskrit) our all-India affairs are going on without any hold-up. Some 15 (or even 20 —see, for example, p. 13) great literary languages for the whole of India with its 400 millions, with a pan-Indian inter-provincial speech in Hindi (Hindustani)—and English as a great culture-language—this is not a position to despair at; considering also that all these languages give but provincial expressions of a great culture, and, whatever their origin, reveal a pan-Indian character and quality.

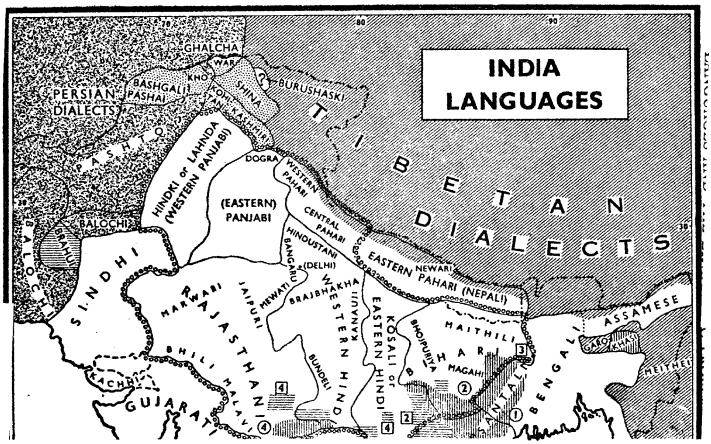
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LANGUAGES AND THE LINGUISTIC PROBLEM

SUNITI
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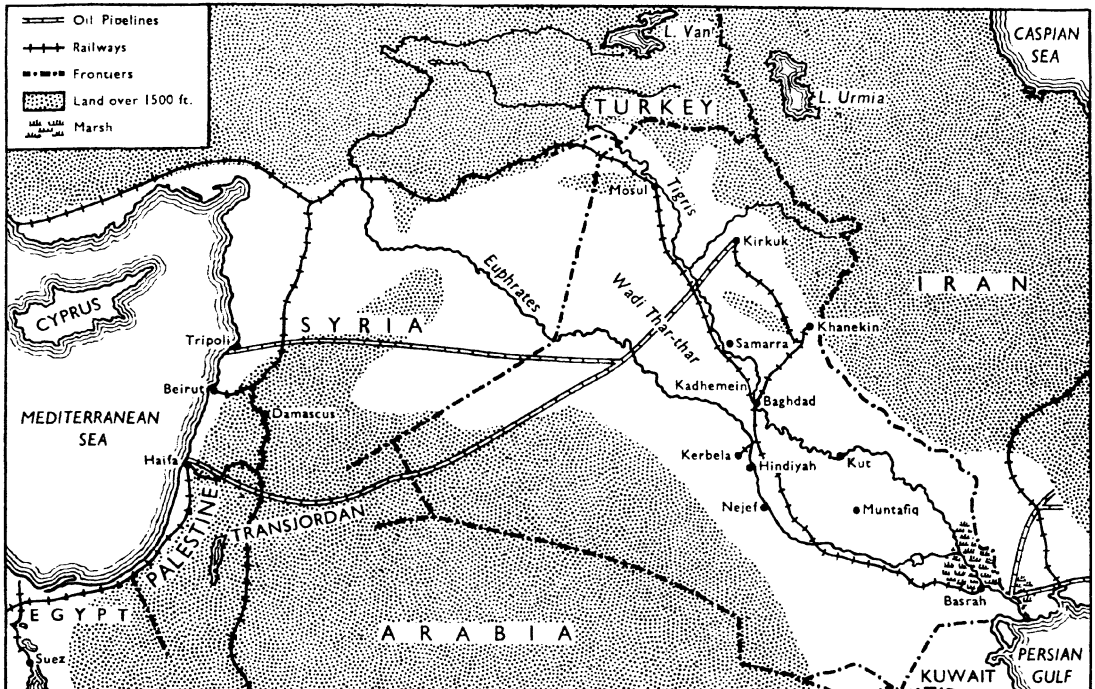
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IRAQ

BY

SETON LLOYD



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IRAQ has an area of 150,000 square miles and a population of 3,000,000. It is now less thickly populated than Sind, with which it was linked in the remote past by the contemporary and related civilizations of the Indus valley and Sumer. The modern State is a child of the First World War, and, in the words of one of its own historians, 'owes its existence largely to the efforts and devotion of its British officials'. Iraq attained independence and membership of the League of Nations in 1932, and declared war upon the Axis in January of this year. Many of its problems—social, agricultural, industrial and educational—are similar to those we face in India, and in this pamphlet the author tells us something of the way in which they are being attacked. The Iraqis are endeavouring to see their future in the light of post-war planning on a world-scale, suggested by Mr Churchill's phrase 'Council of Asia'.

Seton Lloyd, F.S.A., has visited all parts of the country and has had ample opportunities of seeing the working of the new State. From 1929–39 he was engaged in directing archaeological research in various parts of the country, and since 1939 has been British Adviser to the Iraq Government Directorate of Antiquities. He is the author of *Ruined Cities of Iraq* (1942) and *Twin Rivers*, a history of Iraq now in the press.

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IRAQ

Overland Route

In 326 B.C. a Greek named Nearchus sailed from the Indus to the Euphrates. His voyage, which owed its conception to the genius of Alexander, has been described as 'the first event of general importance to mankind in the history of navigation'. Its significance consisted in the fact that it opened a communication between Europe and the most distant countries of Asia. It was the source and origin of the Portuguese exploration of the Indian Ocean in the fifteenth century, and so the indirect cause of British establishment in India. Furthermore, it proved once and for all the importance of the Persian Gulf in the great world-commercial system of the future.

For over a century Great Britain has been the predominant power in the Persian Gulf — creating maritime facilities, policing its waters, suppressing piracy and slavery, and controlling traffic in arms. In 1903 Lord Lansdowne announced in the House of Lords that 'we should regard the establishment of a naval base or a fortified port on the Persian Gulf by any other Power as a very grave menace to British interests, and that we should certainly resist it with all the means at our disposal'. This policy still holds good, and its justification is obvious. There are two long extensions of the Indian Ocean into the heart of the Middle East—the Red Sea ending at Suez, and the Persian Gulf at Basrah. The railways and rivers of Iraq are the overland extension of the Gulf towards the Mediterranean and Europe.

The position of Mesopotamia, as it was then called, in the scheme of British imperial communications first became clear in the middle of the last century. An agency of the East India Company was established at Basrah, and then came the great Lynch Chesney experiment with steamers on

the Euphrates, which were to be linked by a short railway to the Syrian coast. This scheme was officially dropped in deference to the French and the success of their plans for the Suez Canal. But it did not prevent the formation in 1861 of a Euphrates and Tigris Steam Navigation Company, the forerunner of Iraq's present extensive Inland Water Transport Board. A modest railway was built in the early years of the present century to supplement river transport, and by 1914 the 'Berlin-to-Baghdad' line, with its implications of rival interests, had reached the frontier of the Mosul *vilayet*. Long before it was completed, motor traffic had made possible an efficient, direct desert route from Damascus to Baghdad. Finally came air-routes to the Far East. A day and a night from Croydon, and a day from Karachi, the Baghdad airport began to be familiarly referred to as the 'Clapham Junction of the air'.

Here meanwhile, in what has been rightly called the Cradle of Civilization, and wrongly the Cradle of Mankind, a remarkable thing had occurred. Following the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, its Mesopotamian provinces had been made the subject of a unique experiment in statecraft, setting an 'all-time' precedent for the treatment of conquered territories and the emancipation of backward people. In England in 1910 Lord Cromer had remarked that the Englishman as an imperialist is always striving to attain two ideals, which are apt to be mutually destructive — the ideal of good government, which connotes the continuance of his supremacy, and the ideal of self-government, which connotes the whole or partial abdication of his supreme position. In the case of Mesopotamia, this same conflict had occurred, and partly as a result of extraneous influences, self-government had won. Sprawled most uncompromisingly across the highway to India and Britain's new oil-fields, there was now a half-

fledged and sometimes intractable independent State called Iraq, with a noticeable tendency to be unimpressed, if not irritated, by the two treaty air-bases still maintained by Britain in her territory.

It is the significant nature of this country, and its resources, in relation to the character of its people, which we now propose examining.

The Country

There is little or no historical precedent for the frontiers of the Iraqi State as eventually fixed by the Allied Nations during the years immediately following the First World War. Except for a small portion of the Iranian border, where it follows the line of demarcation between plain and mountain, any geographical expedients there may have been are at first glance equally obscure. The country is in fact composed of at least four distinct regions whose geophysical nature is as diverse as the ethnic character of the people who inhabit them.

In the south there is the alluvial plain, reclaimed by the rivers themselves from the headwaters of the Persian Gulf. In the north are the undulating pasture and ploughlands of the old Turkish *vilayet* of Mosul. These are the main divisions, but included within the modern State there is also a large slice of the Syrian Desert and approximately one-third of mountainous Kurdistan.

The Iraqi national flag embodies two white stars symbolizing the *rafidhain* or twin rivers of Mesopotamia. Each has seven points to represent the fourteen *liwas* or administrative districts into which the country is divided. Yet the *liwas* also have little relation to the divisions created by nature. One may, therefore, infer that these arbitrary subdivisions of the State, as well as its modern frontiers, have a background in political exigency. But since considerations such as these can in no way alter the essential character of

the land, its several regions must be differentiated on some more authentic basis.

The southern alluvial plain, then, is exactly delimited by the ancient shore-line of the Gulf before the sixth millennium B.C. To the north-east this follows the foothills of the Persian mountains up from the sea, turns south-west across the old river estuaries at Samarra and Hit, and returns parallel to and west of the Euphrates. Enclosed within this boundary is an expanse of entirely flat and stoneless river-born soil, potentially very fertile indeed but requiring artificial irrigation to compensate for climatic shortcomings. Through this area the two rivers have meandered for seven millennia, changing their courses continually, often remaining split into several branches, but latterly always reuniting above the modern city of Basrah to complete their course in a single great channel called the Shatt-al-Arab. Above Basrah also is the marshland of the Muntafiq *liwa*, where the drying-out process is still incomplete. Here, in a strangely separate world of shallow-draft boats and reed-buildings, the Marsh-Arabs live on the produce of their mud-banks and swampy islands. Elsewhere, the rivers, being in their delta, flow at a level a few feet higher than the rest of the plain, which is consequently always in danger of flood, particularly in the springtime, when the snow melts on the mountains of Kurdistan and Anatolia.

Depending for its cultivation on artificial irrigation, the entire plain is threaded and crisscrossed with water-channels and the remains of ancient canals, testifying to sixty centuries of human industry and ingenuity. It is also flecked with innumerable mounds, each representing the accumulated remains of some human settlement, now abandoned.

The greater part of northern Iraq may be called upland country. It is undulating, gravel steppe and rich ploughland with some stone. Here the rainfall of an average year is

sufficient for it to yield a single crop without irrigation, wherever the soil is suitable, so that only gardens and plantations are artificially watered. The country is normally bare, but a wet spring covers it with an ephemeral garment of grass and flowers, which withers in May. Between the two rivers, in the centre, is a wedge of uncultivable gypsum desert known as Al-Jazirah, itself divided by a strange deserted *wadi*, called Thar-thar, which runs due north and south and ends in a salt lake. After the uplands come the high lands of Kurdistan, forming a north-eastern crescent of mountain country with its lower point resting approximately on Khanaqin and its upper on the Tigris at Faish Khabur. Here are stone-built villages shelved into the side of the hills, with tall silver poplars, and terraced cultivation including vineyards and tobacco. Large areas of mountain-side are covered with scrub-oak, or less often conifers, and there is much game below the snow-line in winter.

Lastly, as we have said, included in the frontiers of northern Iraq is a portion of the Syrian Desert, almost equal in area to the remaining half of the State. This is uncultivable and almost waterless, inhabited only by Bedouin tribes with their flocks and camels.

Economic Resources

Contrary to the impression which the land gives to a casual visitor, Iraq is a rich country and potentially richer. Hand-to-mouth living among the peasants, and their methods of barter, make it difficult to assess the exact yield of the principal crops in an average year, but a study of the export figures in peacetime gives a fair impression of Iraq's part in world production. The following are the figures for the principal exports in 1937, a prosperous trading year:

	Tons		*Tons*
Wheat	... 113,161	Wool	... 7,784
Barley	... 286,877	Hides	... 2,697
Dates	... 191,017		

In the same year Iraq also exported almost half a million live animals of various sorts, by far the largest number of which were sheep. Combined with more than 4,000,000 tons of oil a year and various other, mainly agricultural, commodities, this gave Iraq an annual export trade worth £5,500,000—a considerable figure for so young and backward a country.

For it must be admitted that Iraq is backward by modern standards of production—backward in the sense that the potential riches of the country could be exploited to give a much greater yield.

With improved agricultural methods, extended irrigation, more capital, and better communications, Iraq would be able to support a population many times its present size. Her needs are common to every Middle Eastern country in the process of modernization, but in Iraq one other important factor has hampered her development, and that is the uncertainty which she suffered during the years before the present war owing to the instability of the grain market. When peace returns, nothing would do more to give her a good start in world markets than a guaranteed price for her grains.

Economically the war has affected Iraq considerably, although rather at second-hand. To begin with it has held up the construction of factories, such as cement and sugar, and certain major irrigation schemes, such as the proposed Geli Bekhme dam on the Greater Zab. But more important has been the effect of the presence of Allied armies in Iraq.

Through these armies employment has been given to many thousands of labourers: public works have been constructed and a general stimulus given to industry of all kinds. All this has not been an unmixed blessing. The note issue has risen from a pre-war figure of I.D. 4,500,000[1] to about I.D. 25,000,000 (March, 1943), and this enormous increase in

[1] The Iraqi Dinar is worth £1 sterling, or Rs. 13–5–4.

the amount of money circulating in the country, combined with an inevitable end to the import of all except essential goods, has caused an economic condition which bears a close resemblance to inflation. It is not true inflation, however, inasmuch as the Government's credit is sound, and the Dinar is still tied to Sterling. In fact, the main result so far of the war has been to build up a considerable credit in Iraq, which could be used when the war is over for financing many of the public works schemes of which Iraq has long stood in need. For the first time in her brief history Iraq has become a creditor nation. This is, or should be, her hope for after the war.

Meanwhile, as long as the war lasts it will be difficult for Iraq to put this new accumulation of wealth to the best use. What is needed here, as in every other country under war conditions, is economic control, and voluntary or compulsory saving. Both these ideas are new to the country, although the hardships caused by their absence have fostered a popular demand for them to be introduced. Until Iraq's entry into the war (January, 1943) the tendency had been for prices to rise with alarming rapidity, and for those who could to speculate in land and commodities, taking full advantage of a rising market. But with Iraq's adherence to the United Nations' declaration, and her own declaration of war against the Axis, the Iraqi people have come increasingly to realize what is implied by her undertaking to employ 'full resources—military or economic' against the enemy. In Iraq's case, full economic co-operation is of pre-eminent importance. As we have seen, Iraq before the war was a great exporter of cereals, a commodity of which there is a shortage in all the neighbouring countries. It has become the declared policy of the present Prime Minister that Iraq should return as far as possible to her pre-war status as a granary, and, if he succeeds, it will be difficult to exaggerate the importance of this contribution to Allied war effort.

IRAQ

Oil

One of the more important effects on Iraq of the Allied victory in the First World War was the development of the country's oil resources. Before that war competition between the powers to secure oil rights in Mesopotamia had probably delayed the development of the deposits, but one of the prizes of the Allied victory was certainly a concession granted in 1925 to what is now the Iraq Petroleum Company. This Company is an international consortium representative of the main Allied oil interests. The concession gave to the Company the right to select after examination certain areas for the Company's exclusive exploitation and in return required the Company to build a pipeline to the Mediterranean, to pay royalties and to market petroleum products in Iraq at prices slightly below world prices. After the selection of the Company's exclusive areas the Iraq Government had the right to offer non-selected areas to other concessionaires. The policy has been successful, in that the original Company discovered oil in more than adequate quantities (1927), built a pipeline, with two branches and a total capacity of four million tons, to the Mediterranean ports of Haifa and Tripoli, and carried out its obligations of making cheap oil available to Iraq itself. Other companies have taken over certain areas not selected by the original Company and in general the principles of concessionary development are in full swing. Iraq exports 4,000,000 tons of oil a year through the Mediterranean pipeline and consumes a further 200,000 tons at specially cheap rates within the country itself—a large fraction of this being on oil used for irrigation.

The first big step in the development of Iraq's oil has been completed. The second phase will undoubtedly begin after the war and it is likely to be considerably more complex. It has been established beyond all doubt that

both Iraq and Iran possess oil deposits with a productive capacity, even on a conservative basis, enormously in excess of the present output. In addition, the existence of oil deposits has been proved at various points on the Persian Gulf. Iraq is, in fact, the centre of an oil-bearing zone which has only just started to be tapped. A limited quantity of this oil goes to markets served by sea through the Persian Gulf, and a more limited quantity goes by pipeline to the Mediterranean. The world demand for oil after the war is likely to increase considerably. How much of the extra demand is to be met from Iraqi sources? What balance will be struck in meeting this extra demand by other oil-bearing countries of the Middle East? Will the evident possibility of one oil-supplying country being played off against another lead to some kind of self-protective Middle Eastern oil confederation? Will those Middle Eastern countries not fortunate enough to possess oil deposits demand a share in Middle Eastern oils on the broad bases of planned economy and the Atlantic Charter? These are the main issues affecting Iraq and the Middle East in terms of world oil development. The domestic issue, apart from oil royalties, is also of great importance to Iraq. A beginning has already been made in liberating cheap oil supplies for the country's own consumption. This will undoubtedly be regarded as a beginning only. Iraq expects to see industrial development take place, which inevitably posits cheap fuel, and there can be no doubt the country will apply itself to obtaining even cheaper supplies of fuel on which to base manufacturing industries.

Irrigation and Agriculture

Iraq's greatest national hero should be the man who first thought of digging a ditch to bring water from the river to a distant field. For a country with summer shade temperatures of 110° to 130° F. and no rain for eight months in the

year, the distribution of water to both crops and human beings is its most vital function. In Mesopotamia, the engineering side of irrigation by trench and canal had already been brought to a fine art in Babylonian times, and the ruins of ancient waterways confirm the testimony of ancient writers that Iraq was once one of the great granaries of the world. There is no doubt whatever that up till the thirteenth century A.D. an immensely greater area of the land was under cultivation than at present, and the obsolete irrigation system can still easily be traced. In the first place the Euphrates, as at the present day, then flowed at a slightly higher level than the Tigris. This permitted irrigation from the one, and drainage into the other, so that a succession of almost parallel canals ran diagonally between the two rivers. Other great canals were diverted from the Tigris by a barrage in its prehistoric estuary, to irrigate great tracts of fertile country on either side, and another artificial barrier again split it into two streams in the south.

Today each river has a modern barrage serving a similar purpose—the Tigris at Kut and the Euphrates at Hindiyah—but both are situated low down towards the delta and command a greatly reduced area of cultivation. Irrigation in the immediate vicinity of the rivers has admittedly been improved by substituting modern oil-engine pumps for the primitive 'lift', but there is still a great need for a reservoir on one of the upper tributaries of the Tigris to prevent useless flooding in the spring and to release extra water in the dry season.

Except for the date-gardens on the Shatt-al-Arab and the fruit and vegetable gardens outside the large towns, Iraq's cultivation system is 'extensive', which means that a light amount of work is put into a large area. When a careless regime and inadequate drainage produce salting, the farmer merely transfers his cultivation to new ground. The method in general is uneconomic for this reason. Wheat and barley

are grown in winter, and such crops as rice, maize, sorghum and sesame in the summer. Cotton could play a large part in the future development of Iraq's agriculture, as American upland types have been found to give a profitable yield, and there are already several ginneries. Generally speaking, annual rather than perennial crops are suited to Iraq's wide climate.

Land Tenure

In the north of the country small-holdings are fairly common, but in the south the proprietorship of cultivation is almost exclusively divided between townsmen, pump-owners and tribal sheikhs.

The system of actual land-tenure is complicated. The Ottoman Government considered that any land not belonging to individual holders was the property of the State. The Turkish reformer, Midhat Pasha, was the first to initiate a definite land policy, which consisted of selling by auction, on easy terms, the tenancy-rights of the State lands to all claimants. At the same time, freehold titles, which he made annually renewable, were allowed to lapse by those who considered themselves authentic owners. The result, when the Turks left and almost all documents of ownership were destroyed, was a state of chaos greatly increased by the prescriptive and customary rights which varied from district to district. The whole affair is only now being elucidated by an efficient Government campaign of land-settlement, profiting from a cadastral survey.

In the case of the State-owned land then, the tenant-proprietors are usually tribal sheikhs. The land is actually farmed by the tribal members—peasant-labourers who receive no specific wages, but get their income by the share system. Here is some fairly up-to-date information about the sheikh's relations with his *fellahin*, and with the Government.[1]

[1] Fadhl Jamali, *The New Iraq* (1934).

I. If the land is State-land with the title given to the Sheikh and if the Sheikh himself pays for the seed, the produce is divided into three parts; one-third goes to the Government, one-third to the Sheikh and one-third to the tribal member.

II. If the Sheikh does not pay for the seed, his share is one-sixth and the remainder belongs to the tribesman after taking away the Government duty of one-third.

III. If the land title is in the name of the tribe as a whole, but registered in the Sheikh's name, the Sheikh gets ten per cent and the remainder belongs to the former, after paying the duty to the Government.

IV. If the land is owned by the Sheikh, the Government gets one-fifth of the produce and the remainder is divided equally between the landowner and the tribal member.

In addition to having to place a deposit in cash with the sheikh, the *fellah* must make minor contributions in kind to the sheikh's coffee-man, his water-distributor, his *mullah* and his guest-house. So it is not difficult to see who, in the end, gets the worst of the deal, even if the sheikh is honest. In fact, the *fellahin*, whose family incomes often do not exceed ten pounds a year, treat the obvious disparity of wealth with the unquestioning resignation which is bred of long feudal tradition, but the system does result in their contributing the bare minimum of labour required of them. Any plan for extended cultivation in the south of Iraq would necessitate giving the peasants the stimulus of a fair interest in the results of their work, as well as other improved amenities.

The People and their History

More than two of Iraq's three millions of population are said to be Moslem Arabs, though this can only be a formal classification for statistical convenience. In order to be in any sense related to scientific truth, one's view of the Iraqi people must, in fact, be against a background of their long history.

IRAQ

Traces of the first settlers in Iraq, in the sixth millennium B.C., are naturally found in the northern uplands only, since the head of the Persian Gulf had at that time not yet receded. When the southern plain did eventually begin to dry out, new settlers came in three waves—the first and third from the Iranian highlands to the east, the second from northern Anatolia. By about 3000 B.C., when written history begins, these indeterminate immigrants had fused themselves into a homogeneous national entity with clearly defined Japhetite, or at least non-Semitic, character. They called themselves Sumerians, and by the middle of the third millennium had laid the foundations of the world-civilization. The next comers were Semitic Akkadians, whose approach was probably through the western desert from Syria. These superimposed themselves on the Sumerians, absorbing and improving their culture (which now had a counterpart in the Indus valley). Out of the Sumero-Akkadian combination grew largely Semitic Babylon, modified in the second millennium by the influx, first of Indo-Iranian Kassites and then of Armenoid Hittites and Hurrians. Finally, flowering from a small upland city-state, Semitic Assyria dominated the whole riverland, and for a time loosely controlled most of the Middle East. When Nineveh fell in the seventh century B.C. and Babylon for the last time in the sixth, the independence of Mesopotamian states was temporarily ended, and a long period of foreign domination began.

During the next thousand years the power of three various Persian dynasties extended westwards over Iraq. Between the first and the second of these was a strange interlude, when the young Macedonian with his Greek army passed magnificently across the land, destroying the last Achaemenian king; and returned later, fresh from the conquest of North India, adding his quota of Europeans and conscripts from

Central Asia to the already confused heredity of Mesopotamia. After him Parthians and Sassanians ruled Seleucia-Ctesiphon, warring with Imperial Rome. Only the Syrian Desert separated East and West.

All this was changed in the seventh century by an unexpected event. The human reservoir of Arabia once more overflowed. This time a great Arab leader gave impetus to the initial movement, and a religious ideology cohesion to its outcome. North-west and north-east the armies of Islam marched to their first conquests, and the waning might of Byzantium and Persia crumbled before them. Apt and ready to assimilate such knowledge as they had lacked in their native desert, the Arabs settled in Syria, to breathe on the dying embers of classical learning. A line of Omayyad Caliphs made Damascus the centre of the fast expanding Moslem world. Over Iraq another wave passed into Persia and beyond. They returned wearing a new garment, the mantle of the Sassanians, and prepared to dispute the authority of Damascus. So the torch passed eastwards to the Abbasids, and Baghdad became the capital city of an empire which stretched from Spain to China. Furthermore, intent upon supplementing their own meagre heritage of wisdom, in Baghdad also the Arabs intensified their industry and research, knitting up the threads of human accomplishment in the past, and adapting them to a culture of their own, destined to play no mean part in the evolution of the present-day civilization. For five hundred years all this activity had its focus almost by chance in Mesopotamia, and it was during this period that the complicated breed of Mesopotamian people received its first admixture of racially pure Arab blood. From this time onwards Iraq is historically considered not only a Moslem but an Arab country.

The thirteenth century was a turning-point in the fortunes of Arab Iraq. Mongol invasions from Central Asia put an

end to the Abbasid dynasty and the Arab Empire alike, and the work of despoiling the country was completed by Turcomans and Tartars. Iraq never recovered. Six hundred years of poverty, maladministration and general insecurity brought the Iraqi people into the twentieth century as backward and intransigent as they left the thirteenth. A perpetual bone of contention between Turkish Sultans and Persian Shahs, each exploiting the internal religious rift between Shiah and Sunni Moslems, the country had changed hands many times and lost much of its self-respect in the process. It now seemed doomed indefinitely to remain a shabby and neglected outpost of the Ottoman Empire.

Arabs

Many of the vicissitudes through which their country has at various times passed are reflected in one or other section of the modern Iraqi people. The tribal system, to which almost the whole population outside the cities is subject, may be considered a heritage from Arabia. Apart from the Marsh tribes in the south, tending their buffaloes from canoes, there are Bedouin tribes, nomadic pastors of camels, sheep and horses; there are cultivator tribes near the rivers, and semi-settled, semi-nomadic tribes, whose behaviour varies with the climate. Every stage in tribal development from the desert nomad to the riverain cultivator can be observed, and it is interesting to note how few of his tribal characteristics the *fellah* has lost in his transition from the desert to the town. In the country the administration of justice is largely on the lines of tribal customs, and there are Government regulations for disposing of tribal criminal and civil disputes on this basis.

It would be a fallacy, however, to imagine that all the cultivators of southern Iraq are provided by the gradual settlement of nomadic Arabs. Any anthropologist who has

watched a brachycephalic Mesopotamian *fellah* patiently trenching his field with the identical spade which appears in Assyrian reliefs, or carrying home on his shoulder the elementary wooden plough of Sumerian drawings, must realize that this Iraqi at least has his roots in the pre-Arab past of the country.

In the cities the racial blending is more subtle and complicated, and even varies perceptibly between the two principal Moslem sects. An original controversy over the authenticity of the Caliph, or successor of the Prophet, later becoming identified with the temporal rivalry between Damascus and Baghdad, created these sects in the early generations of Islam, and the murder at Kerbela of Hussain, son of Ali and grandson of the Prophet, split Moslems into two bitterly opposed factions. Generally speaking the affinities of the Shiah Arabs are with the East, so that it is to their shrines at Kerbela, Nejef, Kadhemein and Samarra that some thousands of Indians, as well as Afghans and Persians, make their annual pilgrimage or bring their dead to be buried. But in other towns also the twelve-hundred-year-old conflict is not yet extinct and shows itself sometimes in local politics.

Christians

There are Christian communities in all the principal towns of Iraq, but their villages fall thickest in the Mosul district. There are four principal local subdivisions of the Christian Church. The two primary sects are the Nestorians (who have the purely political denomination—'Assyrians') and the Jacobites. The others are the 'Uniate' branches of these two, respectively known as the Chaldean and Syrian Catholics. Christianity reached northern Syria and Iraq in the very early years after the death of Christ. By the fourth century, when Constantine made it the state religion of the Roman Empire, there was a powerful church established in

Antioch, and the missionary work of St Thaddaeus had spread its influence throughout Mesopotamia. A famous heresy split the Antioch church in two, and Sassanian persecution scattered the Nestorians eastwards. Gibbon refers to the remarkable role played by the Mosul church in evangelizing India, and Nestorian missionizing reached its climax in the time of the semi-fabulous Prester John, whose temporal power carried Christianity eastwards to China, while his fame spread to the courts of Europe. Religious apathy characterized the Mongols' treatment of Christians, but the Tartars were less tolerant. Repeated massacres eventually confined the Nestorians once more to a group of villages south of Van, and the Chaldeans, who had now separated themselves, to the Mosul district. In 1917 the fortunes of war brought the Nestorian Assyrians back to Iraq. Today Christians hold many responsible positions in the Iraq Government and there has been one Christian Cabinet Minister.

Kurds

The Kurds have been variously identified, by those seeking their forebears in the three millennia before Christ, with the Gutians, Kassites and Medes. Historically, they are for the first time easily recognizable in the *Karduchi* whom Xenophon found already established in the Hakkiari district of Anti-Taurus. By the Middle Ages they had pushed a good deal further west into northern Syria, and it seems likely that this movement dates from the time of the great Kurdish hero Saladin who united the western tribes, making the Aleppo citadel their central fortress. Today there are approximately a million and a half Kurds fairly equally divided between Iraq, Iran and Turkey. In Iraq their domain corresponds to the highland crescent referred to earlier.

They are plainly Indo-Iranian by extraction, or what is sometimes loosely called Aryan. Their religion is Islam,

but they have a language of their own with rich grammatical forms and a distinct syntax. Philologists say that in Kurdish, pure Aryan origins are less obscured by Arabic importations than in Persian. Kurdish families are characterized by the strongest possible feudal sense and a rigorous code of honour. Their women are allowed considerable freedom. They go unveiled, and often attain positions of respect and authority in later life.

Jews

The majority of Iraqi Jews, who slightly exceed the Christians in number, live in Baghdad. It will be remembered that the patriarch Abraham, whose first home was at Ur-of-the-Chaldees, later migrated to Canaan; so the ancestors of the present Hebrew Iraqis must have arrived at a later date—probably as war-prisoners in the wake of the victorious armies of Tiglath-pileser, Shalmaneser, Sargon and Nebuchadnezzar. The tears of their early captivity were soon forgotten in their growing appreciation of this new Land of Promise, and the Greek writers found them prospering in large communities on the Euphrates, including their university cities of Sura and Pumbaditha. In Sassanian times they even attained some measure of administrative independence, while the Abbasid Caliphs were not above benefiting from their commercial and economic acumen. They have since been assimilated into the life of the country, until today a foreigner will find them barely distinguishable from Iraqi townsmen of different extraction. They had seldom been discriminated against, until the development of political Zionism.

In Baghdad there are Jewish schools, hospitals and charitable institutions, financed by the community, and conforming to Government regulations. The community has a president and two councils whose appointment is confirmed by royal *irada*.

Others

About thirty thousand Yezidis and an even smaller number of Turcomans, Sabaeans, Shebeks and Lurs complete the picture. The Yezidis in the hills north of Mosul have an obscure religious formula centred around the propitiation of the principle of evil. They are consequently often erroneously called 'devil-worshippers'. The Turcomans are a remnant of a fourteenth-century invasion. They were retained by the early Ottoman rulers in a line of settlements calculated to protect their own communications with Turkey from the less reliable Arabs.

The Mandaean 'baptists' have a more ancient faith, whose origins may perhaps be buried among the ruins of Harran on the Turko-Syrian frontier. They now ply their trade as silversmiths at Baghdad and Amarah.

Near Mosul half-a-dozen villages of Shebeks speak a language of their own; the Lurs are mainly confined to a guild of porters used in the town for moving heavy loads.

The Birth of the State

Any conscientious attempt to understand the *risorgimento* of Modern Iraq takes one back at least to the first decade of the present century. In these distant *vilayets* of Turkish Arabia, Ottoman rule was at that time beginning to show a marked deterioration, and wars in Europe were weakening the Central Government in Istanbul. Amongst the Arabs these facts, combined with resentment at the 'Ottomanism' of the Young Turks, had already led to a recrudescence of racial aspiration, and the comparatively new concept of 'nationalism' claimed its partisans. Damascus and Beirut were the first centres of an organized Arab Nationalist Movement, but by the outbreak of the First World War the secret society called Al-Ahd had extended its activities to Baghdad.

The impact of Western civilization and Western ideas on these inner regions of the Middle East had been a gradual process. But the implications of certain events were by no means lost on the Arabs. Great Britain's interest in the port of Basrah and the Persian Gulf generally, in relation to the newly discovered Persian oil and the overland route to India, had plainly anticipated, if not forestalled, the Berlin-to-Baghdad railway. Strategically as well as economically Turkish Arabia was acquiring a new significance, and its now politically conscious people had visions of the future in a shape which was by no means reassuring.

When the great upheaval, in which their patrimony was to be contended for by the great Western powers, did materialize, they were, as a result, to some extent prepared for it.

Great Britain's Mesopotamian campaign, which began in Basrah in the winter of 1914, and ended in Mosul simultaneously with the signing of the Mudros Armistice, was a straightforward military conquest. As it turned out, so far from doing anything to assist the British-Indian army, the Arabs of Iraq gave more than token-support to the Turks. Yet Allenby's campaign in the west had proved to be a different story. Here a revolt of Hejazi Arabs against the Turks, encouraged and financed by Britain, religiously sanctioned by the Hashimite family, and led by the young educated Arab Nationalists of Al-Ahd and Al-Fatat, many of them Iraqis, had provided a mobile force protecting the right flank of the British advance, and contributed more than a little to an eventual British triumph. Furthermore, it had been instigated on the basis of a fairly wholesale pledge of Arab emancipation in the case of the campaign succeeding. A second and almost simultaneous agreement envisaged a different situation. It provided for the contingency of Syria being wrested from the Turks without Arab assistance, as in Mesopotamia, and was mainly concerned

with a provisional division of the spoils between Great Britain and France.

This, in the briefest possible form, is the background of the post-war settlement in the Middle East. What transpired in Mesopotamia is probably fairly familiar, but none the less remarkable. A preliminary period of military occupation, with a semi-colonial administration, conscientious and efficient in the extreme, but making few concessions to the peculiar political precosity of the people, resulted in a serious check. The insurrection of 1921 (though largely instigated by tribal elements who had long been a thorn in the side of the Turks and have since risen against the independent government), in addition to costing the British Treasury forty million pounds, was undoubtedly symptomatic.

The Anglo-French declaration directly after the Armistice had renewed the promise of those powers to 'encourage and assist the establishment of indigenous governments' in the countries 'liberated from Turkish oppression', and Woodrow Wilson, in his Twelfth Point, had spoken of 'an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development'. Meanwhile the ejection by the French of Feisal's first autonomous Arab Government from Damascus had resulted in a transference of nationalist hopes to Iraq. Here they had not only become determined and vocal, but had now expressed themselves in a costly piece of violence.

Under these circumstances the League of Nations' mandatory scheme of tutelage for backward nations had much to recommend it. It was an answer to Iraqi nationalism, and at the same time a sop to the idealism of President Wilson, to General Smuts and to the progressive trend of world-thought in general. Moreover it soon became clear that a Feisal lost to Syria was a Feisal gained to Iraq, and under his able guidance the ultimate emancipation of the country

stood some chance of becoming an accomplished fact. In some of Feisal's entourage, however, an initial disinclination to admit the necessity of a tutelary period had been aggravated by their experience in Damascus, and their suspicion and distrust of their 'tutors' was easily reflected in the general run of Iraqis, conditioned by centuries of oppression. The years of the mandate were not, therefore, entirely plain sailing. Yet by 1932, when the country, as a sequel to a succession of treaties, passed from mandate to independence, there was little doubt that from a purely practical and mechanical point of view, the experiment had so far succeeded. Antonius[1], for instance, whose chronicle of the nationalist movement no one would suspect of Western bias, refers to it as 'one of the most remarkable instances of post-war reconstruction', and generously adds that 'the Modern State of Iraq owes its existence largely to the efforts and devotion of its British officials'. There is in any case no doubt that Great Britain, having once committed herself to this ostensibly idealistic innovation, was actuated by a genuine desire to maintain a clear conscience. In the end it was only her haste in expediting the conclusion of the experiment which drew world criticism. She was accused by some of allowing the clamour of importunate Arab extremists to dull the voice of that same conscience, of ignoring the rights and interests of the less vocal sections of the Iraqi people, and, in a word, of expecting the little state to run before it could walk. This criticism has been repeated at intervals since, and occasionally seemed justified by subsequent events.

In any case, the final treaty between Great Britain and Iraq, signed in 1930 as a basis of Iraq's admission to the League of Nations, was an unequivocal assurance of the

[1] George Antonius, *Arab Awakening*.

State's genuine independence. Her future relations with Britain were defined as a 'close alliance' and the special concessions required of her were reasonable. In case of war against one party to the treaty, the other would 'come to his aid in the capacity of an ally'. Iraq's aid to Britain in that event would consist in 'furnishing to His Britannic Majesty on Iraq territory all facilities and assistance in his power, including the use of railways, rivers, ports, aerodromes and means of communication'. Precautionary measures for mutual defence being 'in the common interest of both parties', Great Britain was to be allowed to maintain air-bases at Basrah and west of the Euphrates. Identity in training between the British and Iraqi armies was to be assured by the maintenance in Iraq of a British military mission. For the rest, His Britannic Majesty's representative was to have precedence over the representatives of other powers at the Iraqi court, and Iraq would normally engage British subjects for posts requiring foreign officials.

The Constitution of the new independent Iraq was as follows. The legislative power was vested in Parliament with the King. Parliament consisted of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. The Senate was composed of twenty members appointed by the King from among those who, by their acts, had gained the confidence and trust of the people, and those who had an honourable past in the service of the Government and of the country. The Chamber of Deputies was elected on the basis of one deputy to every 20,000 male Iraqi subjects. Every bill must be submitted to each assembly in turn and then approved by the King.

There were eight Ministers, who met under the presidency of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister was chosen by the King. The other Ministers were appointed by the King on the recommendation of the Prime Minister.

Half-a-dozen British advisers were retained in various ministries and departments.

Istiqlal [1]

Looking back over the first thirteen years of Iraq's independence, one aspect of the experiment is brought into sharp perspective, perhaps as a result of the ideological stress laid by wartime politics on democracy. It becomes clear that constitutional democracy on the pattern of Britain and America could not reasonably be expected to spring fully-fledged from the efforts of a single generation, whose heritage was oriental feudalism. A King, a council of ministers, two houses of parliament, party government, free elections, freedom of speech and of the press—in fact 'the government of the people by the people'—have in peaceful times become a commonplace to the Western world. But in a country where a small proportion of the population are literate, and an even smaller percentage politically conscious or responsible, some of these component attributes of mature democracy must at first naturally be modified if not dispensed with altogether. This at times has caused a recrudescence of feudalism, together with administrative weaknesses such as nepotism and patronage, which in the East are inseparable from it. Dangers of this sort were inherent in the original plan, and time will show whether they will eliminate themselves naturally through the medium of extended education, or require a major operation to deal with them.

Another danger which the independent Government had to fear, and which had been intelligently foreseen by King Feisal, was disunity in the country itself. The Kurds in their particularly inaccessible mountain country took time to be reconciled to Arab government, while any lenience in

[1] Independence.

dealing with *Kurdi Jumhuriet*[1] aspirations would have had the added disadvantage of alienating two neighbouring governments, both contending with the same difficulty. The Shiahs of the middle Euphrates nursed religious and political jealousies, resulting from their inadequate representation in an administration headed by a Sunni royal family. Finally, the newly conscripted Iraq Army proved its ability to brush aside, with impunity, civil control, and to take the law into its own hands. By that time there was no longer a Feisal on the throne, with his remarkable faculty for manipulating and controlling these conflicting elements.

It is also interesting to see that in a complex way Iraq's constitutional immaturity contributed towards the events which led up to the affair of May, 1941. When the full blast of German propaganda was turned upon the Arab countries in the last years of peace, the ground in Iraq was already fortuitously prepared for it. The old congenital distrust and suspicion combined with reactionary xenophobia had sustained the myth of British interference, and a new generation of Western-educated youths, impatient of their country's continued backwardness, welcomed the German fairy-tale of avaricious and unscrupulous imperialists, deliberately conniving at this state of affairs for their own nefarious advantage. Next, the nationalist theme was fully exploited. Pledges of twenty-five years ago were contrasted with a fictitious state of servitude throughout Arab States, and with their present disunity, again artificially fostered by the Machiavellian imperialists. In Iraq particularly, the case for 'servitude and oppression' being a hard one to make, Iraqi eyes were directed towards the unfortunate conflict in Palestine, from which streams of charlatans and adventurers posing as political refugees now began to arrive adding fuel to the fire. Many of them were given positions of

[1] Kurdish Republic.

responsibility as teachers, and did untold harm, by their many prejudices and few qualifications, to Iraqi youth.

It will, therefore, be seen that for an ingenious and well-subsidized propaganda organism, the political seduction of a certain section of Iraq presented few difficulties, especially as Great Britain appeared to view the whole process with the semi-incredulous apathy at that time in evidence in many other quarters. In any case it eventually bore fruit in the anti-constitutional and anti-British rising in 1941, when Rashid Ali endeavoured unsuccessfully to link the fortunes of his country with those of the Axis powers.

Since that time there have been great changes in Iraq, and a most serious attempt has been made by British and Iraqis alike to eradicate not only the effects but the causes of the estrangement. They have culminated in 1943 in Nuri Pasha as-Said's decision to bring Iraq into the ranks of the United Nations, and there is little doubt left in the country as to the policy required by its permanent interests. The legitimate claims of the Arab nationalists have again been seriously considered and in some measure answered. In Palestine repeated earnests of Great Britain's post-war intentions, and in Syria a first symbol of independence, have perhaps both been overshadowed in importance by a general statement of the British attitude towards Arab unity. The Foreign Secretary has, in fact, made declaration of full British support 'to any scheme which commands general approval' for strengthening the political, cultural and economic ties between the Arab countries. He also laid his finger upon one weakness of nationalist complaints, by implying that the initiative in this matter must lie with the Arab Governments themselves.

Actually in Iraq today a new and realist generation is perhaps a shade less concerned with the theme of political unity than are their fathers and uncles, who joined Al-Ahd

or fought in the Arab Revolt. On this subject they mostly confine themselves to a general conviction that 'in some predictable future the historical and cultural identity of the Arab Nation will find adequate political expression'.[1] Their minds, in this way, being less obsessed with unfulfilled nationalist ambitions, adapt themselves more readily to economic and social reflection. The result is a new and most significant wish to be associated with the economic progress envisaged in the Atlantic Charter, a healthy interest in local problems such as the poverty and illiteracy of the Arab masses, the unscientific exploitation of the land and backwardness of industrial development, and an appreciation of the necessity for outside help in solving them. Finally, in March, 1943, they are endeavouring to see their future in the light of post-war planning on a world-scale, suggested by Mr Churchill's phrase 'Council of Asia'.

Social Problems

There has been a great tendency for orientalists to generalize about the character of the Iraqi Arab, and the mutually contradictory opinions which have resulted suggest that a categorical appraisement is something which it is really well to avoid. One authority for instance suggests that religious fatalism, and the effects of an enervating climate, have produced a radically unprogressive attitude of mind, devoid of all instinct for citizenship or social integrity. Another speaks of the Iraqi countryman's amazing quickness at adapting himself to new conditions and profiting by unexpected opportunities. Almost all seem to have found amongst them endearing qualities which easily disarm criticism; and it will, therefore, be more useful here to avoid the danger of prejudiced characterization of the people and to concentrate on an objective statement of some of their problems.

[1] *The Times* (London), 10 Feb. 1943.

Almost every social problem which presents itself in Iraq today would be soluble by an improvement and extension of national education in one or other of its branches. Education alone can teach the people the necessity as well as the means of changing their way of life, and adapting it to a changing world. We have already spoken of the impact of Western civilization on the East in the present generation, but we have not particularized the cultural predicament which it produced in Iraq. Emerging from her long slumber under the Turks, Iraq found herself faced with an overwhelming need for material and social reconstruction. Her material industries were non-existent; the small proportion of her land which was not lying fallow was wastefully and improvidently cultivated; her national health was undermined with malaria, bilharzia and trachoma, and her infant mortality alarming. In contrast to this she soon found her markets flooded with Western goods, Western inventions altering the whole *tempo* of national life, and Western ideas upsetting traditional ethics and morality.

The drastic treatment which this situation called for was hampered and delayed by internal controversy over a leading issue. A still-conservative, older generation saw the youth of the country swept by a wave of Westernism (automobiles, gramophones, radios, cinemas and cabarets, went with Western clothes and Western manners), and a reactionary axiom that it was better to be a chemically pure oriental than an *ersatz* European only antagonized them, and rendered them unreceptive to the wise counsel which could have taught them judgement and discrimination in the process of adaptation. As it turned out, political nationalism was another contributory cause of the adolescent State's failure to concentrate on social planning. The impatient clamour for national emancipation absorbed the attention of her politicians and exhausted their time and energy.

Though much has been done in twenty years, in spite of ministerial vicissitudes, to put the country on her feet generally, and to face industrial problems, one finds that up to the outbreak of the present war there had still been no comprehensive survey of the country's internal needs with a view to a fixed and constructive policy. The difficulty of obtaining any statistical information about social progress incidentally bears witness to this. School education particularly lacked vision, and had already proved itself susceptible to political abuse of a totalitarian character. One weakness consisted in the fact that the system, when it was inaugurated, was aimed at the production of the then badly-needed class of junior government official. This need had long since been filled, and for every small vacancy now there were a dozen applicants; so that the schools had tended to produce a class of semi-educated place-seekers, surplus to the civil service, but no longer fitted or inclined to return to the land. This problem, which still exists, strikes at the roots of the whole purpose of education, about which incidentally there are in the country some surprisingly conflicting theories.

In general the crying need in Iraqi education at present is for decentralization and extension; varied instruction to equip all classes and ages of the people for their peculiar function in a national life conforming to some carefully conceived plan. In this sense a primary and outstanding necessity is the proper study of tribal education, which has up to now been limited and haphazard. Bedouin and semi-nomadic tribes, who are tending to settle and cultivate, find themselves faced with a whole series of incomprehensible and apparently unreasonable disabilities, which if properly explained would enable them to assume their rightful responsibility as democratic people. Without wider education, problems such as land-ownership, distribution of wealth,

the status of women and public health, are all subjects which they will continue to treat with that apathetic resignation which is the enemy of all human progress. The necessity for eventually extending such tribal education to pure nomads needs no emphasis.

In almost every sphere education must and will be the primary instrument in bringing about the reforms necessary to the fuller social and economic life of the nation. No human community can hold its own in the modern world when precisely half its members are prevented from taking any part in public life. Yet improvement in the status of women is only one need. The full economic development of the nation's natural resources is another; so are a sense of civil responsibility, improved public health and the enrichment of the people's leisure. Education is the first step to the attainment of all these things.

It would be unfair to conclude without some mention of the social accomplishments of the past decade, to offset inevitable shortcomings. The civic amenities of Baghdad and many of the smaller towns greatly impress those who return after some years' absence. From the fringes of the capital, flower-lined boulevards lead to distant suburbs, and children play in well-appointed public gardens. A theatre and attractive town hall enhance the dignity of public events. A school of Fine Arts teaches music, painting and sculpture, while a competent Directorate of Antiquities maintains no less than seven museums and a picture-gallery in Baghdad alone. Much is spent on the restoration and protection of ancient buildings, and, even in wartime, on archaeological research and excavation.

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THE ABORIGINALS

BY
VERRIER ELWIN



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THERE are more than 25 million aboriginals in India. The happy few who live in the remote hills have preserved their tribal customs unimpaired and need only to be protected from contact with our acquisitive society. A small number of the chiefs can be said to have won the battle of culture-contact, and to have assimilated the blessings of civilization, but the great majority of the 25 million are suffering from what the author calls 'loss of nerve'. Forbidden to hunt and cultivate in the forest, exploited in the villages, they have become 'servile, obsequious, timid, of poor physique'. The author discusses what might be done to improve the lot of these 'real swadeshi products of India' who 'were here first' and 'should come first in our regard'.

Verrier Elwin, M.A., D.Sc., of Merton College, Oxford, is remarkably well qualified to write on this subject. He is a Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute, which awarded him the Wellcome Medal in 1942, and of the National Institute of Sciences. More than ten years ago he settled down in an aboriginal village in the Central Provinces, and since that day he has only returned to our civilization for brief periods. Parts of his entertaining diary, entitled *Leaves from the Jungle*, were published in 1936: and his works include *The Baiga* (1939), *The Agaria* (1942), and *Folk-Tales of Mahakoshal* (1944). A monograph on *The Muria and their Ghotul* is in the press.

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THE ABORIGINALS

I WAS once introduced to a Colonel's wife somewhere in India as an anthropologist. The lady looked at me with horror and alarm, and a little later when we were comparatively alone she leant towards me and said in a confidential whisper, 'Tell me, Mr Elwin, is anthropology very prevalent in your district?'

I was able to assure her that 'anthropology' was prevalent not only in my district, but throughout the entire sub-continent of India. The anthropologist, of course, is concerned with the entire history of Man: he is not exclusively concerned with aboriginals; but in actual practice he is often regarded as someone who deals with primitive and simple folk.

Particularly in India the anthropologist has had to try to sort out the great medley of races and tribes into some sort of coherence, and it has to be admitted that so far it has been impossible to reach any very clear conclusions.

The old method of describing the races of India by linguistic terms like Kolarian and Dravidian has been superseded, though no other method of somatic classification can be said to have won general acceptance. Von Eickstedt divides the people of India into three groups:

I. Weddid group 1. Gondid race 2. Malid sub-race	*Ancient-Indians*
II. Melanid group 3. Melanid race 4. Kolid sub-race	*Black-Indians*
III. Indid group 5. Indid race 6. North-Indid sub-race	*New-Indians*

The Weddid group, named after the very primitive Veddas of Ceylon, comprises the bulk of the aboriginals, 'the real and genuine Ancient Indians', and stands in striking contrast to the light-coloured, more graceful Indid group. The Weddids are characterized by the infantile nature of their racial features, by a smooth, round, child-like face

with steep forehead, a child-like snub nose with wide nostrils, a soft, full and bent child-mouth, small retreating chin and the delicate child-like, somewhat stocky (thick-set) body, with small hands and feet. The very important Gondid sub-group (which includes the Uraons, Gonds and Khonds) is marked by a somewhat taller physique, longer faces and noses not so broad.

The Gondid has brown, sometimes even light-brown, skin; but the Malid sub-group found in southern India is marked by an almost black skin, thicker lips and very broad nose, such as are commonly found among the Paniyers.

The Melanid group also concerns our present study, for its sub-race is the Kolid which finds its purest representation among the Santals and Hos. Von Eickstedt classifies the Gadabas and the Panos as Kolid, and finds a Melanid element in the Yanadis and the Chenchus.

The Proto-Australoids

Dr B. S. Guha, who is today our most eminent Indian anthropologist, does not venture on so dogmatic—one might almost say so journalistic—a classification. In his work on the 1931 Census he distinguished seven racial elements in India which he modestly named by the letters of the alphabet. Since, however, we are dealing here only with the aboriginals, his more recent classification is more convenient. Dr Guha names the bulk of the 'Weddids' Proto-Australoid, for—as he says—if we compare many of the central and south Indian tribesmen 'with the Veddas of Ceylon and the aborigines of Australia we find that in the shape of the head and the face, the form of hair and skin colour, the three are essentially alike'. The Indians are the shortest and smallest of the three, and the Australians have more strongly marked brow ridges and profuser body hair. 'All the three belong essentially to the same stock, the Indian tribes retaining the more basic characters and the two extra-Indian groups having developed some of the features in a more marked manner.' Hence the name Proto-Australoid, which indicates the genetic relationships of the Indian tribes.

There is then another element (I prefer Dr Guha's earlier word 'element' to his later 'type'), a Negrito strain,

indicated by the shape of the skull and frizzly hair, marked among the Andamanese and in the interior of Malaya. This has now almost disappeared on the Indian mainland, but traces have been found in very remote areas, among the Angami Nagas, the Bagdis of the Rajmahal Hills and the Kadars of the south-west. Dr Guha thinks that the Negritos are the oldest of all and that the Proto-Australoids came later and, while driving them back into the mountains, absorbed a large amount of their blood.

The third element in the aboriginal population of India is the Mongoloid—in the main (as among the Miri, Bodo and Naga tribes), a rather modified Mongoloid with a dolichocephalic or long head, but with the typical flat nose, high cheek-bones and oblique slit-eyes. This element is almost confined to Assam and eastern Bengal, but Mongoloid features are sometimes found in central India, especially among the Gonds and Marias.

These three elements, relating the Indian aboriginal to the people of three great continents, have in the course of centuries divided up into a large number of tribes, all mutually exclusive, each what is called endogamous (marrying within the tribe), each generally again split into exogamous clans (forbidden to marry members of their own clan), many of them preserving their ancient totem names and customs to this day, a few continuing a megalithic cult of the dead.

The Tribes

They are now over twenty-five million in number and are distributed throughout India. In the mountains of Assam the splendid and warlike Naga tribes, although they have been heavily proselytized, still retain something of their ancient glories. Other important tribes are the Garo, Kachari, Khasi, Mikir and Lushai.

The chief tribe in Bihar is the Santal whose total population is above the million mark; their tragic story has been told by Dr Hutton in *Modern India and the West*. Like the Mundas and Uraons, the Santals are distributed over more than one province and are found also in Orissa. The beautiful Chota Nagpur plateau is the home of the great Uraon tribe, the Mundas, the Hos, some Santals, the

Kharias, and a number of smaller tribes, including the very ancient Asur iron-smelters. These people have been made known to the world by the works of Bodding and of Sarat Chandra Roy, their champion, friend and biographer.

Orissa and its States also has a high population of aboriginals; notable among them are the Bhuiyas and Bhumij, the Khonds (once notorious for human sacrifice), the Savaras (whose name occurs in ancient literature: a member of the tribe gave food to Ramachandra on his wanderings), the remarkably ornamented and attired Gadabas and Porojas. The very primitive Juangs live in the mountains to the south of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway and some of them still dress themselves in leaves.

The Central Provinces is occupied by over two million Gonds—a once royal tribe, from whom the ancient name of the area, 'Gondwana', was taken. Related to them are the romantic and poetically-minded Pardhan minstrels. In the wilder tracts live the Baigas, famous for their magic and their knowledge of the forest. In the Mahadeo Hills to the west are the Korkus. One of the neighbouring States, Bastar, where aboriginals form 75 per cent of the population, is a model of what can be done when anthropological principles are applied to the administration of a tribal area.

The Bhils are the great tribe of the Bombay province and the Rajputana States. Remarkable work for their advancement has been done by the Bhil Seva Mandal founded by Mr A. V. Thakkar. But there are also in western India other tribes less well known, such as the Dhodias, the Thakurs, the Varlis and the Katkaris.

Southern India is inhabited by what has been described as 'one of the most primitive kinds of men that it is possible still to find on the earth today'. From the Cardamom Hills to the Nilgiris, through the forests of eastern Mysore and over the Nallamallai Hills are to be found such tribes as the Kurumber, Kanikar, Irular and Yanadi.

Tribal Languages

Throughout the area the old languages still struggle for survival. Of these probably the most important is Gondi, still spoken by a million and a half people, which has been

described as intermediate between the Dravida and the Andhra tongues. It has several dialects. Kurukh is the language of the Uraons and is closely connected with ancient Tamil. Kandh or Kui is spoken by the Khonds of Orissa.

The agglutinative Munda languages are principally spoken in Chota Nagpur and the adjoining country. The most important of them, Kherwari, divides into dialects according to the tribe that speaks it—Santal, Bhumij, the Larka or 'fighting' Kol, Ho, Asur and Korwa. Each group interprets it in its own way. The dying Kharia language is now only found in restricted areas, as is the old language of the Juangs—members of the tribe now also speak Oriya. Akin to this are the special tongues of the Savaras and Gadabas. Korku, which is allied to Kherwari, is spoken by a people geographically remote from the other Munda-speaking tribes, the Korkus of Berar. For the languages of Assam (there are sixteen different languages apart from dialects in the Naga Hills) and the Andamans, reference may be had to the important monographs on their tribes, for they are too diverse and complicated to lend themselves to any summary.

A great many of the tribesmen are now bilingual and others have altogether lost their ancient form of speech. This has been a cause of aboriginal decline, for with the passing of the old languages there has gone a whole world of culture, and the tribesman, forced to deal in a speech not his own with officials, landlords and merchants, finds himself at a disadvantage which constantly results in his exploitation. There is a moral loss as well: a shrewd observer has pointed out that the Santals always speak the truth—as long as they speak their own language.

Four Kinds of Aboriginals

It is impossible in one small pamphlet to describe the religious and social customs of tribes distributed across a subcontinent, especially when these tribes stand on such varied levels of cultural development. Indeed no intelligent approach to the aboriginal problem is possible without recognizing that the tribesmen fall into at least four main cultural divisions, each of which demands distinct administrative treatment.

The first two classes consist of the comparatively small block (probably not more than five million) of real primitives living in the hills. The word 'living' is properly applied to them; these Highlanders do not merely exist like so many ordinary villagers; they really *live*. Their religion is characteristic and alive; their tribal organization is unimpaired; their artistic and choreographic traditions are unbroken; their mythology still vitalizes the healthy organism of tribal life. Geographical conditions have largely protected them from the debasing contacts of the plains. It has been said that the hoot of the motor-horn would sound the knell of the aboriginal tribes as such; but now petrol rationing has stepped in to delay the funeral.

These wilder aboriginals have to be subdivided into two sections. The first class, in the most primitive and simple stage of all, is characterized by the following:

(i) *Its members live a largely communal life.* This is emphasized even by the lay-out of their villages; thus, the Hill Marias build their long houses round a common square; the Hill Baigas do the same. The Juangs build their houses all opening on to one another within a single enclosure. The common club or dormitory is often an important factor in social life.

(ii) *Economically they still share with one another.* In Hill Maria villages there are still to be found corporate granaries. In some Juang villages, everyone pays the same taxes, whether they be 'rich' or 'poor', in order to preserve village solidarity. In the Juang Pirh of Keonjhar taxes are paid by the village, not by the individual; stores are kept in the village clubs to meet the needs of the poorer members of the community. There is little or no property in land; the land belongs to the community and clearings for axe-cultivation are distributed by agreement. A man who has a poor crop one year is given the best clearing next time.

(iii) *Their life still centres round a peculiar form of agriculture,* the axe-cultivation that is the despair of every Forest Officer. By this, the *taungya* of Burma, the *jhum* of Assam, the *bewar* of the Baigas, the cultivator clears part of the forest, sets fire to the fallen trees and branches and sows his seed in the ashes. The more primitive do not break

the soil at all for the main crops, and only dibble with a digging-stick when planting beans and pulses. Other tribes turn over the soil and dig in the ashes with a hoe. The clearing is used for two or three years and is then deserted for a fresh patch of forest. To many of the tribesmen this is more than a form of agriculture; it is a way of life. They cannot visualize existence without it. It is established in the mythology of the tribes; it was taught to the Juangs by Boram Deo, to the Baigas by Nanga Baiga. A large part of their lives is spent in the clearings and little tree houses which they make for safety from wild animals.

(iv) *They are shy of strangers*, but among themselves honest, simple and innocent. Crime is rare and women virtuous. Domestic life is marked by fidelity and restraint. Adultery is punished by divine vengeance, and the adulterer is sometimes stripped naked and paraded through the village with a heavy stone tied to his genitalia. They wear few clothes and the women generally go with breasts uncovered, an innocent and natural practice. The aboriginals of this type are, for example, the Hill Marias of Bastar State, the Juangs of Keonjhar and Pal-Lahara, the Gadabas and Bondos of Orissa, the Baigas of Pandaria and Kawardha, many of the smaller communities and the more isolated villages even of comparatively sophisticated tribes.

The second class of aboriginals live in country equally remote and they are equally attached to their solitude and to their ancient traditions. But they have begun to change in many small and subtle ways. The difference can be seen very vividly in a comparison between the Hill Marias and the Bison-horn Marias of Bastar State, or between the Bhumia and the Binjhwar Baigas.

(i) *Their village life has become individualistic.* They no longer build their houses round a square or in a huddle within a single fence. Many of the Bhuiyas and Bison-horn Marias, for example, build their houses each in a separate compound and with a garden attached. But the Murias and many Bhuiyas and Uraons who belong to this class retain something of their older communal traditions through their admirable village dormitories.

(ii) *They no longer share things with one another.* The spirit of competition has entered. There are distinctions between rich and poor. Their forest clearings are still distributed by agreement, but other possessions are taken as personal.

(iii) *Axe-cultivation is more a habit than a part of their life.* It has only doubtful warrant in their mythology or religion. Its customs are no longer clear and mandatory. For example, many Bhuiyas think it correct to take fire to light their clearings from an ordinary dwelling-house, a thing which to Juang eyes would be certain to result in an invasion of wild elephants! There is no taboo on the use of the plough and indeed members of this class look down on the digging-stick as too elementary for them. Unlike most of the people of Class I they have a fair number of cattle and know how to use them in their clearings.

(iv) *They are more accustomed to outside life.* They are used to going down to the bazaars. They wear more clothes, often importing cheap shirts and jackets. They are generally less simple and honest than members of Class I.

The third class of aboriginals is the most numerous; it probably numbers twenty million, all those who under the influence of external contact have begun to lose their hold on tribal culture, religion and social organization. We will consider this in detail shortly.

A Triumph of Culture-Contact

Finally we have the fourth class, which consists of the old aristocracy of the country, probably dating very far back indeed—represented today by great Bhil and Naga chieftains, the Gond Rajas, a few Binjhwar and Bhuiya landlords, Korku noblemen, wealthy Santal and Uraon leaders and some highly cultured Mundas. These retain the old tribal name and their clan and totem rules and observe elements of tribal religion, though they generally adopt the full Hindu faith and live in modern and even in European style. Thus the Gond Raja of Sarangarh lives in a palace which is equipped with every modern comfort; his well-stocked library includes the works of Aldous Huxley, Bernard Shaw and Malinowski; he is a

brilliant cricketer and tennis-player. Yet he insists that he is a true Gond; his home is decorated with representations of his totem animal, the tortoise, and in the heart of the palace is a small thatched hut where the cult of the old tribal gods is maintained. Other members of this class are those aboriginals who by their own energy and enterprise have improved their economic position and their social standing. There was a Khasi woman in a recent Cabinet of the Government of Assam; another Minister was a Kachari. Many Uraons have become Christian clergymen. A Pardhan has become a Station Master. There is a Gond District Excise Officer in the Central Provinces, and an aboriginal Naib Tahsildar was murdered during the disturbances of 1942. It must be remembered, however, that such educated and progressive persons are not necessarily, simply because they are of aboriginal stock, the best qualified to represent their poorer brethren, of whose needs they often have only an elementary knowledge.

The members of the fourth class may be said to have won the battle of culture-contact—aristocratic tradition, economic stability or affluence, outside encouragement, a certain arrogance and self-confidence characteristic alike of ancient families and modern enterprise, have enabled them to assimilate the blessings of civilization without injury to themselves. It might be said that the whole aboriginal problem is how to enable the tribesmen of the first and second classes to advance direct into the fourth class without having to suffer the despair and degradation of the third.

A Loss of Nerve

The aboriginals of the third class are in a sad and almost desperate plight. The difference between them and the wilder people of the first two classes is a commonplace of anthropology and has been noted by everyone who has travelled or lived among the tribesmen. Generally speaking, the rapid opening-up of communications results more in conflict than in useful contact, not necessarily a conflict of arms but of culture and material interest. 'Attempts to develop minerals,' says Dr Hutton, 'forests or land for

intensive cultivation can only be made at the expense of the tribe whose isolation is thus invaded; tribal customs which regulate the ownership, usufruct or transfer of land are normally superseded by a code in the application of which the tribe is deprived of its property, generally in the name of law, either by alienation to foreigners or by transferring the trusteeship of a tribal chief into absolute ownership of a kind quite foreign to the customs of a tribe. This has befallen both the Mundas and the hill tribes of Chittagong, while even in Rajputana a somewhat similar process has been at work. A similar application of alien law also usually disturbs the tribal customs of debt. The criminal law of a civilized community is often at variance with what is felt to be just and proper by tribal custom. The complicated system of administration of justice has tended to impair the natural truthfulness and honesty of the people and social solidarity of the tribes and has weakened the authority of the social heads and the respect they formerly commanded.'

Another writer describes the devastation that has been wrought by external culture-contact among the Nagas of Assam. 'All Nagas assert that since their country was taken over illness has increased. Not only have specific diseases, such as venereal disease and tuberculosis, been introduced but epidemics spread more quickly. The opening of the cart road to Manipur has led to an increase in prostitution. Education of the type which is given has been on the whole an evil rather than a good. Foreign dress is spreading and the custom is bad in every way. It encourages dirt since no Naga can afford the change he ought to have. It spreads disease in two main ways. Adults become more liable to chills and phthisis since they do not change their wet clothes, and children who are carried against "wet shirt waists" instead of against their mothers' warm backs suffer as a result. To substitute spoiled and poor quality Western clothes or a caricature of them for the picturesque Naga dress is an aesthetic crime. Foreign houses are a blot on the landscape and are expensive and stuffy.'

This is equally true of the people of other parts of India. It is an instructive experience to go from a jungle community

of Baigas in the hills to a village of the same people by the roadside. In the former, tribal life and organization still retain their old vitality; as you enter the village you can almost feel the stir and throb of communal energy; tribal life is an integrated whole, it makes sense, there are no gaps in it, it has no insulated spots, everything is related and functions in its proper place. The people are vigorous, independent, happy. But go to a semi-civilized Baiga village on one of the main trade-routes. The people might belong to another race. Servile, obsequious, timid, of poor physique, their tribal life is all to pieces. Part of it, like the right to hunt and practise axe-cultivation, has been torn up by the roots. The old myths are being forgotten, the old gods neglected. Many of the traditional dances are being abandoned. The souls of the people are soiled and grimy with the dust of passing motor-buses. The village has ceased to be a living community; it is now an aggregate of isolated units. The long houses round a common square, so typical of Baiga as of Hill Maria culture, have disappeared and the people separated into scattered, suspicious and often litigious families. Tribal life and tradition have begun to appear slightly ludicrous, even to the tribesmen themselves.

The Causes of Decay

What is the reason for this remarkable difference between the two types of aboriginals? Is it that there is something infectious about civilized folk so that their very contact destroys the grace and beauty of simple people, as the Earthlings infected Utopia in H. G. Wells' romance *Men Like Gods*? I do not think that the answer is a simple one; a dozen factors combine to break the nerve and shatter the confidence of the tribesmen.

The aboriginals were faced with a serious crisis when British administrators insisted on the cessation of such obviously evil practices as human sacrifice, head-hunting, and murder for witchcraft. Unfortunately, at the same time many of the tribes suffered so serious a loss of their independence that Dr Hutton (himself a former Government official) can write, 'Far from being of immediate benefit to the primitive

tribes, the establishment of British rule in India did most of them much more harm than good'. Another crisis came later when the Christian missionaries attempted to interfere even more drastically with tribal life. The activities of the Baptist Mission among the Nagas have demoralized the people, destroyed tribal solidarity and forbidden the joys and feasting, the decorations and romance of communal life. The Andaman Home policy of winning the savage to loyalty through evangelization and education has proved the door of death for the Andamanese. But Christianity has made little headway among the real aboriginals. It is a curious fact that it is 'Hinduization' that has generally proved a preparation for the Gospel, for it is mainly those tribes that have lost their tribal solidarity in face of Hindu infiltration that have become Christian in any large numbers.

But both official and foreign missionary interference were of an external kind and did not greatly affect the inner spirit of the tribes. Far more serious today is the great wave of semi-civilized influences that is sweeping across tribal country. Let us make a brief summary of the things that have broken the nerve and depressed the spirit of the once happy and free tribesmen. First and foremost is the loss of land. The indolent and pleasure-loving temperament of the tribesmen has always rendered them an easy prey to the educated cunning and intelligence of the men of the plains. It is a deplorable fact that it has been actually proposed as a measure of social uplift to bring the hillmen down to the plains and thus expose them to these adventurers. Those more or less nomadic tribes who had lived by shifting cultivation lost all rights over the forests where they once freely roamed, and many of them today are landless coolies.

The establishment of Forest Departments to protect the forest, in many respects inevitable, proved another serious blow to tribesmen who lived by axe-cultivation, digging for roots and hunting. In spite of vigorous protests by such enlightened administrators as Sir Bampfylde Fuller that it was 'much more important that a tribe of people should live in peace and comfort than that a certain area of land should grow trees of one sort or another or indeed grow trees at all', the rights

of the aboriginals in the great forest areas have steadily been curtailed.

The disappearance of the ritual hunt, which in many tribes preceded their major festivals, the cancellation of fishing rights and the suppression of the home distillery suggested to the aboriginals that civilization was hostile to their most cherished traditions. Liquor, for example, is a necessary ingredient in all forms of aboriginal worship and social ceremonies. The Congress has here shown a liberal spirit and has declared that it will not apply the prohibition laws to the tribesmen. But, as usual, puritan reformers are trying to force their hand. Everyone will wish to see habits of temperance extended, but to prohibit liquor-drinking altogether will be to deprive the hillmen of a valuable tonic and stimulant and will drive them to the far more injurious use of opium and other drugs.

Aboriginals and Education

The effect of literary education on people who can never afford a book to read or a piece of paper to write on has generally been deplorable. Primary education in the tribal areas is in the hands of the District Councils, bodies composed of landlords, lawyers and business men who have often risen to power by exploiting the aboriginals and whose interests are directly opposed to theirs. Schools, totally divorced from the life of the people, staffed by the most inferior type of teacher, which teach the tribesmen to despise their own culture, to abandon their natural and simple dress, dancing and other recreations, are opened in the remotest areas and there is a desire on the part of some politicians—although Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress have condemned this type of education in the most emphatic terms—to introduce it on a compulsory basis wherever they can. The opening of workshops in which carpentry, agriculture and any other means of teaching the people to make useful and beautiful things would, of course, be invaluable. But the miserable little schools for introducing an unwanted literacy are worse than useless. The trouble is that the present unregulated system of education, far from preserving or developing aboriginal culture, destroys it. The schools

are generally situated in centres of the non-aboriginal population and the jungle child grows up among those who regard him and his way of life with scorn. Even where this is not so, the teachers are usually urban-minded, regard themselves and their civilization as infinitely superior to the 'savages' among whom they have to live, and either ignore or condemn their institutions. Hindu, Muslim and Christian, but not aboriginal, festivals are marked by holidays. The children learn to chant in a nasal sing-song and pray to alien gods, but never to the old gods of the soil to whose worship their parents are deeply attached. They study in what is to them a foreign language. They read the lives of Indian Liberal leaders or English Viceroys, but hear nothing of their own cult-heroes or leaders. How many Gond schoolboys could recite the beautiful legend of Lingo, the mythical founder of their tribe, or say how many Gond Rajas there were in India? The aesthetic effect of education is disastrous. How beautiful is a Muria or Uraon boy fresh from the forest, with his long curly locks, his bright necklaces, the feathers and flowers in his hair! But the schoolmaster plucks the feathers from his hair, shaves his elfin locks, derides his ornaments; a small round cap replaces the becoming turban, and soon filthy khaki shorts and a dirty little coat cover 'the eternally dressed nakedness of the brown skin'.

Perhaps the most harmful result of education is its effect on singing and dancing. Many boys, once they can read and write, think themselves superior to tribal recreations. In their place they adopt the harmful amusements of the towns. Gambling takes the place of dancing; the obscenities of Holi replace the beautiful and innocent Relo; I have seen men and women, who scorn the delightful melodies of the Dadaria songs as below them, indulge in *tamasha* in which they imitate the whole human process from copulation to parturition.

William Morris once spoke of the danger 'that the present course of civilization would destroy the beauty of life'. Among Indian aboriginals this is not only a danger but a fact. Mr S. C. Roy has spoken of a 'loss of interest in life' among the Birhors and Korwas, Dr Hutton of physical apathy and physical decline in the Andamans, Mr Mills of

the 'awful monotony of village life' and its 'unspeakable drabness' in Christianized Assam. Sometimes this destruction is caused by outsiders, by well-meaning but rather unintelligent 'uplifters' and social reformers; sometimes, the evil comes from within.

India is all too full of people like Mr Pumblechook who, it will be remembered, could not see a small boy without trying to benefit him by setting him problems in mental arithmetic. The Pumblechooks of India try very hard to make the aboriginal good: they only succeed in making him dull. It is hard to convince the missionary and reformer of whatever religion that the romance and gaiety of tribal life is necessary for its preservation. But it is true. 'The tribe that dances does not die.'

Things of Value in Tribal Life

But are we to regret the rapid decay of customs and superstitions that can have no place in a modern world? Certainly not, if those superstitions and customs are replaced by something better. Unfortunately the almost inevitable result of unregulated cultural change is not real improvement, but decay. Moreover, in spite of certain admitted evils in aboriginal life (and it should be remembered that these evils are not worse than those which may be found in other parts of India and of the world) there are many elements that are well worth preservation; elements in which the tribesmen may not indeed be superior to the finest flower of Oriental or European civilization, but in which they have a great deal to teach their supposedly more civilized neighbours.

The aboriginals have to a very high degree developed the art of recreation, an art which is lamentably absent from the ordinary Indian village. We may note the magnificent dances of the Nagas and of the Bison-horn Marias, the mimetic ballet of the Juangs, the haunting music of the Baiga Karma. Throughout tribal India there are songs of rare beauty and deep simplicity. Children's games are highly developed among certain tribes; for example, over fifty, some of them most exciting and amusing, have been recorded among the Muria.

The tendance of the dead, devotion to the soil, the power to stage a magnificent and colourful tribal festival, the discipline of tribal law, are things which modern village religion should not willingly let die. In the spirit of economic fellowship and the tradition of communal living, some primitive villages are a hundred years ahead of the modern world. This communal life of the wilder people, in which almost everything is shared and in which the joy or sorrow of one is the joy and sorrow of the whole community, is a beautiful thing to witness, and it too perishes immediately before the chill breath of education and advancement. Equally perishable are the aboriginal virtues of simplicity and honesty, frankness and humour.

The unspoilt aboriginal is notable for the purity of his taste, and the beauty of such simple artistic creations as the materials available to him make possible. He is an expert in the art of personal ornamentation, in the decoration of his house (when he has a house), in the carving of masks, combs, snuff-boxes, in the use of cowries and beads. It is a tragedy that weaving is generally taboo to him; similarly pottery in which he might express himself is the monopoly of a minor Hindu caste. But still more tragic is the way in which the aboriginal's instinct for beautiful and artistic creation disappears directly he is educated.

Domestic fidelity is another virtue in which the real primitives might stand as an object-lesson to the whole world. When I recently conducted a survey of domestic life among the Murias of Bastar State, I found that out of 2,000 marriages examined all but 43 husbands were living with their own original wives. Adultery was almost unknown, and divorce exceptional. Here the contrast with the more sophisticated aboriginal of Class III is very striking. In a similar inquiry conducted in the Mandla District, I found that the divorce rate was as high as 56 per cent. But in no area is tribal life degraded by prostitution or unnatural vice.

For in most tribal societies woman holds a high and honourable place. She goes proudly free about the countryside. In field and forest she labours in happy companionship with her husband. She is not subjected to early child-bearing: she is married when she is mature, and if her

marriage is a failure (which it seldom is) she has the right of divorce. The lamentable restrictions of widowhood do not await her: should her husband die, she is allowed, even enjoined, to remarry; and in many tribes she may inherit property. Her free and open life fills her mind with poetry and sharpens her tongue with wit. As a companion, she is humorous and interesting; as a wife, devoted; as a mother, heroic in the service of her children. Her brave, laborious, faithful life is an inspiration.

Many of the aboriginal communities have a system of training and disciplining tribal youth in the village club or dormitory. The *dhumkuria* of the Uraons, the *giti-ora* or the *manda-ghar* of Orissa, the *ghotul* of Bastar, the *morung* of the Nagas serve the admirable purpose of training the boys and girls in social and civic duties, in teaching them the traditions of the tribe and in organizing and disciplining their more intimate relationships.

That aboriginal life is marked by crude superstitions and other evils no one will deny. For example, some of the Nagas enjoy (along with the most advanced nations of Europe) the custom of head-hunting and the practice of human sacrifice. The only difference is that the poor aboriginal sacrifices only one or two human beings in the name of his gods, while the great nations offer up millions in the name of empire and enlightenment. The belief in witchcraft also sometimes leads the aboriginals (like their educated neighbours) into excess, and they have many superstitions which like the superstitions of advanced Indian society and the capitals of Europe are to be regretted and if possible cured. But after ten years of life in closest and most realistic contact with the aboriginals, I can say that though I have found 'evils' I have found none that do not exist in a more virulent form in 'civilized' society. The idea that there is something inherently vicious in primitive life must be abandoned.

A Simple and Natural Existence

The life of the true aboriginals is simple and happy, enriched by natural pleasures. For all their poverty, their days are spent in the beauty of the hills. A woman carrying a load to a hill-top pauses a moment to survey the scene

below her. It is 'the sweet forest', the 'forest of joy and sandal' in which they live. The life of their children in the village dormitory is described as 'beautiful as a bison's horns, lovely as a horse's throat'.

Aboriginals get up very early: 'the tiger must roar from the hill', the 'music of the pestle' must be heard by cock-crow. They drink cold gruel left from yesterday. They wash with water from a gourd held under one arm—the younger people at least are very clean. Then everybody goes to work. The aged get busy on mats and baskets, clean the grain and spread dry fruit and vegetable in the sun. Men and women go to their clearings, the men to cut and hoe, the women to gather leaves for cups and plates, to dig for roots, or gather wild fruit and vegetable. The more adventurous go to search for honey: others shin up trees to get nests of red ants to be made into a tasty chutney or to be used as a febrifuge. Children graze the goats or hunt field-mice and little birds. Soon the sweet music of the flute is heard and the songs of lovers calling to one another among the trees.

The people take two meals—if there is enough food—in the day; one in the middle of the morning, the other about sunset. They eat anything they can. The small millets and the upland rice that grows freely on the rough hillsides is their staple food; it is helped out by a wide variety of roots and tubers, pulses, maize, and chutneys of mahua and tamarind. The Game Laws and the gradual extermination of the larger animals have driven them to depend for meat on hares, squirrels, bats. The Baigas distinguish twenty-one varieties of rat. There are few taboos: the flesh of the monkey and, of course, beef is eagerly taken by starving people.

In the evening, when the sun is 'a bamboo's length above the horizon', the villagers return home. Where there are sago or toddy palms, the men go up them 'like a pack of monkeys' for the refreshing juice. They drink it with savoury titbits such as roasted crab or prawn, fried frogs' legs and mahua paste. After supper, the village quickly goes to rest and the silence is broken only by the laughter of the children in the village dormitory and the muttered talk of old people round their fires.

This routine is continually being broken. There are hunt-

ing expeditions (where these are permitted), beats for fish, encounters with wild elephants and tigers. All the year round life is enlivened by festivals, marriages, dancing excursions. Boys and girls, gay with ornaments and flowers in their hair, gather to dance while their elders are busy at the more serious business of propitiating heaven. Marriages are delightful picnics: there is open house for guests, and hundreds of people gather to feast and dance in the woods. It is astonishing how much pleasure and excitement can be got for a handful of rupees. At other times, the unmarried youths go on dancing expeditions from place to place in search of wives. Sometimes the girls, too, go out to seek for husbands.

This free life is happy and it is happy in proportion as it is free. Yet it is deeply marked by suffering and deprivation. The tribesmen have their own war to fight, a war against disease and fear. Every night, more deadly than the Messerschmidt, comes the mosquito with its deadly load. The villages have been 'blacked-out' for centuries, for they cannot afford oil for their lamps. They are always rationed, for there is insufficient food for everyone. Their liberties are restricted by alien laws. In a few minutes, the steep sky's commotion may ruin the crops and destroy the work of months. Less catastrophically, but no less certainly than in war, life is cut short by disaster or disease.

The Political Solution

There have been many attempts to solve the vast and complicated problem presented by India's twenty-five million aboriginals; indeed had the quantity of action corresponded to the amount of controversy and discussion, the aboriginals' lot would be happier today. Let us first consider the political solution. That British politicians attached great importance to this is shown by their attempt to give protection to the aboriginals in the Government of India Act of 1935. Sections 52 and 92 of that Act provide for the reservation of certain predominantly aboriginal areas (to be known as 'Excluded' or 'Partially Excluded') from the operations of the Provincial Legislatures. 'The executive authority of a Province extends to excluded and partially excluded areas therein', but the

administration of excluded areas is under the Governor at his discretion, and partially excluded areas are administered by the Ministers subject to the special responsibility for their peace and good government imposed on the Governor by Section 52 (e) of the Act. On the other hand, in the matter of legislation, the protection given to excluded and partially excluded areas is the same. Thus the Governor is given power to control the application of legislation, whether of the Federal or Provincial Legislature, and to make regulations for both these areas.

This actually means that though the Ministers have no responsibility for the administration of excluded areas, they are intended to bring the partially excluded areas, as far as local conditions make it desirable, into the normal administrative life of a province subject to the individual judgement of the Governor, which enables him, when necessary, to control their actions.

It was obvious, of course, that no Governor would have time or opportunity to keep himself informed of the affairs of tribesmen so difficult of access and so obscure, and the Secretary of State's letter to the Government of India ordering an inquiry into the condition of 'backward tribes' by Provincial Governments refers to the 'considerable uneasiness' felt in the House of Commons as to the means which would be available to the Governor of securing that knowledge upon which the due discharge of his special responsibilities must depend, and continues, 'the uneasiness would be greatly allayed if it were found possible to appoint in any Province, where they are sufficiently extensive to justify such an appointment, a selected officer as an adviser in regard to these areas with the special duty of keeping Government and the Governor fully informed of their needs'.

This suggestion, so vital, so essential to the welfare of the tribesmen, was not accepted with any great enthusiasm by the Provincial Governments. Assam, which for many years has generously subsidized anthropological publications, decided that it could not afford a special officer, but appointed the well-known writer on the Naga tribes, Mr J. P. Mills, Honorary Ethnographer to Government. Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and the United Provinces did not consider a special

officer necessary 'because in the ordinary course of administration special attention was given to aboriginal needs'.

The Madras Government suggested that its Labour Commissioner might add the care of the tribesmen to his other interests. In Bombay, where there was already a Backward Class Officer, Mr D. Symington was appointed as Special Officer for a few months in 1937 and produced a Report on the Hill Tribes of the province. Travancore now has a Protector of Backward Classes. The Congress Ministers of the Central Provinces were considering the establishment of a special department for the 'uplift' of untouchables and aboriginals (their use of the word 'uplift' and the combination of untouchables and aboriginals, to the great indignation of the latter, was not altogether happy) when they resigned office. Mr W. V. Grigson was appointed Inquiry Officer and his invaluable report has recently been published.

Unfortunately, the reservation of aboriginal areas caused the worst possible impression in India. At a meeting of the Indian National Congress held at Faizpur in 1936 the policy was denounced as 'yet another attempt to divide the people of India into different groups, with unjustifiable and discriminatory treatment, to obstruct the growth of uniform democratic institutions in the country'. Two years later, at Haripura, the Congress passed another resolution in substantially similar terms.

An unfortunate remark by Mr Winston Churchill that he 'should not have objected to the entire scope of the great Indian peninsula under the excluded areas' still further exacerbated Nationalist opinion. An Excluded Areas Association was founded in southern India. In 1938 the Bombay Legislative Assembly, after a debate in which scorn was poured on anthropologists and the policy of protection derided, unanimously passed a resolution condemning the reservation of any areas at all. Similar debates were held in other Legislatures, and even in the Central Legislature at New Delhi otherwise intelligent persons declared that the excluded areas were a trick of the anthropologists to preserve the aboriginals as museum specimens for the exercise of 'their blessed science'.

The actual result, therefore, of this admirably intentioned

move for the protection of the tribesmen has probably been to destroy any real chance of protecting them at all.

The Missionary Solution

Another means of dealing with the problem is by what we may call the missionary solution. This term may be applied to any attempt to deal with aboriginals not by solving their own problems from inside and on the basis of their own life and culture, but by changing them or assimilating them entirely into a new community. This does not so much solve the problem as substitute another problem for it. Instead of the poor aboriginal we now have the poor convert. If the aboriginal becomes a Christian, he generally finds himself deprived of the moral and social sanctions under which he has grown up, of the free and natural recreations to which he is accustomed, and in many cases he sinks into moral and economic degradation.

The religion of the aboriginals, at least of peninsular India, should be regarded as a religion of the Hindu family, with a special relation to the exciting, dangerous, catastrophic Shaivite type, but as having a distinct existence of its own. For purposes of the Census, all aboriginals (except, perhaps, some of those in Assam, about whom I am not competent to give an opinion) should be classed as Hindus by religion, but separate returns of their numbers by race should be provided.

Yet aboriginal religion (with its cow-sacrifice, its worship of daemonic beings, its ceremonial use of blood and liquor), although it belongs theologically to the Hindu family and although politically the aboriginals should be classed with the Hindu community, is a thing distinct and apart; and where there have been attempts to assimilate the tribesmen too rapidly into conventional village Hinduism (a thing very different from the lofty Hinduism of history) harm has often been done. To the tribesmen Hinduism often means little more than the adoption of those very social evils that the best Hindus are today trying to abolish. Here again we have no solution of the aboriginal problem. We merely have a new problem substituted for the old one.

This is specially the case where aboriginal communities which have Hinduized themselves in order to obtain a lift in

the social scale have found themselves actually placed on the lowest rung of the social ladder.

The Gandas and Pankas are aboriginals who have lost their identity; they are now regarded as untouchable in many areas. So are the Kolis, who have become 'Hindus'. The Government of Cochin put the Kadars into the 'Depressed' category. In the west of the Central Provinces the Hinduized Pardhans, Ojhas and Nagarchis (sub-tribes of Gond) are treated as impure. On the other hand, there is every reason to hope that, especially when Indians begin to manage their own affairs, this injustice will be repaired. The aboriginal who retains his independence claims to be a Kshattri (a member of the warrior caste). The Meithei have even been admitted as such into the Hindu fold. The Gond Rajas too have succeeded in establishing their claim to recognition. But at present the poorer folk are unable to do this. There is no central tribunal which can hear their case. Their neighbours at once doom them to inferiority. 'Some of the Weddids', says von Eickstedt (whom I quote because he cannot possibly be suspected of having any axe to grind in this matter), 'have already been completely assimilated into the caste-system of the Indids. In this way they become low-caste, the dregs of humanity. The contrast with the free jungle tribes is very characteristic. With the surrender of their weapons and the freedom of the forests, and just in the degree to which they give way to the attractions of a foreign and "higher" civilization, they sink to the very bottom of the social scale.' Yet where true religion is introduced, and education and reform conducted on sympathetic and scientific principles, good often results, especially if economic improvement has preceded spiritual change.

The Geographical Solution

The least satisfactory of the various solutions offered is the geographical solution—a policy of bringing the tribesmen down to the plains. This is the most destructive and cruel of all the ways of dealing with the problem. Economic collapse, moral decadence and psychic despair inevitably follow when Highlanders are forced away from their beloved mountains to the plains. The policy has nothing to commend

it and there is reason to suppose that it is only advocated in the interests of certain great industrialists who hope that later on the mineral and forest rights of the hills will be available to them without tiresome dispute about the human rights of poor and inconvenient people.

Apart even from the rights of the aboriginals, the policy of stripping the hills of their inhabitants is a bad one, for these wild and lonely tracts may well become a Dark Continent, the breeding-ground of ferocious animals and the refuge of dacoits. There are already signs of land-starvation everywhere and to give good and sufficient land to lakhs of new settlers would only seriously disturb the existing arrangements. Even the Forest Officer, so anxious to preserve his forest from the axes of the tribesmen, recognizes that these are the only people who, being inured to loneliness, hardship and disease, will ever be available to provide the labour necessary for his work.

The Scientific Solution

Finally, we have the scientific solution. In a sense our knowledge of the tribes is not yet sufficiently precise for us to have a scientific solution. Yet I think that the scientists are justified in claiming that their voice should be heard more often than it is in the administration of tribal areas. On matters of public health, they point out, the doctor is consulted; for road-making or mining the engineer is employed; so too in the very delicate and risky matter of cultural change those who have spent their lives studying it ought not to be ignored.

Unfortunately, anthropologists are associated in the Indian mind with two political policies with which actually as scientists they have nothing whatever to do—the policy of the Partially Excluded Areas and the attempt to separate the aboriginals from the Hindu community at the Census. Anthropology has further suffered in Indian esteem by being regarded, quite wrongly, as something foreign: it has been associated with the many travel books that are often little more than collections of sensationally interesting, but often somewhat discreditable, superstitions and customs. The idea naturally arose that the cause of India abroad would suffer as

a result of researches that exposed so much of the nakedness of the land.

This fear may have been justified in the case of certain inferior anthropological writings. It is entirely unmerited for the work of the modern anthropologist whose task is not to collect museum pieces, but to reveal in coherent and logical beauty the entire cultural organism of a people. It is not the loving care and sympathy of the scientists, who are the greatest champions of the tribesmen, that has lowered the cause of India in the world; it is rather the writings of casual travellers and tourists or of hired propagandists. Nor indeed do I believe that the fact that India has an aboriginal population is ever misunderstood. I have often asked American visitors to India what they think about this, and their reply is invariably along these lines: 'We too have an aboriginal population, the Red Indians, and we can well understand how primitive and highly civilized peoples can exist side by side. We have now learned to admire our aboriginals, and all that we have read about yours leads us to admire them also for their simplicity, their childlikeness and their courage. Indeed it will only increase our respect for India if we learn that Indian politicians are able to solve a problem that we ourselves so badly managed. We interfered in the life of the Red Indians and almost destroyed them. We trust you won't do the same thing in India.'

Another puerile complaint is that the anthropologists want to put the aboriginals in a zoo, a criticism that can only have been made by people who have never met an anthropologist or visited a zoo. Many anthropologists do, as a matter of fact, desire to see a considerable measure of protection given to the aboriginals, and some would like to have established National Parks or Reserves where they could live their own lives in unhampered liberty. But this is a very different thing from wishing to keep people as specimens for study in a zoo. It is desired so that these simple children of nature may be protected from those who invariably exploit them, and may continue to live in the freedom and happiness that is their birthright.

The need for protection is probably regarded by all scientists as the most important thing in the solution of the

aboriginal problem. They would also urge the application of certain general principles. They would say that we must be prepared to learn the lessons of history and the experience of other parts of the world. In Australia and the Pacific, in America and Africa, wide experience has been gained, generally at disastrous cost to the aboriginals themselves. This experience is available for study, and it is vital that the future of the Indian aboriginals should not be left either to ignorant politicians or to self-willed administrators who are not prepared to learn from what has happened in other lands. Scientists generally condemn both the missionary and geographical solutions of our problem, and they all insist that change must be extremely gradual if it is not to be disastrous; and that nothing (not even a bad thing) should be taken away from primitive people unless something else is ready to be put in its place.

The application of study to the problem may be illustrated by the situation that has so often arisen with regard to the prohibition of axe-cultivation. I have already pointed out that for the first class of aboriginals this form of cultivation is a necessity, whereas for the second class, although they are attached to it, it is no longer a living religious or social need. When in the Central Provinces fifty years ago axe-cultivation was prohibited, the Gonds who belonged to the second and third classes actually benefited, and many of them settled down as substantial farmers. But the Baigas who belonged to Class I were nearly destroyed, and still remain miserable and discontented because of the shattering blow that the prevention of something so near to their religious and social life had dealt them. In one of the Orissa States I found Bhuiyas belonging to Class II allowed to practise this form of cultivation, and Juangs of Class I prevented from it. The Juangs had sunk into the most pitiable condition of poverty and cultural decline, and the Bhuiyas who did not really need to use their axes, since they had plenty of cattle and the knowledge of ploughing, were merely destroying the forests without benefit to themselves.

Every tribe and every district has to be considered as a problem in itself. This means expenditure, a thing which

all Governments have shown themselves reluctant to incur with regard to aboriginals. Caution is absolutely necessary. Nothing must be done suddenly. Everything must be gradual. Knowledge must always precede reform.

The Need of Anthropology

The need for anthropological studies is most apparent when we consider the enormous attention that is now being paid to other branches of science. The study of man's material needs is out of all proportion to the attention paid to his psychological, moral and spiritual necessities. To study a people is to learn to love them, and to publish your studies is to make them widely loved. The ignorant and patronizing scorn with which all but the very best officials, politicians and members of the public regard the tribesman is seen in the use of the words 'uplift' and 'backward classes' (abominable expressions that should be banished from our vocabulary) and the very common belief that the tribesman is a sort of animal incapable of the higher love or spiritual perception.

Gradually modern methods and ideas are influencing India's study of this subject. The great need now is for a larger number of Indian scholars who will be ready to endure the tedious and exacting labours of research in the field. A whole phase of Indian culture will disappear from history unless means are speedily forthcoming to record it by pen and camera.

Conclusion

My own plan for the aboriginals has no claim to scientific authority. It is a simple practical scheme that has been impressed upon me by the actual realities of life during twelve years in a Gond village. It is based on my division of the aboriginals into different classes. The twenty million, who are already in contact with some sort of 'civilization' and are likely in the next few decades to be overwhelmed by it, do not ultimately present a problem very different from that of other peasants throughout India. The aboriginal problem cannot be considered apart from the general village problem. The great majority of Indian villagers are still

illiterate; they are still attached to antiquated and economically injurious social, religious and agricultural habits; they have little medical assistance, meagre educational facilities, bad communications; they are exploited and oppressed just as the aboriginals are. Wiser heads than mine will plan and great political and economic movements will determine the fate of these multitudes. The twenty million semi-civilized aboriginals will have to take their chance with the rest of the population. It is evident that there is little possibility of protecting them, although locally it may often be possible to ameliorate their lot by special treatment. It would, however, be deplorable if yet another minority community, which would clamour for special representation, weightage and a percentage of Government posts, were to be created. The twenty million aboriginals need what all village India needs—freedom, prosperity, peace, good education, medicine, a new system of agriculture and a fair deal under industrialization.

It is the remaining five millions who present a problem that may well tax our brains and patience. The difficulty here is that not only are there no workers available to solve the problem, but that many people in India refuse to admit that any problem exists. They are ignorant of or have forgotten the appalling consequences of a too rapid acculturation in other parts of the world. They have a pathetic faith in the 'march of progress' to solve every human problem. There is a great deal of glib talk in the cities about 'uplift' and the most ready with their opinions are those who have never seen the aboriginals and who themselves have never moved a finger to help them.

It is little use to say that we should give the blessings of civilization to the remotest aboriginals when we cannot give it to the workers in our great cities or to the peasants in accessible areas in the plains.

I suggest, therefore, that until the social sciences have come to more definite conclusions about the safeguards necessary for primitive people advancing into civilized life, until there are properly trained workers and teachers of integrity and enterprise, until there is sufficient money to do the job of civilizing properly, the five million wilder aboriginals should be left alone and should be given the

strictest protection that our Governments can afford. This is, I admit, a desperate measure and one that is easily misunderstood and still more easily misrepresented. It is a purely practical measure. It is based on no philosophic principle. Least of all does it suggest that the aboriginals are to be kept for ever primitive. I only urge that unless we can civilize them properly it is better not to interfere with the small minority of the most primitive hillmen at all. Casual benefits only destroy and degrade; it needs a lifetime of love and toil to achieve permanent advance.

This view is hotly contested by people who know nothing of the realities of the problem. I have heard very little criticism from those who have actually lived among and studied these aboriginals. The man in the city cannot believe that they can be happy without the radio and the cinema, that they can have a good physique without penicillin, that they can be honourable and decent without going to church, that they have a life that is good, peaceful and free. They feel that the very suggestion is a sort of criticism of their own advancement. I do not suggest that the primitive hillman is better than the finest flower of modern culture, but my experience, which is now extensive, is that these tribes in the freedom and glory of their mountains are infinitely better and better off than the semi-civilized and decadent clerks or coolies which is all that we seem able to produce by our present methods of uplift and reform.

For the great majority of the aboriginals, however, we should press forward with the best schemes of rural reconstruction and education that our wisest brains can devise. For the small minority, who in any case can scarcely be reached, there should be a temporary scheme of protection and isolation. Even for this minority, protection does not mean that nothing is to be done. For them, as for the other aboriginals, there is much that all men and women of goodwill may do immediately.

We may fight for the three freedoms—freedom from fear, freedom from want, freedom from interference. We may see that the aboriginals get a square deal economically. We may see that they are freed from cheats and impostors, from oppressive landlords and moneylenders, from corrupt and rapacious

officials. We may see that they get medical aid from doctors with some sense of professional integrity. If there must be schools, we may see that these teach useful crafts like carpentry and agriculture, and not a useless literacy. We may work to raise the prestige and the honour of the aboriginals in the eyes of their neighbours. We may guard them against adventurers who would rob them of their songs, their dances, their festivals, their laughter.

The essential thing is not to 'uplift' them into a social and economic sphere to which they cannot adapt themselves, but to restore to them the liberties of their own countryside.

But whatever is done, and I would be the last to lay down a general programme, it must be done with caution and above all with love and reverence. The aboriginals are the real swadeshi products of India, in whose presence everyone is foreign. These are the ancient people with moral claims and rights thousands of years old. They were here first: they should come first in our regard.

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THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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OXFORD PAMPHLETS
ON INDIAN AFFAIRS



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OXFORD PAMPHLETS ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

No. 15—DOUBLE PAMPHLET

THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

PRIMARY EDUCATION
By K. G. SAIYADAIN

SECONDARY EDUCATION
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THE UNIVERSITIES
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ADULT EDUCATION
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HUMPHREY MILFORD
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To call this pamphlet 'The Educational System' implies perhaps more integration and uniformity than is to be found in India, where the British Indian provinces and Indian States have all been free to develop their own systems for many years. After reading these papers the dominant impression left in one's mind is that more integration is necessary. A vast expansion of primary and adult education is overdue, secondary and university education require modification, and technical education has still to be developed. For all these purposes, there seems to be the need for a central co-ordinating authority, with power to implement its plans.

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PRIMARY EDUCATION

I. THE BACKGROUND

India's Traditional Love of Learning

INDIA has been a land of learning throughout the ages, not indeed in the sense that education has been universal or very widespread, but in the sense that learning has always been very highly valued and the learned man has been held in even higher esteem than the warrior or the administrator. The close association, in ancient India, between the priestly classes and the duty of education gave the latter a religious rather than a secular significance. During the Muslim period, too, the intimacy of relationship between religion and learning remained intact, and education never became merely a means for earning a livelihood. It was, in some ways, limited in its scope but it was certainly a more integral part of culture than is the case today — taken up by the teachers, generally, as a labour of love and by the students as part of their training for culture and citizenship. The idea of passing examinations and taking degrees and certificates with the definite and declared object of securing entrance into Government service was practically unknown. As in the rest of the world, it is a feature of much later growth, when political and technical developments made certain branches of knowledge and skill marketable commodities. There was no state-controlled and state-financed system of education as is the case in all modern civilized countries today. Education depended partly on private effort motivated by philanthropic considerations, partly on the benefactions of wealthy people who were religiously inclined, and partly on royal patronage, which varied, of course, with individual rulers. As the educational organization was loose and informal, it is not

possible to speak with any statistical certainty about the extent to which facilities for primary (or higher) education were available in India during the ancient or medieval ages. We know definitely that during many luminous periods of Hindu history as also during the Pathan and Mogul periods there was a fairly extensive network of secular and religious schools in the country.

Education before the East India Company

It is difficult to say what the exact state of affairs was in the period immediately preceding the rule of the East India Company. One school of thought — perhaps prompted, consciously or unconsciously, by the desire to throw into bright relief the British period of Indian history — has attempted to prove that when the East India Company stepped into the Indian scene the country was plunged in veritable educational darkness and that, partly on account of the indifference of earlier rulers and partly on account of the wars and the generally unsettled political condition of the preceding decades, no adequate or satisfactory arrangement existed for the education of the people. This view has, however, been seriously challenged by another school of thought which includes Europeans like Dr. Leitner (Director of Public Instruction in the Punjab) and Keir Hardie. They hold that, even at that time, there was a very widespread network of indigenous schools all over the country, that the percentage of literacy was much higher than today, and that it was the lack of proper integration or the uncontrolled conflict between the old and the new systems of education which brought about the rapid decay of the former. On the authority of Max Müller, Keir Hardie has expressed the opinion that before the advent of the British there were as many as 80,000 schools (*maktabs* and *madrasas*) in Bengal alone — which averages out at a

school for every four hundred persons—and that in most villages a majority of people could read and write. With the breakdown of the old system, the village schools gradually disappeared and illiteracy swept the countryside apace. In the absence of reliable statistical data, it is difficult to adjudicate authoritatively between these contradictory views, but, on the basis of the evidence that is available, there is no reason to believe that the pre-British period was either educationally obscurantist or indifferent to the educational needs of the people.

Under the Company's Rule

What, however, of the educational efforts and policy of the East India Company? During the Company's regime, the question of primary education did not figure at all prominently before the Directors and, in the early stages at least, it was definitely ignored. The Directors were naturally more concerned with the size of their dividends than with the provision of educational facilities for a people whose culture and psychology they did not fully understand or appreciate. There was, however, a small group of Englishmen—men like Charles Grant and Wilberforce—who *were* in favour of providing educational facilities in India; but their motives were somewhat mixed. They believed that education would make for ordered progress rather than sweeping, revolutionary changes, as ignorant and illiterate masses are more inflammable material for the political agitator. Again, as Charles Grant argued in his pamphlet, dated 1798, the propagation of English education is desirable because it would 'eradicate the superstitions and falsehoods inherent in the religious thought and philosophy of the Indian people', and consequently impress upon them the superiority of Western culture and religion. The redoubtable Lord Macaulay also lent his support, later, to this narrow-minded and somewhat conceited view. But the

curious fact is that the Directors of the Company were stoutly opposed even to the bill introduced by Wilberforce in Parliament in 1792, advocating that Christian missionaries and educational workers be sent out to India. They apparently considered discretion to be the better part of valour and were afraid that even these missionary efforts might result in political awakening and unrest, and that the unpleasant experience of the American colonies might be repeated in India's rich and obliging land. Little wonder then that even the modest efforts of the interested Englishmen to bring English education to India remained fruitless for many years.

As the years rolled on, there was a growing consciousness on the part of the new rulers, aided perhaps by public pressure, that education is an important responsibility of the state which could not be indefinitely evaded. But things moved at an exasperatingly slow pace. In 1813, the magnificent sum of one lakh of rupees was sanctioned in the Budget, for the first time, for educational purposes but even this amount was not fully utilized for ten years. From 1824 onwards, two or three lakhs were annually spent on education, but obviously such expenditure could not go far to meet the educational needs of millions of people. The Education Dispatch of 1854 made a more serious attempt to tackle the problem. It recommended the extension of primary education through the direct instrumentality of the state, as well as the encouragement of private schools through grants-in-aid. But the proposals did not cut much ice, because the resources available were ridiculously meagre as compared to the magnitude of the problem. Moreover, the Government of the day as well as some influential, and otherwise far-sighted, Indian leaders like Sir Syed Ahmad Khan had pinned their faith in what has come to be known as the Filtration Theory of education, i.e. concentrate on

higher education and the education of the upper classes and they will, in their turn, naturally and inevitably, provide for the education of the masses. Education percolating down from the top, as it were! If political conditions had been different and intimate contact had existed between the classes and the masses, there was some likelihood of the filtration process being set in motion. As it was, this attempt to build a top-heavy, inverted pyramid failed signally as an educational policy for an enormous and predominantly illiterate country.

The Beginnings of an Educational System

The Hunter Commission of 1882 surveyed the educational situation again and made as many as 36 recommendations on primary education, some of which were quite unexceptionable. But the Report lacked vision and a proper appreciation of the magnitude of the problem and there was not even a distant indication of the possibility of universal primary education. It recommended that 'the strenuous efforts of the state should now be directed to primary education *in a still larger measure than heretofore*'. The 'still larger measure' sounds amusing, if it is not meant to be ironical. The Municipal and District Boards were directed to institute school funds out of which part of the expenditure on primary education was to be met and grants-in-aid were to be based on the pernicious system of 'payment-by-results'. Even these recommendations were not vigorously or effectively implemented, and the nineteenth century closed in an educational stalemate.

While the rest of the world was going full steam ahead in the educational field during the early decades of the present century, the policy in India continued to be characterized by the same fatal gradualness as before. In 1904, a Resolution on Indian Educational Policy was conceived and published by Lord Curzon, in which the Government of

Primary Education Acts

Meanwhile the Great War of 1914–18 was fought and won. It brought in its train many disasters, but also a promise of political reform culminating in the Government of India Act of 1919, which incidentally stimulated interest in education. During the years 1918–20 the various Provincial Governments passed a crop of Primary Education Acts which may be regarded as the nearest approximation so far achieved to the ideal of introducing compulsory primary education in the country. They differed in details, but the general outline is the same. The Acts gave the Municipalities and the District Boards the authority to introduce, *at their option*, compulsory education between the ages of six and ten within any part of their jurisdiction after obtaining Government sanction for the purpose. In most of the provinces it is contemplated that this education will be free, but in some like Bengal it is thoughtfully laid down that it '*shall* not ordinarily be free'! Thus the introduction of compulsion is still left to the discretion and initiative of local bodies and, considering what their financial resources generally are and how much forceful initiative can be reasonably expected of them, it is obvious that these Acts could not be the harbingers of any radical or revolutionary programmes. They failed to solve the problem of mass education.

II. SOME PROBLEMS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

The Magnitude of the Problem

When we come to examine the outstanding problems of primary education in India, the first point that confronts us is its sheer magnitude. India is now a country of about 400 million people and the population grows apace. In spite of the greatly increased funds and attention devoted to the problem during the last few decades, we have not even

touched the outer fringes. At present only 34 per cent of the boys and girls of school-going age are under instruction, and even this percentage must be heavily discounted, for a variety of reasons, in estimating literacy. There is, firstly, the problem of wastage. Only 26 per cent of the boys and 13 per cent of the girls on the roll of the primary schools manage to reach Class IV, and considering that even after five years' schooling students fail to achieve permanent literacy—to say nothing of other more important educational objectives—the rest of the boys and girls can be easily left out in calculating effective literacy. The following figures reveal, for example, a tell-tale picture of the classwise enrolment in the primary schools of Bengal and show the paralysing incidence of wastage:[1]

Infant class	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV
21	6·5	4·5	2·0	1·5

This means that only 7 per cent of the children get to Class IV, while the rest fall by the wayside, and that the educational machinery is like a 100-horsepower engine working with 7 per cent efficiency. This makes educational expenditure unprofitable, educational effort ineffective and schools inefficient. It is the despair of teachers, inspecting officers and educational administrators and, unless radical steps are taken to check it, no schemes of reform can have any chance of being successful. Again, while literacy has been slowly increasing, the population has grown more quickly, and it is a moot point whether, at this rate, the increase in the total number of literates can keep pace with the increase in the number of illiterates. In 1881, the percentage was reported to be 3·5 per cent, in 1931 it had risen to 8 per cent, i.e. by 4·5 per cent. According to this depressing basis of calculation, it will take the country, at the present rate of progress, about one millennium to achieve 100 per cent literacy.

[1] J. M. Sen, *Primary Education Acts.*

Looked at from the point of view of expenditure to be incurred, the position is no more encouraging. According to the latest figures available, we spend about ninety million rupees annually on education from all the various sources—Government, Local Boards, income from fees, etc. On a *conservative* estimate the total recurring expenditure on primary education on a nation-wide scale is likely to be about 300 million rupees, without counting the capital cost to be incurred on buildings and equipment—conservative, because it is calculated on the basis of an average annual expenditure of Rs. 8 per boy and Rs. 10 per girl, which is ridiculously low as compared with the corresponding cost in educationally advanced countries.

The Inevitability of Compulsion

No approach to the problem of primary education is worth anything which ignores this quantitative aspect. The greatest tragedy of the Indian educational policy has been its lack of vision and far-sightedness, a failure to realize that no palliative measures but a tremendous nation-wide crusade alone can meet the situation. What Great Britain was doing in the field of education three-quarters of a century ago still defines the boundaries of the official policy, and the introduction of compulsory, universal education is still looked upon as a desirable, but a very distant, dream. Our survey has, however, shown conclusively that much cannot be achieved either through the mythical process of filtration, or through the encouragement of private enterprise or the establishment of state schools in selected localities or even through a kind of permissive compulsion. This obstinate fact is now recognized not only by politicians and educationists but also by seasoned, and therefore cautious, administrators. Thus Sir George Anderson has pointed out in his *Report on the Progress of Education in the Panjab (1924–25)*

that neither economy nor efficiency could be attained without compulsion, which would, on the one hand, reduce wastage and eliminate 'superfluous' and 'uneconomical' schools (by making better planning possible), and, on the other hand, ensure a better chance of achieving literacy by insisting on attendance for a minimum period of four or five years. 'Compulsion is, therefore, an economy and not a luxury which must wait for better times. Every effort should, therefore, be made to introduce it as rapidly as possible.' But while the realization is clear, it has failed to find expression in any long-range plan of expansion inspired by imagination and sympathy.

Further it must be realized that to make compulsory education a success, it is absolutely necessary to make it entirely free. I am always surprised at those who demur at this demand and fail to realize that, if in the richest countries in the world like England and the U.S.A., mass education is not only free but there are many additional facilities like midday meals for children, free medical service, scholarships on a generous scale and, in certain cases, even maintenance allowance for parents, a poor country like India cannot expect her people to pay directly for the education of their children. If mass education is considered as an avoidable luxury or, at best, an act of philanthropy, it is right to think of ways and means of reducing expenditure by restricting its scope and fighting shy of its essential financial implications. But if education is a fundamental civic and human right and basic to the health of the body politic, funds *must* be found for the purpose, whatever the cost of the scheme. Perhaps it is ultimately a question of values. If we consider educational and cultural activities to be as important as wars or the civil services, funds will be forthcoming—not easily, by any means, but through the adoption of a many-sided programme of national planning and economic and industrial reconstruc-

tion. If not, there will always be plausible and apparently unassailable arguments and statistics to prove that it is impossible to introduce free, compulsory and universal primary education in this country.

Reconstruction of Primary Education

So much for the organization or the framework of primary education. We must now turn to its other equally important aspect: its contents and ideology. It is a debatable point whether poor and defective education is in any way better than no education at all. And, for various reasons, our primary education has been meagre, ineffective and uninteresting. It has neither quickened the minds nor enriched the life of the students. Cramped within the narrow compass of the traditional academic subjects and certain technical skills, it has neither been based on the psychology of the child nor responsive to the needs of national life. The future of education cannot be better than its depressing past unless we can reconstruct radically the curriculum, the methods and the whole atmosphere of the primary school, on which rests the entire educational superstructure. If the work of this school lacks life, reality and the touch of imagination, nothing can guarantee the health of the educational system as a whole.

The Balance of Theory and Practice

Along what lines should this reconstruction proceed?

In the first place, we must redress the defective balance between theory and practice in our schools. While life is practical, pragmatic and constructive, the school is a place of bookish learning. When the child enters the school, there is an abrupt and upsetting split in his life because of the conspicuous lack of continuity between the home and school atmosphere. On account of its predominantly academic approach, the school fails to train its students for the practi-

cal demands of an active, social and productive life. A village boy, who has to find his livelihood and his life interests in agriculture and allied types of manual work, does not become a better farmer or a better citizen by receiving stereotyped instruction in the three Rs, which are often divorced from the concrete realities and the pulsating life and problems of his environment. The real object of primary education is not to wean away the children from their rural surroundings or the normal preoccupations of the village community but to enable them to take their place in village life with greater intelligence, understanding and appreciation. The ordinary run of our primary schools fail to achieve this object not only because their curriculum is narrow and one-sided and their methods passive and unliberating but also because they lack adequate accommodation and equipment and work under such adverse *material* conditions that it becomes impossible to create any traditions or tastes or truly educative atmosphere in them. Many of the social and artistic aptitudes of children wither away because they never get any chance for self-expression, and the country suffers an incalculable loss of talent and creative capacity.

The Widening of the Curriculum

It would not be true to say that no attempts have been made to improve methods or to enrich and modify the curriculum during the last few decades. To remedy the artificiality that broods over the work of the primary school, new subjects have been introduced: manual training, nature study, rural science, agriculture, drawing, etc. Schools with a rural bias have been opened and books have been written with an eye to the needs and interests of village children. A few progressive schools have flirted with the Project Method and the Dalton Plan and other modern methods. But these reforms have unfortunately failed to revolutionize

educational ideology and technique because, generally speaking, piecemeal changes and modifications have been introduced into the set framework of the existing system—as if life, which is dynamic and free, could be forced into preconceived, outworn and unsuitable moulds! What is really needed is an almost exactly opposite approach. Study life—its needs and demands and problems; study the child—his mind, his instincts, his emotions and his interests, and then devise a system of education that will ring true on these two complementary counters. Life is the great denominator; education must be reduced to its living terms.

Basic National Education

The scheme of Basic National Education, with which is associated the name of Mahatma Gandhi, is perhaps the most significant and radical attempt so far made to reconstruct primary education from this point of view. I can touch here only very briefly on its most salient characteristics. Firstly, the scheme attacks the problem boldly instead of postulating timid and gradual approaches. It asks for the introduction of *free and universal primary education, on a compulsory basis*, throughout the country. It is not content with a 4- or 5-years' course but insists on a *7-years' course* from the age of 7 to 14 in order to ensure that the children at school will not only acquire effective and abiding literacy but will also be mature enough to understand and appreciate social problems and develop social habits and attitudes. This education is to be *basic*, i.e. related to the basic interests of the child mind and the basic occupations of community life. And, as the mind of the child is an active, pragmatic and social organism and the life of the community is sustained through various types of craftwork, education, too, must centre round some suitable *basic craft*, chosen with due regard to the occupations of the

locality. This craft is not to be just another subject like manual training: it is the pivot of the entire teaching, to which all the other subjects are to be *correlated.* As the craft is practised and its 'why and wherefore' studied with care, problems will arise and questions press themselves on the child's attention and, in tackling them and following up their ramifications under the tactful and unobtrusive guidance of the teacher, the child will gradually find his way into the domains of history, geography, science, etc. Thus education, starting as a unified and integral activity, will lead him into ever-expanding regions of knowledge. Such an approach to the unlocking of the child's mind and creative powers is more effective and fruitful not only because it enlists the powerful support of his instincts but also because it offers opportunities for co-operative and group work in school and thus establishes lines of liaison between life in school and outside. It bases his education on the bedrock of productive work, which is as essential for moral and social training as for the training of practical aptitudes.

Thanks to the impetus given to the scheme by Mahatma Gandhi, it got a promising start in 1938—in spite of the objections of the academicians and the financial and administrative difficulties—and, but for the political impasse that ensued soon after, it would have made much greater headway. Even as it is, it has passed through the most critical stage of early experimentation and trial and, although many modifications and adjustments of detail will be necessary in the light of growing experience, the fundamentals of the scheme stand justified at the bar of informed educational opinion. Not, indeed, that the approval is unanimous—what radical scheme can claim that impossible reception?—but the movement has certainly received a gratifying measure of support, in some cases from entirely unexpected quarters.

It may be difficult to predict its exact future but it is certain that it will exercise a powerful formative influence on the shaping of our educational policy and it will not be possible for any intelligent educationist of the future to think of primary education in terms of the needs of upper and middle classes only or to envisage the primary school as mainly a place of book learning, unrelated to the socio-economic situation and its future as visualized by men of intelligence and foresight.

Educational Reconstruction as part of National Reconstruction

Is it possible to implement this or any other radical scheme of mass education in India? Obviously, the mere framing of an ambitious programme is no *ipso facto* guarantee of its practicability, as it does not offer any solution of the undeniable financial and administrative difficulties. This is an irritating question—irritating in the sense that it either ignores the modern educational history of many other countries which have achieved, in spite of being almost equally handicapped, the seeming miracle of a reasonably well-organized system of mass education, or because it implies the assumption that the people of this country are stamped by a specially designed inferiority which makes them incapable of achieving what others have achieved. If, within a period of 40 years, the U.S.A. could increase the percentage of literacy in the Philippines from 2 to 55 per cent, if within 20 years the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics could reduce the illiteracy of its backward and widely scattered population from 78 to 8 per cent, if China and Turkey, struggling against the heaviest of odds, could tackle this problem with noticeable success, is there any reason, in the very nature of things, why India should be unable to do so? There is, however, one necessary condition which will

have to be fulfilled if this tremendous task is to be done; it postulates the organization of an enthusiastic educational crusade, on a nation-wide basis, which would sweep away alike the people's indifference and the administrators' hesitations and timidity. This cannot, however, be generated in a vacuum; it must be part of a much greater movement for the radical reconstruction of the socio-economic structure of the people's life, arising out of the impulse of national freedom. That is why I feel convinced that the educational problem of India will not be solved till the political problem has been satisfactorily solved, till India is not only politically free but, like the U.S.S.R., utilizes its freedom for fashioning a society based on social justice and planning its economic and industrial life on rational lines. That alone can stimulate the enthusiasm and guarantee the men and the money, the spirit and the sacrifice necessary for this stupendous task.

SECONDARY EDUCATION

THE secondary, or high, school in which English is taught and in which, until recently, English was the sole medium of instruction, is Britain's most distinctive contribution to modern Indian education. It has a long and interesting history which goes back far beyond Macaulay's Minute and it is in the light of this history that its present position, as the backbone of the whole educational system, is most easily intelligible. Some authorities trace its origin to the early efforts of Christian missionaries, belonging to different countries and to different Protestant denominations. Another school of thought is inclined to regard the modern secondary school as the direct descendant of the private seminaries which sprang up, chiefly in Calcutta, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to meet the demands of

Indians for a knowledge of English. It is generally agreed, however, that missionary as well as private enterprise preceded by several years any serious attempt on the part of the Government to provide English education for the people of India. It is also agreed that the first person to formulate an elaborate scheme for the introduction of a widespread system of English education was Charles Grant, who retired from the Company's service in 1790 and subsequently became a Member of Parliament and Chairman of the Board of Directors. He was fired by evangelical zeal and greatly influenced by what Schwartz had done in Madras for the improvement of the people. Backed by the Clapham Sect and by several missionary societies he succeeded, after more than twenty years of strenuous effort, in having an educational clause inserted in the Charter of 1813; this authorized the Company to make a small allotment from public funds for the 'revival of learning' (presumably Oriental) and the 'promotion of scientific knowledge' (presumably Western). This clause marks an epoch, because it is the first legislative admission of the right of education in India to participate in public revenues and because it started the controversy between the Anglicists and the Orientalists which agitated Bengal for many years to come. In the following year (1814) the Directors issued their first educational Dispatch, which puzzled the authorities in India. In the first place it was so vaguely worded that it was difficult to make out what exactly were the intentions of Parliament; secondly, the suggestion that the support of education was a duty resting upon the state was considered not merely quixotic but even dangerous. For years past the Government in India had been pledged to the principle of *strict religious neutrality* and were reluctant to do anything which might be regarded as an interference with the religious beliefs or practices of any section of the people; they were frankly

suspicious of the wisdom of the decision to promote the moral and religious improvement of India, for they were well aware of the evangelical inspiration that lay behind it. The easiest way out of the difficulty was to ignore the Dispatch and to adopt a policy of masterly inactivity.

When a Committee of Public Instruction was set up in 1823 it was decided that the limited funds available should be devoted to the encouragement of Oriental learning, which had behind it the sanction of religion and traditional associations dear to the people. Since the time of Warren Hastings the Company had maintained a few Oriental Colleges, such as the Calcutta Madrassa and the Hindu College, Benares. These had been established for administrative reasons—for the training of upper-class Mohammedans and Hindus for responsible judicial work—and it was believed that the patronage extended to them by the Government would conciliate the more orthodox and influential members of each of the two great communities. Even if no funds had been made available for educational purposes, these institutions would have continued to enjoy Government patronage. The new Committee proposed the establishment of additional Oriental Colleges, whereupon Ram Mohan Roy, the most enlightened Indian of his day and himself a Sanskrit scholar, wrote a letter of protest to the Governor-General urging the Government to encourage the advancement of modern scientific knowledge. His protest went unheeded and the Committee reported to the Directors that there was no demand for Western culture and that a knowledge of English was not among the sensible wants of the people.

This verdict is all the more remarkable because the phenomenal success of the Hindu College (or Vidyalaya) was known to everyone in Calcutta and this institution, even at the time, was in receipt of financial aid from the Government. The College had been founded in 1817 by

the united efforts of David Hare, an English watchmaker and philanthropist, and Ram Mohan Roy, the acknowledged leader of liberal Indian opinion. It was an entirely secularist institution, intended to impart Western knowledge to Hindus of good family, and English was employed as the medium of instruction in the higher classes. Owing to the failure of a bank in which its funds (collected by private subscription) were deposited, Hare approached the Government for assistance and so the College (which developed into the Presidency College in 1855) came under Government control—partial in the beginning. Conservative Hindus viewed with misgivings the secular education which the college imparted, and the extravagant behaviour of some of the students alarmed the Committee of Public Instruction. To counteract the influence of the Vidyalaya, Duff founded his equally famous English College in 1830 and, despite the fact that he made religious teaching obligatory, this institution was soon filled to overflowing (no fees were charged) by enthusiastic young Hindus who were anxious to qualify themselves for honourable, albeit worldly, careers. Some years before, Munro in Madras (1822–6) and Elphinstone in Bombay (1823–7) had urged upon the Directors the desirability of encouraging higher English education among the *upper* classes and they had insisted that it was the duty of the Government to train the natural leaders of the people to occupy responsible administrative posts. The anxiety of the sons of middle- and upper-class Hindus to obtain safe and lucrative employment and the desire of the Company to recruit, at cheap rates, efficient Indian officers go a long way towards explaining the growing demand for English education. In spite of the short-sightedness of the Committee, who advocated caution and the expediency of conciliating learned *maulvis* and *pandits*, the Directors, who were influenced by the elder Mill, came to the conclusion (1830) that higher

English education was deserving of all the encouragement which the Government could give it, because it was calculated 'to raise up a class of persons qualified by their intelligence and morality for high appointment in the civil administration of India'. It is clear that long before Macaulay penned his once famous, now infamous, Minute the die was cast in favour of English education. Macaulay's championship came late and his glib condemnation of Oriental learning was not necessary to convince Bentinck that in future all funds available for educational purposes should be devoted to the maintenance of schools and colleges devoted to Western, but secular, learning to be imparted through the medium of English.

When the facts are squarely faced, Macaulay cannot be held responsible for having imposed an alien culture upon an unwilling India; on the other hand, some credit is due to him for having settled a long-standing dispute and for having confirmed the Governor-General in his opinion that a small allotment from public funds could legally be spent on the promotion of Western learning. It must be conceded that he had no doubt in his own mind that English was of greater cultural value and of greater practical use than Sanskrit or Arabic, or even Persian; also, like many others of his day (including Indians), he believed that the spoken languages were too crude and undeveloped to be suitable vehicles for the communication of modern knowledge. His advocacy of higher English education was based on the assumption that if the upper classes were given facilities for the acquirement of modern knowledge, such knowledge would gradually percolate down to the masses. This is the well-known filtration theory which amounts to little more than this: 'Educate the classes and the masses will look after themselves.' This, of course, is absurd and the students, mostly Hindus, who enrolled themselves in English schools and colleges were not inspired by any zeal to educate or uplift their more unfortunate fellows—

they were too much engrossed in their own affairs and bent on satisfying their own ambitions. Even under Muslim rule Government service had been largely monopolized by Hindus; being wise in their generation, they now abandoned the study of Persian and learned English instead. Small blame to them if they regarded Western education as essentially vocational and embarked on the study of English much in the same spirit as young persons of today might take a course in shorthand or typewriting. This attitude was encouraged even by the Government: in 1837 it was decided that English and the spoken languages of the country should supplant Persian in the law-courts, and in 1844 Lord Hardinge issued a Proclamation announcing that young men educated in English institutions would be given preference for appointment to Government service. These administrative measures gave a considerable impetus to the spread of English education. The Government's policy appears to have satisfied an influential body of advanced Hindu opinion, though it was repugnant to Muslims and strongly condemned by English administrators whose opinions were entitled to respect. Unfortunately, exact figures for the twenty years following 1835 are not available, but it is known (i) that when the Hoogly College was started (1837) no less than 1,200 applications for admission were received within the first three days; (ii) that the number of English schools controlled by the Committee of Public Instruction rose from 28 in 1843 to 151 in 1855, while the number of pupils increased in the same period from 4,632 to 13,163; (iii) that prior to 1854 the Government had established an English school in each district headquarters town (save one) of the Bombay Presidency. With the rapid growth of English schools and colleges (there was no clear line of demarcation between the two), Oriental Colleges lapsed into a state of suspended animation, while primary education, except in Bombay and

the new North-Western Provinces, made little, if any, headway. The ever-growing enthusiasm for English education seemed a sufficient justification for the anglicizing policy which the Government, with some reluctance and after considerable hesitation, had finally adopted.

The issue of Wood's Dispatch (1854), 'a bold, farseeing and statesmanlike document' which is still the basis of the Indian educational system, disturbed the complacency of all concerned. Among many important recommendations it proposed the introduction of a well-articulated system of education from the elementary school upwards, the creation of a Department of Public Instruction in each major province, the institution of a system of grants-in-aid and the foundation of universities (on the London model) in the Presidency towns. The recognition of the importance of primary education is a welcome departure along new lines and implies a repudiation of the old and pernicious theory of downward filtration. The main objective, however, was still 'to extend European knowledge throughout all classes of the people' and this was to be imparted to the upper classes through the medium of English and to the masses through their own spoken languages. As far as higher education is concerned, the most important recommendation was the establishment of universities. This proposal caught the popular imagination and English education became more popular than ever before. High schools and colleges increased with unprecedented rapidity and students, mostly middle-class Hindus, flocked to them in their thousands. As a result, almost all the money available for the educational needs of a vast population was spent on higher English education and the claims of elementary education were conveniently shelved.

It is little wonder that the Hunter Commission were quick to realize that the system had become top-heavy and, to

redress the balance, they recommended the gradual withdrawal of the Government from the field of higher education and its transference to semi-official and private bodies, which were to be given liberal grants-in-aid. The main object of these proposals was to curtail Government's expenditure on secondary schools and colleges and so make available more money for the spread of primary education, which was held to have 'an almost exclusive claim on public revenues'. In order to encourage the establishment of private high schools and colleges, they went so far as to recommend that these institutions should charge fees lower than those charged in similar institutions controlled by the Government. These proposals, plausible on the surface, had certain effects which were never intended: they led to the multiplication of inefficient secondary schools and colleges, miserably staffed and inadequately equipped. By their terms of reference the Commission were precluded from dealing with the universities, but one of their most important recommendations indicates that they viewed with alarm the stereotyped literary education imparted in high schools already dominated by the requirements of Matriculation: they proposed that in the upper classes there should be bifurcation, 'one division leading to Matriculation and the other of a more practical character to fit youths for commercial and non-literary pursuits'. The Government gave this recommendation their blessing, but took no steps to implement it, even in their own schools, while private, including missionary, institutions were unable to meet the expenditure involved by the provision of modern equipment and the employment of expert teachers. It was certainly difficult to go against the tide of popular enthusiasm, and the educated classes still adhered to the traditional view that literary studies were on a higher plane than any sort of practical training. The result was that things were allowed to drift and, as the century

drew towards its close, the products of the existing system, many of them graduates, found it more and more difficult to find employment; economic insecurity naturally bred discontent and this was fanned by political agitation. Nothing, however, was done to remedy matters until Lord Curzon decided to tackle the thorny question of educational reform. He appointed a University Commission which recommended (1904), as a cure for the tyranny of Matriculation and the evils of cramming, that the standard of entrance examinations should be raised and that candidates should not be allowed to matriculate until they had reached the age of 16; these proposals were popularly regarded as unjust and as a threat to the growing power of the intelligentsia. Another recommendation was that only 'recognized' schools should be allowed to send up candidates for Matriculation—a proposal which led to the framing of elaborate rules governing university recognition; these were laxly administered because the universities had neither the machinery nor the courage to enforce them. In *Resolutions on Indian Educational Policy* issued in 1904 and 1913 the Government of India stated that they were aware of the fact that purely literary courses continued to attract the great majority of pupils and that more practical courses were but little in request. They proposed to introduce 'alternative courses' to meet the needs of those who were destined for industrial and commercial pursuits, to free secondary schools from university domination by setting up S.L.C. examinations (with diversified curricula), and to curtail the use of English as the medium of instruction. These proposals failed to undermine the faith of the intelligentsia in university education; secondary schools of the old-fashioned type grew apace, and the defects of an unwieldy and inefficient system became most noticeable in Bengal. In 1917 the Calcutta University Commission was appointed to investigate the system of higher

education in that province and to give a lead to other provinces in the matter of educational reform. Two years later the Report of the Sadler Commission was published and it is generally ranked as an educational 'classic'. It exposed, with sympathy and impartiality, the faults of a narrow and examination-ridden system and laid particular stress on the inability of universities to control secondary education, on the rigid uniformity of the literary studies pursued for Matriculation, on the predominance of English and on the inefficiency of teachers and their miserable conditions of service. As far as high schools are concerned, the most important proposals related to the setting up of Intermediate Colleges, the dethronement of English as the medium of instruction and the appointment of well-qualified and well-paid trained teachers. These proposals were accepted, in principle, by the Government, but not carried out to any appreciable extent—least of all in Bengal itself. It is true that the upheaval caused by the Great War, the subsequent wave of economic depression and the political movements which led to dyarchy and culminated in the Reforms of 1937 help to explain the reluctance of the authorities to overhaul a system, which, in spite of its obvious defects, still had the support of the educated classes —including men of advanced political views.

The main defects of the system have been stressed in recent years by the Hartog Committee (1929) and the Abbott-Wood *Report on Vocational Education in India* (1937), which reiterated the necessity of building up a system of education suited to the needs and aspirations of the people and based on the industrial and economic requirements of the country. Various responsible bodies have since given careful consideration to the reform of secondary schools. For instance, the Conference of Indian Universities which met at Delhi in 1934 passed a resolution urging 'the radical readjustment of

the present system of education in such a way that a number of pupils should be diverted on the completion of their secondary education to occupations or to separate vocational institutions'; such reorganization, it was claimed, would relieve unemployment, ease congestion in the colleges and enable the universities to raise their standards of admission. In 1935 the Central Advisory Board made a comprehensive survey of the existing position and pointed out that 'various considerations necessitated a new attitude towards educational problems'; it was resolved that 'a radical readjustment of the present system in schools should be made in such a way as not only to prepare pupils for professional and university courses, but also to enable them, at the completion of appropriate stages, to be diverted to occupations or to separate vocational institutions'. Since then several provincial Governments have drawn up schemes for the introduction of S.L.C. examinations with diversified and practical courses, entirely free from university requirements. Such efforts as have been made to reform a stereotyped system have been cautious and they do not appear to have aroused much popular enthusiasm; old prejudices die hard and it would seem that vested interests will have to be set at nought and academic obstinacy overcome before schools can shake off university entanglements and enjoy the latitude and freedom which are theirs by right. It is a healthy sign, however, that university authorities are beginning to realize that direct preoccupation with schools tends to divert their attention from purely academic concerns, that the Matriculation examination is no longer a reliable test of fitness for higher studies, that colleges are crowded with young people who have no inclination or aptitude for academic work and that a lowering of standards is the inevitable consequence of granting easy admission to unwieldy numbers. Apart altogether from the problems of educated unemployment and

vocational training, it seems clear that the secondary system needs to be overhauled in the interests of universities themselves, so as to enable them to fill the place in the cultural life of the country which it is their duty to fill. In the meantime, some 1½ million boys and 350,000 girls (of whom nearly one-seventh are attending boys' schools) are receiving an education which is all of a piece, which has no direct bearing on the lives they lead outside their schools and which leads, or rather drives, them to embark on academic work for which the majority are totally unfitted.

When the present position is viewed in its proper historical perspective, it seems reasonable to conclude that the secondary school system suffers from arrested development: it has failed to keep pace with the changes—social and political, economic and industrial—which have gone to the making of modern India, and it has failed to keep abreast of the latest developments in educational theory and practice. Schools are weighed down by the incubus of Matriculation and fettered by regulations governing 'recognition'; courses are bookish and theoretical and provide little to attract pupils with a practical turn of mind; the excessive use of English as the medium of instruction places a severe psychological burden on both pupils and teachers—it stifles individuality, encourages memorization and makes instruction lifeless and mechanical; scientific and practical subjects are neglected and inadequate provision is made for outdoor games and other recreational activities. The whole school system is rigid and inelastic and is characterized by a dull and monotonous uniformity. On the whole, India has been well served by expert advice but, despite the recommendations of various Committees and Commissions, little has been done to adapt an outworn system to the conditions of modern life. Indeed, it is only a slight exaggeration to say that the Indian high school, with a few notable exceptions, is much the same

as it was in 1904 and but little changed from what it was as far back as 1884. It is abundantly clear, therefore, that the secondary system must be reorganized and made more fruitful; at present, it brings only disillusionment and discontent to many whose abilities and aspirations are deserving of a richer reward.

THE UNIVERSITIES

HIGHER education was imparted in this country even in the ancient days. There is abundant evidence to show that it was widespread, well-organized, and easily available. It was in keeping with the social framework; it was in harmony with the spirit of men's dreams; it sustained both the spiritual and the material needs of the community. Institutions of higher learning were richly endowed; they attracted scholars from far and near; many of the savants had an international reputation. Taxila, Nalanda, Mithila, Navadvipa, to mention only a few, were centres of learning to which flocked many a youth burning with the desire for light, eager to seek knowledge whatever the cost and however hard the conditions, willing to scorn delights and live laborious days, sitting for years at the feet of the masters, learning as much from oral discourse as from the written word. And after they had finished their course of instruction which included ritual and the holy scriptures, grammar and astronomy, medicine, logic and the different systems of philosophy, and had attained proficiency alike in disputation and in exposition, they went their way, either seeking the patronage of some court or content to lead the humble life of a scholar and preceptor in the obscure corner which was their home. This learning was in the main confined to the privileged Brahmana caste, though instances are not wanting

of members of other castes attaining real eminence in the world of scholarship. In the middle ages, despite many political changes, the even tenor of traditional learning was not disturbed. At the beginning of the twelfth century there were a thousand monks at the university of Odantapuri, three thousand at the Vikramasila Vihara, and a thousand at Vajrasena (Buddha Gaya). The village *tols* continued to flourish through the centuries, as also the *maktabs*. Education was imparted to large numbers of pupils, who, in course of time, rose to be *pandits* or *maulvis* or held offices of trust in the administration.

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The beginning of English education can be traced to the year 1792 when the Court of Directors of the East India Company debated a proposal by Mr Wilberforce for sending out schoolmasters to India. On that occasion one of the Directors said that 'we had just lost America from our folly, in having allowed the establishment of schools and colleges, and that it would not do for us to repeat the same act of folly in regard to India, and that if the Natives required anything in the way of education they must come to England for it'. In 1813, Parliament ordered that the sum of ten thousand pounds should be appropriated to the education of the natives. Act 53 Geo. III provides in Section 43: 'A sum of not less than one lac of rupees in each year shall be set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature, and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India.' The Court of Directors in their Dispatch of 1830, said: 'There is no point of view in which we look with greater interest at the exertions you are now making for the instruction of the Natives, than as being calculated to raise up a class of persons qualified, by their

intelligence and morality, for high employments in the Civil Administration of India. . . . We wish you to consider this as our deliberate view of the scope and end to which all our endeavours with respect to the education of the Natives should refer.' In 1835, Lord William Bentinck published a Resolution in which he said: 'His Lordship in Council is of opinion that the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science amongst the natives of India, and that all the funds appropriated for the purposes of education would be best employed on English education alone.' The next stage is reached by the publication of Sir Charles Wood's Education Dispatch of 1854. Its main purport was thus summed up in the Report of the Indian Education Commission of 1882:

> 'It commends to the special attention of the Government of India the improvement and far wider extension of education, both English and Vernacular, and prescribes as the means for the attainment of these objects: (1) the constitution of a separate department of the administration for education; (2) the institution of Universities at the Presidency towns; (3) the establishment of institutions for training teachers for all classes of schools; (4) the maintenance of the existing government colleges and High Schools, and the increase of their number where necessary; (5) the establishment of new Middle Schools; (6) increased attention to Vernacular Schools, indigenous or other, for elementary education; and (7) the introduction of a system of grants-in-aid.'

Sir James Colville introduced the Calcutta University Bill which became Act II of 1857. In the preamble to it occurs the following sentence: 'For the better encouragement of Her Majesty's subjects of all classes and denominations within the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal and other parts of India in the pursuit of a regular and liberal course of education it has been determined to establish a university at

Calcutta for the purpose of ascertaining by examination the persons who have acquired proficiency in different branches of Literature, Science and Art, and marks of honour proportioned thereunto.' The University of Bombay was established in the same year, as also that of Madras. The Punjab University came into existence in 1882, and Allahabad in 1887. These five universities continued to serve the country for many years; their jurisdiction was fixed by the Act of 1904. It was not until 1916 that the Benares Hindu and Mysore universities were established. The others followed in quick succession—Patna, 1917; Osmania, 1918; Aligarh Muslim and Lucknow in 1920; Dacca in 1921; Delhi in 1922; Nagpur in 1923; Andhra in 1926; Agra in 1927; Annamalai in 1929; and Travancore in 1937. The Utkal University was established in Cuttack in 1943, and there are also proposals for establishing universities at Jaipur and Ajmer, in Sind, Maharashtra and in Assam.

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'We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern, a class of persons Indians in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect,' said Macaulay. At one time it seemed as though Macaulay's hopes would be literally realized, for the Indians who came out of the universities seemed thoroughly denationalized, looking with contempt upon Indian languages and Indian culture, almost apologetic for not being Christians, aping everything Western, ambitious of even dreaming dreams in English. But Macaulay builded better than he knew, and it is to the education imparted in the universities and to the fact of many Indians having travelled abroad that we owe the inception and growth of the nationalist movement. The first wave of enthusiasm for Western culture having subsided, there grew up a spirit of national self-respect, under

the influence of which the Indian languages were developed, Indian philosophy was studied, Indian history was re-written, and a wholesome regard for Indian traditions gained strength.

The main functions of a university are the maintenance of high intellectual standards by means of teaching and examining; the encouragement of original research and investigation and addition to human knowledge; the formation of character so that all who come out of a university may bear the stamp of intellectual honesty and moral integrity; the training of youth for their work in life, whether definitely for a vocation or generally for any task that they may be called upon to undertake. No one will claim that our universities have invariably succeeded in performing these functions satisfactorily or in their entirety. But that, within the limitations under which they have been placed, they have justified the hopes of their founders cannot be seriously disputed. What are these limitations? First of all, the older universities were saddled with responsibilities that should not normally fall within the purview of a university. Thus, in the University of Calcutta, in 1940 more than 14,000 candidates passed the Matriculation examination, and about 8,000 the Intermediate examination; in the University of Bombay, in 1938–9 over 3,000 passed the Intermediate examination; in the University of Madras over 3,000 passed the Intermediate examination; in the Punjab University, in 1939–40, over 20,000 candidates passed the Matriculation examination, and about 4,500 the Intermediate examination. This burden of examining schoolboys and students of the pre-university stage must naturally be heavy and prevent whole-hearted concentration on legitimate university work. Secondly, the medium of instruction has all through been English. At one time, this was the medium even in elementary and secondary

schools. For some time now, fortunately, it has been replaced at the pre-university stage by the Indian languages. But at the university English still continues to be the sole medium both for teaching and for examining. I am far from decrying the importance of English. It is now an international language and it must continue to be studied in this country, both because of its global importance and for its own sake as enshrining a noble literature at the springs of which many Indians have drunk deep and from the loftiest strains of which we have derived valuable inspiration. It will be a sad day when we lose the many advantages we have derived from a study of the masters of English; it is to be hoped that no false notions of independence will prevail to force us to give up what during the last seventy-five years we have learnt from them. But educationally, it is entirely unsound that instruction should be imparted through the medium of a foreign and an exceedingly difficult foreign tongue. It stifles original thinking; it involves very severe mental strain. The inevitable tendency is to test a candidate's ability not on the basis of his knowledge and learning but by the skill with which he uses a foreign language. The languages of India must be the media of instruction. There are, of course, practical difficulties: in some provinces, more than one language will have to be employed; this will involve additional expenditure. It will mean also that students and teachers from other provinces will be under a handicap. In the scientific subjects particularly, terminologies will have to be coined. But all these difficulties will soon be overcome and the result will be the freeing of the young intellect from the incubus of thinking and expressing its thoughts in a foreign language. In the third place, the length of residence at a university has been only two academic years, or twenty months. This is altogether inadequate, and university authorities, as indicated in resolutions of Universities' Con-

ferences, are realizing the need and importance of a three-years' degree course. The University of Delhi has, under the energetic leadership of Sir Maurice Gwyer, effected this long-due change, and the situation there will be watched with keen and sympathetic interest by all educationists. In the fourth place, the universities have in the main given little thought to moral and religious education. With the exception of the two denominational universities, the others have left the religious aspect of education severely alone. Lastly, it has to be admitted that very few universities have made any endeavour to relate university education to the needs of the masses and they have, unconsciously, produced a large community which in habits and thought and outlook is separated by a very wide gulf from the vast majority of the people.

During the last fifty years, a great amount of valuable work has been done by the universities. Many Indian scientists have achieved an international reputation. Quite a number have written books on philosophy, economics, political science, history, and other branches of learning which have made a mark. Many university men have devotedly served their mother-tongue and helped to enrich their literature. The universities have supplied to the country politicians and statesmen; administrators; civil servants; judges, jurists, and lawyers; engineers and physicians and surgeons; teachers; agriculturists; business magnates—and a host of others who have an honourable place in society. But change and reform are signs of vitality: only a moribund institution can be content to rest on its oars. Circumstances have altered. Old values are challenged. A change is coming over the spirit of men's dreams, and the universities must adapt themselves to the conditions that are arising. They cannot afford to cut themselves adrift from the rest of the community. They should

remain faithful to their high ideals. Things that are of permanent value—academic freedom; the freedom to seek knowledge and to express frankly the results of patient investigation; the freedom to resist interference from without in the pursuit of learning; the freedom to hold and express opinions; these must be preserved at all costs, or else the universities will fail to justify their existence. But there are certain changes that are desirable and, indeed, inevitable. University education is at present beyond the reach of many brilliant young men, because it is expensive. Whether it can be made cheaper one may question; but it should be the endeavour alike of the state and the university to ensure that no young man of promise who is likely to profit from higher education is deprived of it on financial grounds. Again, the universities must pay more attention to vocational and technical education, without any reduction of the existing facilities for the study of the pure sciences and the humanities. The universities should undertake also Settlement Work, establish literacy centres, have a plan for adult education, and by means of social service associations and leagues get into closer touch with the villages, so that the rest of the community may feel bound and attached to university men and not look upon them, as, alas, they too often do now, as aliens apart and different from themselves. Finally, religion must figure prominently in the curricula. The universities should strive to produce an atmosphere in which crude superstition cannot flourish, moral cruelty cannot be permitted, and social injustice will be a thing of the past. If they can establish harmony in place of discord and order in place of disruption, they will truly be blessed. 'A little generous prudence, a little forbearance of one another, and some grain of charity might win all these diligences to join and unite into one general and brotherly search after truth.'

ADULT EDUCATION

'From hopes for the regeneration of mankind, one passes to a consideration of practical measures required to realize some quite limited social amelioration.'—Sorel, quoted in *The Art of Being Ruled* by Wyndham Lewis.

THE movement for adult education is a modern phenomenon in social development. Its beginnings can be traced to the closing years of the eighteenth century in Britain and to the first quarter of the nineteenth century in the U.S.A., while in the continental countries like Denmark and Switzerland it became a force much later. In more recent times the Government of Russia have taken in hand the task of promoting adult education with their characteristic vigour. Lately China, Iran and Turkey have also concerned themselves with it.

India's adult education movement has barely entered upon the adolescent stage. In a land where only 120 people out of a thousand are literate, the history of adult education is to be looked for in the future rather than in the past. We need not, therefore, dwell upon the sporadic efforts at promoting adult schools in different parts of this subcontinent under the zealous direction of exceptional officials (such as Sir George Anderson of the Punjab). Most of these efforts miscarried for various reasons and were not followed up. They must rank as 'incidents' in our educational annals.

Growing political consciousness has awakened interest in certain aspects of adult education in India—notably in literacy. The blot of illiteracy, almost equally with the stigma of untouchability, has created a certain emotional 'mind-set' among the more awakened sections of the privileged classes and among politicians. The publication of the Reports of the Simon Commission and the Hartog Com-

mittee and of Miss Mayo's *Mother India*, in the twenties, roused many sensitive souls to a painful awareness of the ignominy of being an illiterate country.

The transfer, in 1937, of considerable power to elected assemblies, whose leaders took office in British Indian provinces, was a landmark in the history of the adult education movement in India and of literacy work. Ministers, moved by patriotic fervour and not altogether unaffected by the desire to do something spectacular to touch the lives of the masses, launched or encouraged literacy campaigns. Governors of provinces, rulers of States, politicians and thousands of humbler but, perhaps, more steady workers in the cause were drawn into a movement which soon assumed national proportions. It was wisely canalized in many areas. It brought together in conference some active workers alive to the necessity of sharing experience and co-ordinating effort. This finally led to the formation of an all-India body, the Indian Adult Education Association. Eight organizations, including the Bengal and Bombay Presidency Adult Education Associations and the South Indian Adult Education Association, are now affiliated to it and others are likely to follow suit.

The Association held an All-India Conference in conjunction with the All-India Educational Conference in Indore in December 1942. Professor Amaranatha Jha, Vice-Chancellor of Allahabad University, is the President of the Association, and its central office is located at Indore.

It has pushed forward the organization of adult education in the southern part of the country through a whole-time Organizing Secretary. Similar plans for the north are under consideration.

An all-India organ, *The Indian Journal of Adult Education*, had already started life in December 1939 from the Friends' Settlement, Hoshangabad, C.P. Today it has a representa-

tive Editorial Board and is published six times a year from the Quaker Centre, Karolbagh, Delhi. It serves the interest of a steady, independent and forward-looking movement in India and is already on the approved list of all Indian Government Educational Departments which maintain such lists.

The stimulus and inspiration which Dr. F. Laubach, an American who had done pioneer work in the Philippines, brought to the literacy movement in two visits to India deserves special mention. Perhaps he tended to minimize the immensity of our task: single-minded men often do. But he was instrumental in the starting of much enthusiastic and more or less scientific experimentation. His slogan 'Each One Teach One' has not had a fair deal in our tradition-ridden educational world. His book *India Shall be Literate* is an illustration of the virtues as well as the weaknesses of the Laubach approach.

Most provinces and some Indian States have special Literacy or Adult Education Officers or organizations today. Voluntary bodies continue to labour with devotion though often without adequate knowledge and sense of direction. The fact that the percentage of literates has risen from 8 in 1931 to 12 in 1941—the decennium's increase of 15 per cent in the population notwithstanding—is a tribute to the literacy campaigns carried on throughout India.

* * *

A few of the problems, revealed or latent, in the present situation may now be touched upon. At the outset it must be noted that the country has not yet begun to recognize that adult education must occupy a central place in any scheme of India's advance towards self-realization in the comity of nations and that *comprehensive* provision must be made for it. Educational authorities and institutions of higher learning have either taken too narrow a view of their academic responsibilities or have been too complacent to give a lead in

the matter. The Government of India have been either preoccupied with administrative complexities or too little concerned with genuine progress adequately to discharge their responsibilities in the matter. The immensity of the problem has not inspired initiative or persistence on their part. They have remained content to dwell on their difficulties. The beginning made by the Central Advisory Board of Education has been stultified by the consuming passions aroused by the present war. The proposals put forward by them in 1943 require generous revision. Neither the Government nor, indeed, its vociferous political critics have shown any signs of that foresight to which the Educational Commissioner with the Government of India referred on his return from China. The *Hindustan Times* of 1 June 1942 reported:

> An ancient people fired by a proud sense of unity and a zeal to build up a new China, clinging tenaciously to their universities and other centres of education and using them as agencies to build up reserves of brain-power for national reconstruction after the war rather than to prepare manpower for the immediate purposes of the war—that is the outstanding impression brought by Mr John Sargent, Educational Commissioner with the Government of India, who returned this morning from his 20-day visit to China.

The second remarkable phenomenon is the confusion in the minds of educational administrators as to the relative value of children's (primary) education and adult education. The two are looked upon as rivals instead of being viewed as complements to each other, which they are. Educational authorities, both official and non-official, too preoccupied with routine and not infrequently harassed by financial insufficiency, find in this confusion an excuse for their inactivity.

Thirdly, the widespread tendency among the privileged classes to dissipate their zeal in unconstructive talk and ill-

planned effort constitutes a serious obstacle to rapid advance. And lastly we must refer to the one-sided development of the labour movement in India. 'Labour', both industrial and agrarian, has failed to pull its weight in the struggle for securing educational facilities for the masses. The Indian labour movement would gain immensely by cherishing educational aspirations which have been a source of strength to the co-operative movement, to peasant organizations and to industrial trade unionism in Western countries; it would also make an abiding contribution to national progress.

Local bodies, with noble exceptions—such as the District Boards of Tanjore and Madura, the Corporations of Bombay and (to a lesser extent) Madras, to name some—have on the whole failed to take advantage of popular enthusiasm. Universities as such have not shown much practical interest. Here again, there are exceptions. The Mysore University has led its students in literacy work through the University Union. The Bangalore University Settlement, where students, under the guidance of a whole-time Warden, are encouraged to do practical social work, is still a unique institution in India. The Bombay University is now considering the implementing of a scheme which was put before it some ten years ago by Sir Rustom Masani. Allahabad has been offering its students facilities for theoretical training in social work mainly through a course of forty extension lectures which it has arranged annually for the last three years, while encouraging the literacy work of its Social Service League. Nagpur has adopted a modest scheme of extension work as a beginning. Extension lectures are to be delivered under its auspices by teachers of university standing in Marathi and Hindi—the two languages most commonly used in its area. Students are to be enlisted in this enterprise and a small amount of money has been sanctioned by the

Executive Council for encouraging needy students to participate in this social effort.

With the above preliminary considerations in mind we may now take a bird's-eye view of adult education activity in the country. No exhaustive record is possible within one brief section of a short article. I can only indicate the more important types of activity and illustrate them by reference to different parts of the country. It is inevitable that many valuable experiments will find no mention.

Some Figures

Complete figures for adult education work are impossible to obtain, but the following table from the Government of India *Report on Education for the year 1938–39* will be of interest:

SCHOOLS FOR ADULTS, 1938–9

PROVINCE	NO OF SCHOOLS	ENROLMENT
Madras	12	771
Bombay	673	22,095
Bengal	967	28,152
United Provinces	2,689	82,590
Punjab	146	5,201
Bihar	130	2,772
Central Provinces and Berar ...	43	1,714
Assam	13	505
North-West Frontier Province	...	...
Sind	28	659
Orissa	1	26
Coorg	...	...
Delhi	18	230
Ajmer-Merwara	13	268
	4,733	144,983

N.B.—The figures in this table refer to regular schools for adults, and do not include 'classes' started for adults at various centres.

The following extract from a communication from the Travancore Government is also illuminating:

> 'From the point of view of literacy, Travancore takes the highest place in India, the figures being 47·88 per cent; Cochin coming next with 35·43; Delhi 25·7, and Baroda 23·01.
>
> Among the provinces, Madras, Bombay and Bengal have percentages of 13·01, 19·5 and 16·12 respectively.'

A Bird's-eye View

As already mentioned, most British provinces have been giving some attention to adult literacy work. **Assam** has established a separate department under a Mass Literacy Officer with an adequate staff. They have carried on effective work for about two years, and in the autumn of 1941 they planned a comprehensive ring of post-literacy circles. It was announced: 'There will be 1,200 study circles in the Assam Valley and 700 in the Surma Valley. A set of post-literacy readers and fortnightly news-sheets will be supplied to each. Readers, books and periodicals will be issued to the people who have just become literate and to other people. New sets of readers will be supplied to each study circle annually.' This scheme was worked and improved upon, but Japan's entry into the war has interrupted the effort.

Orissa, where the literacy movement and other forms of adult education have failed to grip the imagination of people and of the Government to the same extent as they have done in some other areas, reported 425 adult education centres with a total of 8,147 persons under instruction during 1940–1. The Government could report no appreciable progress in 1942–3, partly owing to abnormal conditions in the province.

In the **Punjab**, the year 1939-40, 'which saw a great expansion of the movement, also gave it a slogan. It is:

"Each one teach one", which rendered into Urdu means: *Parho aur parhao*,' says a Government Report.

During this first year of the five-year plan to eradicate illiteracy, the Punjab Government sanctioned a grant of Rs. 22,800 for the purpose. No less than 308,000 copies of primers in different scripts and 56,000 copies of follow-up literature were purchased by the Education Department. The number of males made literate was 50,799.

Attempts were made to use the old type of regular adult schools and adult centres were also started. The number of adult schools increased to 201 and their enrolment to 6,075. The latest figure for those under instruction is 196,123. Adult centres run in accordance with the Laubach method were conducted through divisional, district, *tehsil* and village literacy leagues with the help of volunteers.

The movement is also gaining ground among women. The Lahore circle has 2,836 centres (with 1,565 adult women), and Rawalpindi reports 700.

The **Bombay** Government were the first to appoint a Provincial Board of Adult Education under a non-official Chairman in 1937. They started with 29 adult literacy classes, and bore all the expenses. Later, however, the Government brought into force a scheme of grants-in-aid. In 1939–40 there were 2,300 classes and 13,200 were made literate. In 1942–3 24,000 adults attended 1,039 classes. Of these 19,600 passed the literacy test. Of the total grant of Rs. 86,000, about Rs. 27,000 was by way of equipment grant. The average cost per literate thus amounted to Rs. 4-8-0 at first.

In view of the heavy cost *per capita*, the Provincial Board recommended a revised rate of grants. This seems to have affected the movement adversely during 1940–41. The Government have, therefore, once again revised their rates and have made a provision of Rs. 1,00,000. 'Government

spent in 1942–3 Rs. 50,000 for village reading rooms and libraries. Readers, posters and reading sheets were distributed to 140,000 persons.

So far as the liquidation of adult illiteracy in Bombay city is concerned, there is a separate Adult Education Committee with a Special Literacy Officer. During 1940–41 the Committee maintained 1,140 literacy classes for adults in Marathi, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Telugu and Tamil. These classes were attended by over 16,000 men and 5,000 women. Of those who appeared for literacy tests, 14,860 were declared to have become literate, while in 1941–2 about 100 post-literacy classes were maintained by the Committee. The Government paid rather more than two-thirds of the Committee's total expenditure of Rs. 64,840.

Sind, under its enthusiastic Education Minister, Khan Bahadur Pir Ilahi Bux, made good progress during the years 1938–40. In 1939 the Government collected and spent Rs. 1,49,017 on a campaign, making 29,995 literates. In May 1942, 1,819 people took and 1,672 passed the final test. In March 1943, 16 permanent night schools had been established.

Bihar, under the leadership of Dr Syed Mahmud, was perhaps the first to set up an effective Provincial Mass Literacy Committee. It was fortunate in possessing for its Secretary Professor B. B. Mukerjee, and the Bihar Inspectorate included steady workers who were prepared to divest themselves of the usual official red-tape traditions and to throw themselves into the movement whole-heartedly. They built up a movement largely *voluntary* in character. Volunteers of their 'Make Your Home Literate' campaign alone made 24,289 literates in 1941–2.

In April 1938, 1,065,821 adults (including 71,744 women) were made literate, and at the end of March 1941, 625,696

were attending post-literacy courses. In 1941–2, 203,394 passed the Literacy Test. In 1942–3, 111,153 received post-literacy instruction. Bihar claims that one of the important results of this movement has been the stimulation of the demand for primary education in the province and the raising of the average daily attendance in the schools of those areas where it has made headway. It has recently produced a set of 20 posters suitable for campaigns and of more than provincial interest. Its adult libraries issued 634,000 books in 1941–2, and 683,332 in 1942–3.

Bengal has entrusted adult education to the Rural Reconstruction Department, and only recently has it been decided that this Department shall hold major responsibility for sponsoring adult education in all its stages. The present Director of the Department, Mr S. M. Ishaque, has devoted himself to an examination of the problems involved with singular zeal, and some remarkable progress has been made in spite of wartime complications in that area.

The above will give some idea of the progress of the literacy movement in some of the British provinces. We may now pause to glance at some of the more advanced Indian States.

The **Mysore** Government have taken a keen interest in literacy work. The Mysore State Literacy Council, a semi-Government body, has a whole-time Organiser and in 1942–3 was paid a special grant of Rs. 80,000 for a literacy campaign in connexion with the rural reconstruction scheme of the State.[1] During this year it made 6,000 adults literate.

The University Union, ably led by the Vice-Chancellor and university teachers, organized Kannada, Urdu, Telugu and Tamil Centres in the summer vacation of 1941 and did a very creditable piece of work. The Mysore University

[1] Normally the Council receives grants from the Government, Municipalities and District Boards and donations from the public.

Settlement, Bangalore, the only body of its kind in India, has been a good training ground for social work under qualified socio-academic leadership.

The State of **Jammu and Kashmir** has been fortunate in having for its Director of Education a catholic educationist. In 1942–3, 54,987 adults received instruction in 4,050 centres and 27,911 became literate. In 1942–3, 480 adult libraries existed in the State, of which 300 were in villages. The average book stock is 200 to 300 books and covers subjects such as health, agriculture, religion and science.

In 1941, 60,169 adults were under instruction in 4,253 centres, while 23,109 persons had been made literate.

The adult literacy campaign in **Baroda** started in 1939. By the end of July 1941, the total number of classes conducted was 1,795. In all, 26,457 adult literates attended these classes and out of them 9,861 have been successful in attaining the literacy standard fixed by the State.

Adult classes conducted in backward areas or in areas of concentrated effort are paid a monthly contingency grant of Rs. 2 to Rs. 4, and over and above this a yearly lump sum of Rs. 50 can be earned under certain conditions.

Higher Education Authorities and Adult Education

It is a matter for regret that, generally speaking, higher education authorities in India have not learnt to discharge their duty by adult education. The best form of extra-mural work done on any considerable scale by universities is to be found in the system of extension lectures, but they generally fail to draw the type of person who is served by adult education departments of universities in the West. Systematic university teaching on the tutorial class level is hardly anywhere attempted under university auspices in India. Indeed, the only organized and systematic tutorial class work is that which began with the enthusiasm of certain

Bombay professors as far back as 1922 and which is now affiliated to the Bombay Adult Education Association. Recently, the Nagpur University has decided to make a beginning with an extra-mural department which may well become the model for a new type of adult education service in Indian universities. The Mysore University adopted but has not enforced the making of ten persons literate as an additional condition for admission to the B.A. and B.Sc. degrees.

Even in the matter of giving guidance in teaching methods, university bodies and Training Colleges have lagged behind in the field of experiment, research and systematization of available knowledge. The running of training classes for adult teachers has been left largely to voluntary agencies and to individuals. Such courses have been held in Ranchi, in Agra, Gorakhpur, Ghaziabad (U.P.), Kharar and Moga (Punjab), and Tuticorin (South India), Bombay city and in many other places. Madras city has a spring-time Laubach Training Centre, organized by the South Indian Adult Education Association. The Bengal Presidency Adult Education Association has from time to time organized short training courses. Christian bodies, particularly through missionary institutions, have rendered yeoman service throughout the country in this matter as also in the matter of faithful experimentation with method. Adult literacy now receives special attention through a Standing Committee of the National Christian Council.

Literature

The problem of providing special literature for adults newly literate in a country where 15 major and 150 minor languages are spoken is a colossal one. Simple libraries and reading rooms have increased throughout India during the

last ten years. In the United Provinces alone 5,382,943 visitors to these were reported in 1941–2.

The Indian Journal of Adult Education has published from time to time articles dealing with available literature in different languages. It has also published graded and annotated bibliographies in the Kanarese, Hindi, Tamil and Punjabi languages. One for Urdu is now available. The Sikh Literacy Association, Amritsar and the Adult Education Department of the Jamia Milia Islamia, Delhi, have rendered useful service to the Gurmukhi and Urdu constituencies respectively.

Various Provincial Christian Councils have led the way in their language areas and have also co-operated with their local authorities in providing both beginners' and follow-up literature.

Voluntary Agencies

The interest that the Government have shown in recent years in adult education generally and literacy work in particular has brought into existence a great many voluntary organizations throughout the country. Their enthusiasm often outstrips their organizing ability and their capacity for sustained work. Many of them, however, render invaluable service both to the cause of adult education and as training grounds in social work for the privileged classes. Special mention must be made in this connexion of students' organizations which have undertaken, in many parts of the country (e.g. Madras city, the Surma Valley in Assam, and Delhi), intensive campaigns and have carried them through to a successful conclusion. Students in Bihar and to a lesser extent in the Madras University have taken a good share in literacy campaigns. In South India, particularly in the Andhra country, college students and their teachers took a good deal of interest in peasant classes organized by some leaders of the labour movement. They held schools in which

systematic and sustained teaching was given. They managed to rouse, however, the suspicions of the Madras Government, who have passed orders that no adult training school or class shall be held unless the promoters have obtained a permit from the District Magistrate to do so. This has been a most discouraging feature in the history of adult education work in the south.

Conclusion

The preceding section has sought to present a brief account of the various types of activity in the adult education field in India. This account will have shown that though we have to make use of the literacy movement and all its enthusiasm, *we need constantly to remind the country that literacy does not constitute adult education*, but is only one of the important means of furthering it. It will also be clear that universities and Local Bodies need to give special attention to this vast field of service. Each university and each Local Body should have a special officer charged with the duty to sponsor and direct adult education. This, however, is not likely to come on a general scale unless our Provincial Governments appoint competent men of the rank of Deputy Directors of Education as Adult Education Officers. This again is hardly likely to happen till our elected representatives, our Education Officers and our Governments realize that the problem of this country's literacy, let alone its ignorance, cannot be solved by compulsory primary education alone. The study which Mr S. R. Bhagwat, Chairman of the Bombay Board of Adult Education, has made of the enlightened city of Poona in this connexion should prove an eye-opener to all concerned. He has established that after ten years of compulsory primary education in Poona, the percentage of literacy cannot be said to have risen appreciably.

Has the Central Government a duty in this nation-building matter? I believe it has. It must give a lead to the Provincial Governments; for no one else can. It must show them that this is a big piece of work which needs to be viewed in a big way. It must produce literature which will awaken the provinces to the possibilities of adult education. It must make available to them in readable form the experience of other countries in so far as it is applicable to India. And last but not least, it must make up its mind to encourage voluntary bodies with grants-in-aid administered under an adequate set of rules drawn up in a broad spirit of educational realism. It should keep before the country the truth that for the success of democratic self-governing institutions, a land so large as India must have a population which can be called educated, that the need for educating our masters is as great in India today as it was in Disraeli's England.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION

THERE has been a general feeling that education in this country is too literary, that far too many young men are being educated for academic or clerical occupations, that provision for vocational education has been very small, and that schools and colleges have paid little attention to the needs of industry. Higher education in particular has been subject to such criticism by those interested in industrial development. Even in the comparatively highly industrialized province of Bombay, there were in 1941–2 only 264 graduates in the Faculty of Technology: 192 in Engineering, 20 in Chemical Technology and 52 in Agriculture, the total number of graduates being 5,100. It will be noted incidentally that the

University of Bombay does not yet offer degree courses in textile manufacture, which constitutes the premier industry of the province. Our backwardness in technical education is part of the larger political problem. For generations the main object of education in the lower stages was to secure a minimum of literacy and in the higher stages to make such literacy more advanced and competent from the point of view of governmental needs. In the absence of a positive and vigorous policy of planned and large-scale industrialization, any progress in technical education was until recently of a sporadic and casual character.

Historical

In their Dispatch on education in 1854 the Court of Directors of the East India Company asked the Government of India to consider how useful and practical knowledge suited to every standard of life could be best conveyed to the great mass of the people, but the creation of the first institutions in India imparting vocational training was directly concerned with the needs of the Public Works and other Government Departments. Four engineering colleges at Roorkee, Poona, Madras and Calcutta were established between 1856 and 1858, and these offer degree courses in Civil, Mechanical, and Electrical Engineering, besides diploma and other courses for lower grades of employment in Government and other engineering departments. More engineering colleges at Benares, Lahore, Karachi, Patna, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Trivandrum and elsewhere have since come into existence. With a munificent endowment from the late J. N. Tata, the Indian Institute of Science was opened in 1911 for post-graduate teaching and research in pure and applied chemistry, biochemistry and electrical technology. Departments of applied chemistry or chemical technology have now been instituted in several of the universities, the largest and best-

equipped being the Department of Chemical Technology of the Bombay University, which has at present two sections of Textile Chemistry and Chemical Engineering and will shortly have additional sections of 'Intermediates and Dyes', 'Pharmaceuticals and Fine Chemicals', 'Plastics, Paints and Varnishes', 'Oils, Fats and Soaps', and 'Foods and Drugs'. The Harcourt Butler Technological Institute and the Imperial Institute of Sugar Technology at Cawnpore carry out post-graduate teaching and research in oil technology and sugar technology.

Technical Institutes

It is usual to classify industrial workers as belonging to three grades: directing or managerial, supervisory (foremen, chargehands, etc.) and operative (skilled and semi-skilled workmen). The number of persons of the first grade is necessarily very small in an industrial undertaking and, while a multiplication and expansion of technical colleges, such as those mentioned, will be desirable for meeting the growing need for specialists, the training of men who would occupy the directing positions in industry is receiving more or less adequate attention. Turning to the education of men in the second category, there have been notable developments during the last fifty years. Technical training of a standard lower than the usual university degree requirements, but of a more practical character, is available in several institutes spread over the country, such as the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute in Bombay, the Kala Bhavan Technical Institute at Baroda, the Government Central Textile Institute and Leather Working School at Cawnpore, the Central Wood Working Institute at Bareilly, the Textile Institutes at Serampore and Bangalore, and the Government Dyeing School at Shahdara near Lahore. The Delhi Polytechnic is the latest addition to the list, representing the

implementation of one of the major recommendations in the Abbott-Wood Report (1937). The products of these institutions have rendered valuable service in industry, have demonstrated that the Indian student trained in school or college can do manual work and stand the monotony and drudgery of factory life, and have dispelled the mistaken notion of industrial employers that the educated Indian youth will not take his coat off and get down to a job of work. Training in an academic institution, however well equipped it may be, can only be preparatory; it can lay no claim to produce experts who can immediately proceed to take charge of plant and processes. Apprenticeship in a factory for a few months as part of the requirements for a degree or diploma gives an insight into industrial operations, but 'sandwich' or co-operative systems, in which the student alternates between the technical institute and the factory, may be adopted with advantage. The training in works should be so planned that it has educational value and is closely correlated with the theoretical instruction imparted in the institute.

Industrial Schools and Junior Technical Institutes

The primary object of industrial schools is to train skilled craftsmen for minor or cottage industries like weaving, carving, leather work, metal work and wood work, while the institutions for training skilled workmen for organized industry may be classified as junior technical institutes. There is, however, no sharp distinction in scope or functions. Many schools and institutes of this type have been created and are in general doing useful work. In the province of Bombay alone, there are over 80 technical institutions catering for a very wide variety of industrial occupations. Since the Abbott-Wood Report has dealt in detail with junior-grade vocational education, it would suffice to indicate within the

brief compass of this note the problems which appear to us to need urgent examination.

The relative positions of cottage and large-scale industries must be submitted to close scrutiny in their relation to technical education. Having regard to the fact that the agricultural population is not fully occupied for nearly half the year and that the handicrafts which constitute a part of the national tradition of art and craft deserve every encouragement, there must be provision for sound and effective technical education which will enable the cottage worker to obtain the maximum return for his labour. The methods in vogue in France and Japan may be taken into account. On the other hand, the limitations of small-scale industries in a competitive world must not be overlooked.

Standardization and Size of Training Units

We have too many schools and colleges undertaking technical education in comparison with the number of pupils trained, the subjects studied and the total expenditure. It is very desirable that there should be more 'doing' and less 'learning' in schools and colleges, and if workshop practice or machine drawing is introduced as an addition to existing courses of instruction on account of the intrinsic educational value of such training, it is a step in the right direction; but it is an entirely different matter for a school or college, normally equipped for teaching the ordinary arts and science courses, to set up a 'technical institute' as a new and separate department and offer a diploma in a single and very limited branch of technology. The general awakening in the country regarding industrial development has led some of the colleges in Bombay, for instance, to embark on technical education in this manner in their desire to keep abreast of industrial progress and to open wider avenues of employment for their students. In the long run the multiplication of such 'techni-

cal institutions' will have an adverse effect on technical education in general. This is equally true, and for very similar reasons, of the numerous technical and vocational schools and institutes which are being created, and which in many cases have provision for training only a small number of students in a single and strictly circumscribed vocation. Their finances are usually poor, and so in consequence must be their facilities by way of staff and equipment. In the province of Bombay, for instance, the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute with its excellent laboratories, workshops and staff is at one end of the scale, and there is a sharp decline as one proceeds to the other institutions, and even among the latter as a class there is a wide variation in standards. Controlling bodies, such as the Committee of Direction for Technical Education in Bombay, might be able to effect some measure of standardization, but the real remedy is to overhaul the entire system. A polytechnic has many advantages over a monotechnic, although the latter may be occasionally justified for purposes of intensive specialization in an industry of major importance (e.g. textiles). The reasons are so many that only a brief indication is possible here. The various branches of technology have essential correlations, and the utmost efficiency in training and economy in expenditure can only be obtained by limiting the number of institutions in a large area and by each of these providing for training in as many technical subjects as possible. Narrow specialization may be necessary in the more advanced stages and during actual employment in industry, but the general training must be broad-based on a fundamental knowledge of science and engineering. Apart from this need for a substantial part of the training being common for all technicians, irrespective of the particular industrial occupation they propose to pursue later, a great polytechnic has the ideal environment and

atmosphere for the education of boys who are later to enter an organized industry and also to be good citizens. Technical education should not be merely regarded as the mechanism by which a boy is trained for employment, but as a process by which he is fitted for a certain way of life in which, in addition to technical knowledge of a chosen craft or manufacture, he has to exhibit personal qualities of honesty, patience, courage and the ability to work in happy comradeship with varied types of men and women. There should also be opportunities for developing initiative and the other characteristics that might enable the few having natural advantages to rise to positions of leadership in industry.

By means of evening classes or part-time work during the day by arrangement with factory managers, it should be possible for operatives and technicians, who are earning their livelihood, to improve their technical knowledge and qualifications so that they may aspire to move higher from grade to grade. A feature of our educational system is its rigidity and, so far as technical education is concerned, there should be as far as practicable a continuous and unbroken chain from elementary technical training to the most advanced stages of technological education. If there are alternative doors of admission to courses of study, leading to 'external' degrees or diplomas, persons who are compelled to take up industrial employment early in life for economic reasons, but have ability and ambition, would not suffer from a sense of frustration and denied opportunities.

Vocational Guidance

At each successive stage of school and college education a student is faced with the problem of the next step he has to take, and he tends to follow the line of least resistance. He often drifts from one stage to what is nearest at hand, and is left without guidance on the occasions of his life when he

most needs it. If the industrial employer is to obtain workers who are appropriate to their tasks by virtue of temperament and training, such vocational selection would only be possible if the future recruits to his industry had the necessary vocational guidance. Greater publicity regarding the industries in the neighbourhood, the openings likely to be offered, the nature of the work in each case, and the facilities for training that are available is a desideratum. Close and continual contact between headmasters of schools, the heads of technical institutions and industrial employers is also necessary.

General Education

The foundation on which the entire structure of technical education, whether it is of the operative, supervisory or managerial grade, is to be built is elementary general education, and this is without doubt unsound and inadequate. Primary and secondary school education in the country needs revision, reorganization, and all-round improvement. With the remuneration of our primary schoolmasters being not infrequently lower than that of domestic servants, the profession has no permanent attraction for men with the requisite qualities. No reflection is intended on the vast body of men who are rendering important national service under difficult circumstances, but not even the best of them can put his heart into his work or resist the temptation to take the first opportunity of changing his profession to one which gives him a living wage. Other aspects of primary school education, such as the advantages of staffing infant classes by trained women, the excessive time spent in 'immobile study' and the mistaken concentration on mere literacy, have been discussed in the Abbott-Wood Report, and call for careful consideration.

The Teaching of English

After Lord Macaulay's famous Minute, English was for a century the medium of instruction in schools and colleges. More recently the drawbacks in learning art and science through a foreign language have been realized, and in most provinces teaching up to the fourth or fifth standard is in the regional language; it is also open to a candidate for the Matriculation to take his examinations in his own language or in English. The teaching of English itself continues, however, to be extremely unsatisfactory. Taught by men who have been brought up on a similar irrational and top-heavy system, students at school and college wade through Goldsmith, Carlyle, Shakespeare, Milton and Keats, and at the end of it are usually unable to write a few sentences of simple, clear and correct English. One is forced to conclude that the essential object of the prevailing system of English teaching is the deliberate production of *babus*. Although one may regard as too sweeping Mahatma Gandhi's condemnation that English education has emasculated us, constrained our intellect, and the manner of imparting this education has rendered us effeminate, no process in our educational technique is so wasteful as the teaching of English, and drastic reform is urgently needed. The inability to express ideas and results in a brief and businesslike manner has been a serious handicap for the Indian technician. After two or three years of study it should surely be possible to have a good working knowledge of English, adequate for the purposes of technical employment.

Scientific and Technical Terminology in the Indian Languages

If technical education is to be really widespread and to conform to the needs of industry, the problem of teaching technical subjects in the modern Indian languages should be

solved without further delay. Although the question has been receiving some attention for over a century, the earliest attempt to lay down principles for a scientific terminology in an Indian language having been made as far back as 1830 by the Translation Society of the old Delhi College, no scheme embracing the whole of the country and all the regional languages has yet been adopted. There are at least three schools of thought in this matter: (i) wholesale adoption of English terminology in all scientific writings in all Indian languages; (ii) inclusion of a limited vocabulary of basic and internationally accepted words and expressions in their English forms, and the use, with fresh coining if necessary, of suitable equivalents in the various languages; and (iii) with the exception of recognized international nomenclature and notation (as in chemistry or botany), the adoption of entirely indigenous systems of terminology, which may be two or three in number, dividing the Indian languages into two or three groups, such as Indo-Aryan and Dravidian; or Sanskritic, Perso-Arabic and Dravidian. Schemes involving modifications and compromises have also been suggested. We have given no special thought to this subject, but after a perusal of the Report of the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1940, we are inclined to favour the procedure now adopted in the Osmania University. Briefly, it would involve our borrowing the essential international elements of scientific terminology from English, and the evolution, making the fullest use of current and commonly understood expressions, of a national scientific terminology. Until such time as we have a single national language, the latter must exist in two or three forms represented by the two or three main groups into which our languages may be divided. What we wish to urge here is the urgent need for concrete action in this regard. As a result of the war and as part of the rising tide of national consciousness, our industries are

bound to expand in the immediate future, but the ultimate chances of their survival in the face of world competition will depend on the increased efficiency of the operative grade of industrial workers more perhaps than on any other single factor. Survival will only be possible if industrial labour, down to the lowest grade, has a certain minimum of general education and scientific knowledge with special reference to the relevant industry, for which in turn the existence of text-books and teaching facilities in the major Indian languages is essential.

Technical Education, Industry and the State

While there has been in recent years some progress in technical education, specially in its more advanced technological aspects, the main defect is the lack of a planned and co-ordinated effort on the part of the three agencies concerned — educational authorities, industry and the state. Industrial development has been slow, halting and haphazard. The basic or key industries, such as the heavy chemical, coal-tar, chemical plant and engineering industries, have not advanced on a scale commensurate with our requirements or our national resources. To limit technical education to the exact demands of industry at a given time would be to take too narrow a view of the aim and scope of technical education; on the other hand there is little to be gained by training for unemployment, in whose wake will follow discontent and demoralization. It is a vicious circle, from which the only escape is a realization of the organic relations between industry, education and the state. Our model must be Russia, whose position when the Soviet Government took over was in many ways very similar to ours at the present time. The three five-year plans and the methods by which science, industry, education and the state were integrated (cf. Edelmann, *How Russia Prepared*; Crowther,

Science in Soviet Russia, etc.) must be studied and adopted with such modifications as may be necessary to suit our special conditions. At the end of the second five-year plan in 1937, large-scale industry in Russia had attained over 400 per cent of the 1929 output. In the third five-year plan, interrupted by the war, there was further expansion in the technical reconstruction of the national economy, improvement in the organization and technology of production, extensive introduction of scientific discoveries and inventions, strengthening of labour discipline, and high labour productivity. An extensive system of schools and training courses for workers and technicians was promoted, and provision was made for the graduation of 14,000,000 technicians and 600,000 specialists. Measures were taken for raising the level of the cultural and technical education of workers to that of engineers and technicians. Universal secondary education was to be introduced in the cities, and universal junior secondary education (seven years), accompanied by an extension to ten years of secondary education, in rural areas. In the scale and intensity of the organized effort made in Russia, she has been in advance of other countries, and nowhere has there been such effective integration of industry, technical education and the state. The growth of technical education in this country must similarly be a part of social, economic and political planning, if the standard of living of the mass of the population is to be raised within a reasonable time to the minimum of civilized existence.

No. 16 As. 8

ATLAS OF INDIA

A. M. LORENZO

OXFORD PAMPHLETS ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

THIS handy atlas with its commentary offers the reader much varied and classified information, and will, it is hoped, be useful for reference. India is almost at the centre of the Eastern Hemisphere, well situated for trade with Europe, the Far East, Australasia, and Africa. It is a rich land, with fertile riverine plains and forest-covered mountains which offer great opportunities for economic enterprise. The meagre and localized mineral resources are more than compensated by the potential agricultural and forest wealth of the country. Special maps are devoted to the main natural regions; to industries, trade and transport; to plant, animal and human life; and the pamphlet concludes with geo-political and sociological maps. The author suggests a readjustment of 'living-space' between the States and the British Indian provinces, and throws light on the regional distribution of some of the outstanding social institutions of the country.

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16. REGIONAL SOCIOLOGY

THE evolution and distribution of the modes of habitation i.e. Huts, Hamlets and Villages, and spatial patterning, i.e. Clustered and Scattered settlements, are phases of Collective Living, and almost entirely governed by ecological factors. Intensive farming, with its elaborate routine of cropping and collective management of pastures and water-courses, gives rise to permanent and compact settlements, for example the Village Communities of river-valleys. Centripetal Rural Settlements grow up in Regions of Effort (temperate river valleys) and Regions of Increment (monsoon lands), while Centrifugal Rural Settlements are characteristic of Regions of Bounty (deltas and tropical lowlands) and Regions of Arrested Development (arid table-lands). Artificial Village Communities (e.g. Canal Colonies) have also, during the past fifty years, sprung up in the Punjab and Sind where large arid tracts have been brought under canal irrigation. Isolated habitations are characteristic of the Himalayan regions and littoral tracts. Wherever *jhum* cultivation (brand tillage) prevails, as in the hills and forests of Kumaon, Chota Nagpur, Assam, the C.P., Madras and Travancore, peripatetic groups of lower culture form only shifting habitations.

The vestigial remains of agrestic serfdom are traceable in remote forest regions which have newly been reclaimed for cultivation, or where, due to unhealthy climate and poor soil, bond-labour of the native population was introduced.

Polygamy is an established socio-economic institution: as a rule, *polyandry* is found associated with nomadic life and unsettled economy of land in Regions of Arrested Development (e.g. the arid tableland of Baluchistan, the NW.F.P. and the Himalayan Zone), whilst *polygyny* is commonly practised in Regions of Bounty (e.g. the sub-Himalayan belt, eastern Bengal and the south-western coastal tracts).

Ethnologically, the peoples of India form a mixture of six races split into about 2,400 endogamous castes and tribes. Culturally, they consist of four principal linguistic families divided into 15 language groups and 232 dialects, with eight major religions, besides 14 tribal religions and many ambiguous sects, exhibiting a multitudinous variety of economic functions and social practices.

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ATLAS OF INDIA

By A. M. LORENZO

Oxford Pamphlets on Indian Affairs. No. 16

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AN BRANCH

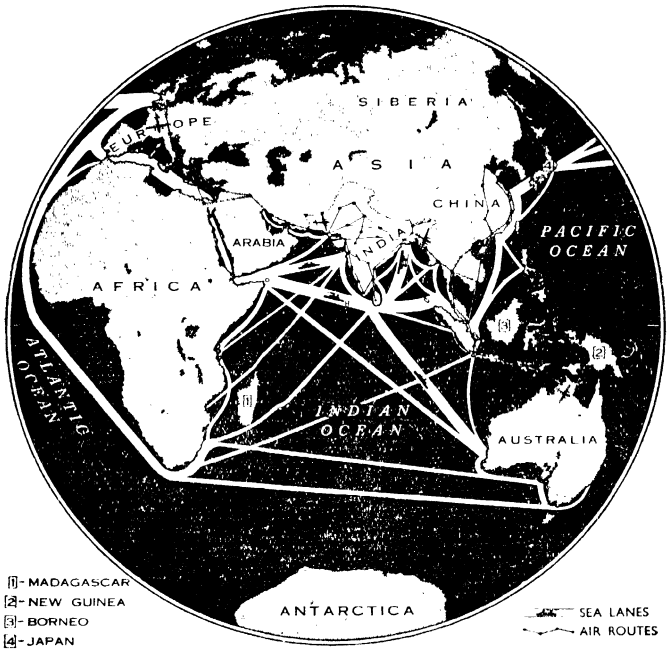
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INDIAN BRANCH



THE COMMANDING POSITION OF INDIA IN THE EASTERN HEMISPHERE

INDIA occupies a highly favourable position for trade with southern Asia and the rest of the world. Situated almost at the centre of the Eastern Hemisphere, and at the head of the Indian Ocean, it commands the sea routes for trade between the West and the Far East.

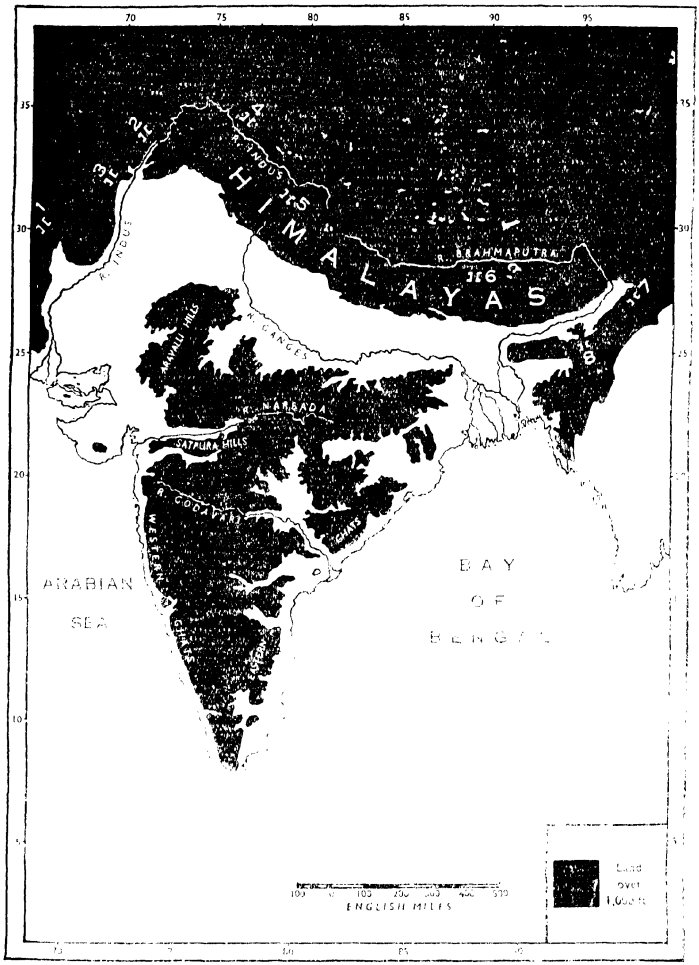
1. ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

INDIA is the central and largest of the three irregular peninsulas of Southern Asia. One of the greatest of Greek geographers, Strabo, defined the shape of India as rhomboidal rather than triangular, with an acute apex pointing southward into the Indian Ocean. India is almost as long as it is broad, stretching from the hottest regions of the Equator to far within the Temperate Zone. It covers an area of 1,623,015 square miles. Its greatest length from north to south is about 2,000 miles, and its breadth from west to east is about 2,200 miles. Its coast-line is 4,000 miles in length, and is washed by the two embracing arms of the Indian Ocean—the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. Its land-frontiers adjoin those of Iran, Afghanistan, China and Burma, and stretch well over 5,000 miles. Roughly speaking, India is thirteen times as large as the British Isles, but only half the size of the U.S.A., or five-sixths the size of Europe. Although it covers only 3·4 per cent of the land surface of the globe, it contains one-fifth of the entire human race, and one-third of the world's total bovine population.

It is situated entirely to the north of the Equator between latitudes 8° and 37° N. and longitudes 61° and 97° E. Although the country is roughly bisected by the Tropic of Cancer—the northern half lying in the Temperate Zone and the southern half in the Torrid Zone—India is essentially a tropical region. It is the most typical of the monsoon countries, and the monsoon climate has a characteristic influence on the lives of the Indian people.

India is a geographical entity, due to its separation from the rest of the continent of Asia by the lofty barriers of the Himalayas. In point of size and individuality, though it ranks just below a continent, its geographical divergences approximate to those of several continents. It is isolated enough to keep its historical processes detached for long periods from those of the bordering countries and to give a characteristic stamp to the life and habits of its peoples. In spite of sharp regional differences, India presents a picture of cultural unity in the midst of physical diversity.

A land of promise, where nature has showered her gifts with lavish hand, India is the abode of races who differ from one another in physical characteristics, language and culture more widely than do the peoples of Europe. The abundance and variety of natural resources enable the country to support a population of 388·9 million people and 207 million head of cattle, in addition to 118 million head of other livestock and 191 million poultry. Although primarily a producer of foodstuffs and raw materials, India has also entered the front rank amongst the industrial countries of the world.



THE CONTOUR MAP

1. Bolan pass
2. Khyber pass
3. Gomal pass
4. Karakoram pass
5. Shipki pass
6. Darjeeling route
7. Hukaung valley route
8. Tuzu ing and Manipur route

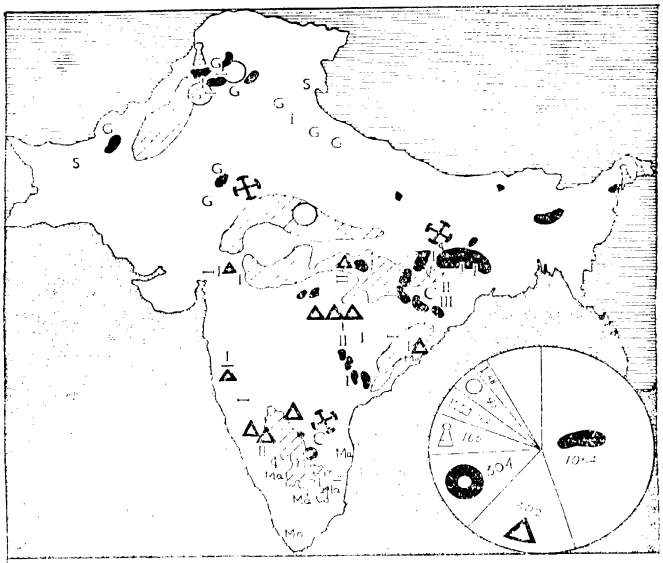
2. REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

INDIA is composed of three earth-features which are as unlike in their physical as in their geological characters. These three divisions are the Great Mountain Zone of the north (the Himalayas); the Plateau of the Peninsula (the Southern Tableland); and the Region of Depression (the Indo-Gangetic Plain) extending from west to east and separating the two former areas. Geologically, the Southern Tableland is one of the oldest of the world's formations; the Himalayas, one of the most recent ones; while the Great Plains of Hindustan are still in the process of formation.

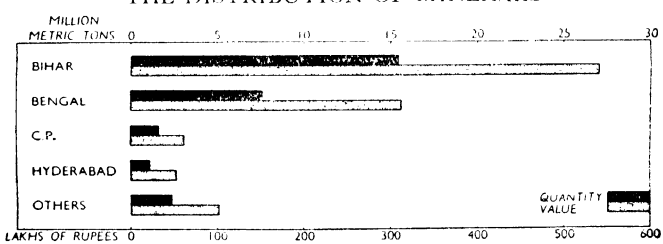
The Himalayas comprise a system of stupendous fold-mountain ranges, some of them the loftiest in the world (Mt Everest 29,141 ft and Kinchinjunga 28,146 ft), extending in the shape of a scimitar, with its edge facing southward, for a distance of 1,250 miles. At the north-western angle it is pierced by the Indus which turns southward on its course through the Punjab, and the Brahmaputra bursts through the main axis of the range at the north-eastern angle. The Himalayan frontier offers a few difficult routes which make possible commerce with Iran (through Makran), Afghanistan (Bolan, Gomal and Khyber passes), Chinese Turkestan (Zojila and Karakoram passes), Tibet (Shipki pass and via Kalimpong), Burma (through the Hukawng valley, the Tuzu Gap and via the Manipur route). The Himalayan region provides valuable forest and water-power resources.

The plains of Hindustan are (with unvarying monotony) composed of alluvial deposits. They are about 2,000 miles long from end to end, and 300 miles broad in the west, gradually narrowing down to 90 miles in their eastern extremity. They cover an area of 300,000 sq. miles and are watered by three distinct river systems, the Indus, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra. This is economically the most developed region and supports two-thirds of the country's total population.

The Peninsula comprises a three-sided tableland composed of old, hard, crystalline rocks. The northern side rests on confused ranges running west to east (Vindhyas, 1,500 to 4,000 ft), and the other two sides are known as the Western and the Eastern Ghats. The Western Ghats, which rise abruptly from the sea, have an average height of 3,000 ft and are covered with rich forests. Their watersheds have made possible the development of huge hydro-electric stations and consequently the industrial development of neighbouring areas. The Eastern Ghats (1,500 ft) stretch in fragmentary spurs and ranges, receding inland and leaving broad level tracts between them and the shore. The coastal plains flanked by the Eastern and Western Ghats are composed of alluvial soil and are agriculturally the most important areas. The huge deposits of minerals in the tableland region more than compensate for the unproductivity of the soil for cultivation.



THE DISTRIBUTION OF MINERALS



ANNUAL COAL-PRODUCTION

3. MINERAL RESOURCES

THE distribution of economic minerals in India is very localized. The principal coal-fields are in the Gondwana region (Bengal, Bihar, Orissa) in the remote north-eastern corner of the Peninsular Plateau. The oil-fields too, occurring as they do on the edge of great fold mountains, are sparsely distributed in Assam and the Punjab. Iron-ores, like the rest of metallic ores, are not found in the vicinity of coal-fields, and many rich iron deposits of Madras, Mysore and Hyderabad cannot be worked for want of metallurgical fuel. Other industrial minerals, such as borax, sulphur, magnesite, ilmenite or gypsum, are scattered far and wide. This scattered occurrence renders difficult the co-ordination of production and distribution, and is to a certain extent responsible for the lag in the industrial development of the country.

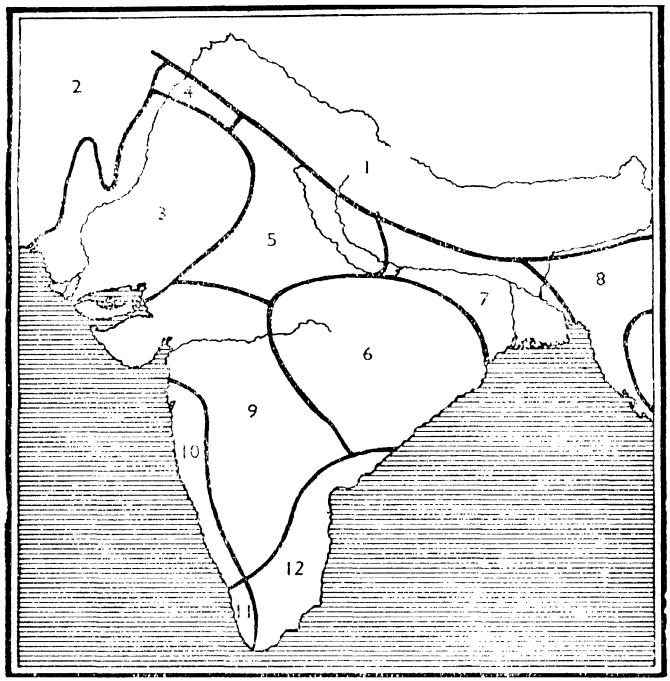
The total value of minerals, metals and ores produced in India in 1938 was Rs. 34,14 lakhs. The value of raw material minerals alone, i.e. excluding steel, pig iron, ferro-manganese, was Rs. 23,50 lakhs. With an output of 28·3 million tons of coal, valued at Rs. 10,64 lakhs, India ranked second in the British Empire and ninth amongst the coal-producing countries of the world. Other minerals produced were: iron-ore 2,743,675 tons, manganese 967,929 tons, copper 288,127 tons, gold 321,138 oz., chromite 44,149 tons, petroleum 87,082,371 gallons, salt 1,539,663 tons, mica 61,584 tons, saltpetre 72,412 tons, magnesite 25,611 tons, monazite 5,221 tons. India also produced 4,892 carats of sapphires and 1,729 carats of diamonds. The net annual imports of metals, minerals and precious stones exceed Rs. 10 crores in value, or 8 per cent of the total imports.

In 1938 there were 1,953 mines, employing 306,260 workers. Although 43 separate minerals are at present exploited, India does not enjoy a position of self-sufficiency in respect of all industrial minerals. India's position in the world's total production is shown by the following figures:

Coal	... 1·9 %	Manganese	... 15·3 %	Mica	... 48·00 %
Petroleum	... 0·1 %	Copper-ore	... 0·4 %	Rocksalt	... 0·06 %
Iron-ore	... 1·8 %	Gold	... 0·9 %	Gypsum	... 0·34 %

India is the main source of mica, ilmenite, and manganese, and is possessed of perhaps the world's largest reserve of high-grade iron-ore—3,600 million tons. Its resources in chromite, salt and saltpetre, gypsum, building material, earths and clays are fairly large, but it is very deficient in petroleum, tin, nickel, molybdenum, lead, zinc and silver, tungsten, antimony, bauxite and certain chemicals.

The coal reserves are estimated at 60,000 million tons, of which only 4,500 million tons are of good quality, whilst not more than 1,700 million tons are classed as coking coals. The present consumption of coal is about 30 million tons per annum and at this rate 4,500 million tons of good coal would last 150 years. At the outbreak of the war Indian industries experienced an acute shortage of mechanical power and basic chemicals, and though the foundations for the development of a heavy chemicals industry have been laid, a rapid development of alcohol, hydro-electric and other power is needed to avert an industrial crisis in the post-war period.



THE MAJOR CLIMATIC ZONES

1. **The Himalayan Zone**: Invariably cold climate. Very heavy rainfall on central and eastern slopes. 2. **Arid Plateau**: Very hot and dry summers, very cold and dry winters. 3. **Arid Lowland**: Very hot and dry summers, cold and dry winters. 4. **Hot and Dry Summers, Cold and Moist Winters**: Rainfall between 5–10 inches during summer as well as winter. Mean January temperature below 55°F. Hottest month, July. 5. **Cool Winters and Very Hot and Dry Early Summers**: Rainfall moderate in summer and below 5 in. in winter. Mean January temperature 55° to 65°F. Hottest month, June. 6. **Warm and Moist**: Rainfall heavy, considerable humidity. 7. **Very Hot and Very Moist Lowland**: Hot wet zone extending eastward. 8. **Warm and Wet**: Rainfall over 100 in. 9. **Hot Summers and Warm and Dry Winters**: Moderate rainfall in summer. Mean January temperature 65° to 75°F. Hottest month May. 10. **Hot and Very Moist**: Rainfall over 80 in. from mid-June to mid-September. Dry season for 7 months. 11. **Very Warm and Wet**: Rainfall everywhere over 100 in. Dry season for 3 months, with a narrower annual range of temperature than in zone 10. 12. **Hot Dry Summers, Cool-Moist Winters**: Moderate rainfall (40 in.) in winter months from October to December.

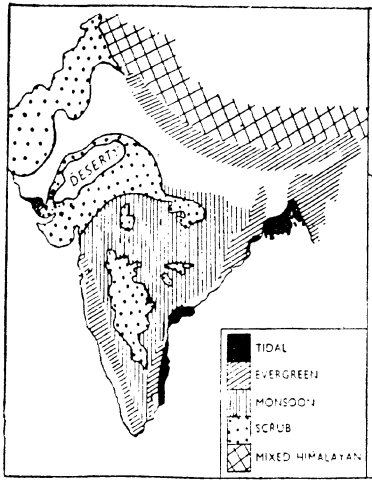
4. CLIMATE

INDIA has large and marked variations of climate, produced out of the country's characteristic relief and location which control its meteorological conditions. The climate of India is not influenced by the distribution of pressure and winds in Central Asia, but its main weather features are determined by the cycle of solar activity. Meteorologically, the Indian year is divided into three well-marked seasons: (i) the cool season, with little rain, from November to February; (ii) the dry season from March to June; (iii) the wet season with heavy monsoon rains and the lowering of temperature, from July to October. On an average, the Indian climate represents the Tropical Monsoon type, which is characterized by hot rainy summers and cool dry winters. The alternation of seasons is a relieving feature of the Indian climate, because the cooling effect of the monsoon rains, followed by a cool season, generally does away with the depressing and enervating effects of a tropical climate.

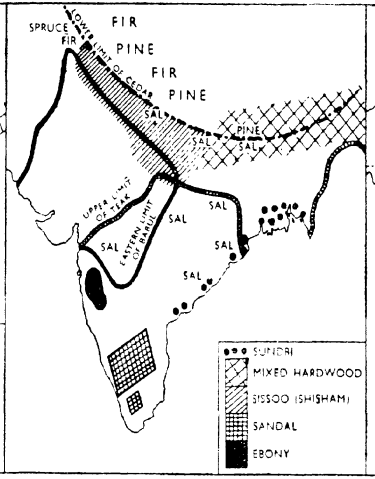
The country may be divided into several climatic zones, each of these exercising its inevitable influence on the economic practices and the modes of living of its inhabitants. The north-west region is very hot and dry in summer, cold and moist in winter. The cold-weather cyclonic rains render the climate bracing and energetic. This area is inhabited by stalwart races who subsist mostly on a wheat, milk and meat diet, and are engaged in pasturing (in arid tracts) and cultivation (where irrigation is possible). The low-lying regions of the eastern Ganges plain, and the eastern and western coast-strips, have a depressing climate, and are inhabited by people of comparatively modest physique sustained mostly on a rice and fish diet. Intensive cultivation and multiple cropping support a very heavy population, the density often exceeding 2,000 persons per square mile. The arid conditions of the Southern Tableland as a whole offer poor facilities for successful agriculture. Pasturing and cultivation supplement each other. The inhabitants are hardy but poor, and live mainly on millets and livestock products.

In a variable climate, such as we find in India, one year may be warm and wet, and full of crops, and another hot and dry, and famine-stricken; one region may be inhabited by a healthy and prosperous peasantry, such as we find in the Punjab, and another by a half-starved mass of humanity, such as we notice in Central India. A regular series of changes in the diet, dress, health and efficiency of the people take place in sympathy with seasonal variations.

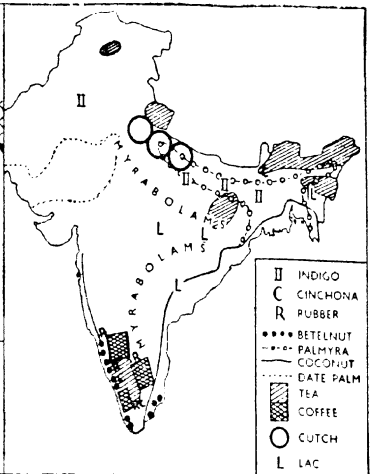
Climatically, India is a *Region of Increment*, where nature yields the means of livelihood with comparatively little effort on the part of man. Like all monsoon lands, it enjoys a comparative advantage in raising a variety of vegetable and animal products. But the monsoon climate, with its characteristic seasonal variations, exercises a direct influence on the distribution of natural resources, the evolution of economic stages, and the regulation of the energy and efficiency of agricultural and industrial workers. These regional and seasonal variations of climate in India, with their inevitable economic consequences, deserve special consideration in any scheme of economic planning and post-war construction.



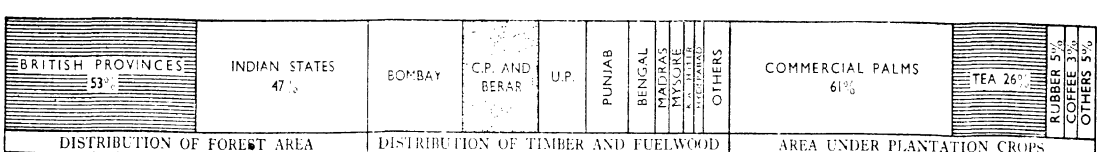
TYPES OF FORESTS



COMMERCIAL TIMBERS



PLANTATION AND MINOR PRODUCTS



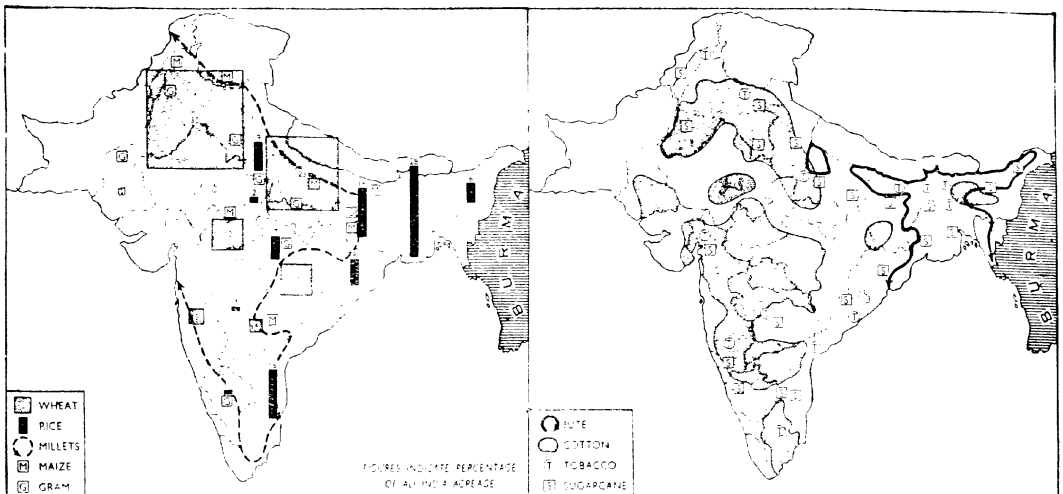
DISTRIBUTION OF FOREST AREA | DISTRIBUTION OF TIMBER AND FUELWOOD | AREA UNDER PLANTATION CROPS

5. FOREST WEALTH

VEGETATIONALLY, the greater part of India must be considered as in the tropics, but because of greater climatic and physiographic differences there is found an infinite variety in the types of natural vegetation. We may thus find tropical, sub-tropical, temperate and Alpine zones at varying altitudes. Within each of these main vegetation zones are definite forest types: Wet, Moist and Dry, depending on soil, rainfall and local factors. The main types of forests, classified regionally, are (i) *Tidal*: representing the Wet Tropical type, occurring in swamps and submerged coastal plains, and producing mangrove vegetation, e.g. sundri, casuarina, and fuel-wood; (ii) *Evergreen*: the Moist Tropical type, thriving on plateau regions (1,000-3,000 ft) facing the monsoon currents. They occur in the Western Ghats, the eastern sub-Himalayas and Assam, and produce valuable hard-wood, e.g. teak, toon and bamboos; (iii) *Deciduous Monsoon*: distributed in sub-Himalayan regions and in the central and eastern Peninsula. They produce hard-wood, e.g. sal, teak, rosewood, ebony, shisham, sandal and mango; (iv) *Dry*: occurring in arid regions of the Punjab plain, Sind, Rajputana and Baluchistan, and producing babul and tar-wood; (v) *Mixed Himalayan*: producing vegetation of mixed deciduous and coniferous types, depending on elevation and rainfall, e.g. spruce, cedar, silver fir, pines, oaks, magnolias and laurels.

The total area under forests in India is about 127 million acres, 68 million acres (53%) lying in British territory and 59 million acres (47%) in Indian States.

The forest wealth of India may be divided into three groups: *Major Products*—timber and fuel-wood; *Plantation Products*—tea, coffee, palms, rubber, cinchona and semul; and *Minor Products*—essential oils, dyeing and tanning substances, gums and resins, fibres and grasses, bamboos, lac, fruits and flowers, herbs and spices, beeswax and honey. The average annual outturn of timber and fuel-wood is 295 million cubic feet. The estimated annual value of timber, fuel-wood, and woodware is now about Rs. 15,00 lakhs. The income from minor products averages Rs. 4,00 lakhs. The acreage under plantation crops is 3,250,000, and the value of plantation products is estimated at Rs. 35,00 lakhs. In 1939-40 India produced 451 million lb. of tea, 40 of coffee, 31 of rubber, 99 of lac, and 7,840 of coconuts (in shell), and the forest revenue amounted to Rs. 3,02 lakhs, yielding a surplus of Rs. 74 lakhs. India's position in the production of timber, lac, coconut, myrabolams and tea is favourable, there being always an exportable surplus, but there is deficiency of rubber, gums and resins, and deal-wood. Forests provide permanent employment for about 1½ million workers and their dependants, and casual employment for a few more millions. The forest industries tend to reduce pressure on cultivation by absorbing a large floating population of rural labourers set free on account of the seasonal nature of agricultural operations.



FOOD CROPS

COMMERCIAL CROPS



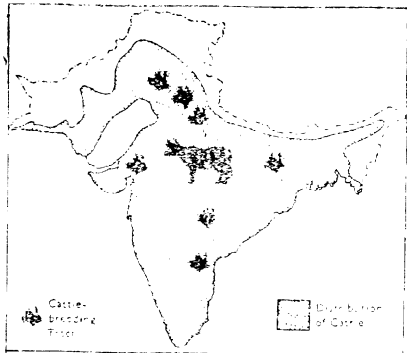
Each unit represents 1 per cent of the total area under crops

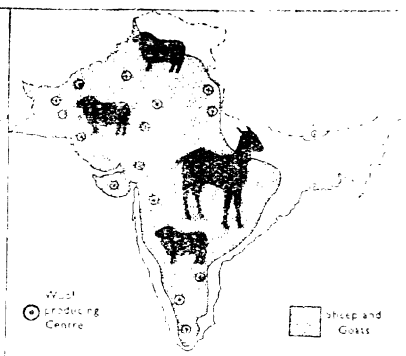
6. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

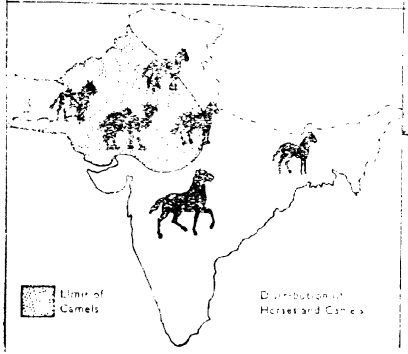
On account of a wide range of physical and climatic conditions no homogeneous system of agriculture is found in India, the agricultural practices being adapted to regional peculiarities. *Wet Cultivation* is characteristic of new alluvium tracts which receive very heavy rainfall (over 80 inches), e.g. in the central and eastern sub-Himalayas and lower Bengal, and on the Malabar coast. The land is subject to multiple cropping and the principal crops are paddy and jute. *Humid Farming* is found in the alluvial and black-soil regions of moderate rainfall (80″–40″), e.g. in the central Ganges plain, Deccan and the Central Provinces—irrigation developing westward and wet cultivation eastward. Double-cropping—often supplemented with a catch-crop, *zaid*—is usually practised. *Irrigation Farming* is developed in regions of older alluvium receiving inadequate or uncertain rainfall (40″–20″), e.g. in the upper Ganges plain, the Punjab plain, Sind and northern Madras. One or two crops may be raised. *Dry Farming*, characteristic of arid uplands which receive less than 20″ of rainfall, e.g. Bombay, Sind, western U.P. and the Punjab, makes possible only one crop of wheat or millets in two or three years.

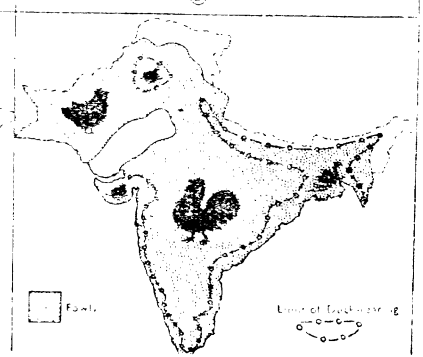
Agriculture in India is a seasonal industry. There are two principal cropping seasons: *kharif*, the summer rain cultivation, and *rabi*, the winter rain cultivation. *Zaid*, a catch-crop, is raised by artificial irrigation in humid regions. *Kharif* crops are sown after the first outbreak of the summer monsoon and harvested in September or October. The principal crops are rice, maize, millets (*jowar*, *bajra*), pulses (*arhar*, *mung*, *masur*), oilseeds (castor, sesamum, groundnut), cotton, jute, hemp, sugarcane, tobacco, forage grasses and leafy vegetables. *Rabi* crops are sown in October and harvested in March or April, the chief of them being wheat, barley, gram, peas and beans, linseed, mustard, scrub-fodder, potatoes, root and tuber vegetables. *Zaid* crops are usually melons, water-melons, cucumbers, leafy and tuber vegetables.

The rural population is 87 per cent of the total population, out of which 66 per cent is directly engaged in cultivation. In 1939-40 the net area sown was 209,959,786 acres, of which 80·6 per cent was devoted to food crops and 19·4 per cent to commercial crops. India produced 55 million tons of food grains, 6·2 of oilseeds, 4·6 of sugarcane, in addition to 1,066 million lb. of tobacco, 3,896 million lb. of jute and 1,964 million lb. of cotton. Though the production of commercial crops is in surplus, there is generally food shortage. According to the estimates of Dr Radhakamal Mukerjee, in a year of normal harvests there is food deficiency for 48 million persons, or 12 per cent of the population. In 1939-40 the net imports were 0·77 million tons of wheat and 1·62 million tons of rice, constituting the food requirements of about 41 million people. There is great scope for improvement in the crops and livestock of the country, and in course of time India should become self-sufficient in food supply.










Cows 54%


Buffaloes 44%


Sheep and Goats 2%

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF MILCH CATTLE

Estimated Annual Total Cash Value of Animal Products and Services

	Rs. Crores
Milk and milk-products	300·00
Cattle labour	400·00
Cow-dung for manure and fuel	270·00
Hides, skins, wool, hair, bristles	40·00
Meat, fat, blood, horn ..	10·70
Bones, guts, casings, offals	0·25
Export of cattle ..	0·05
Total Rs.	10,21·00

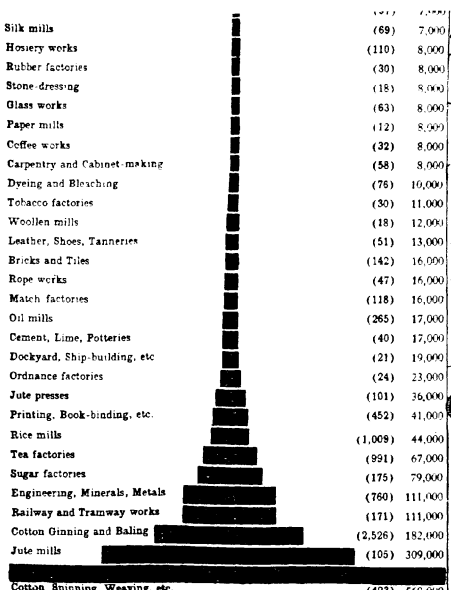
7. ANIMAL RESOURCES

AMONG the most valuable potential natural resources of India must be reckoned her animal kingdom. Indian forests afford shelter to wild animals and birds in large numbers and in great variety. Bears and small fur-bearing animals, e.g. martens and weasels, are found in the Himalayas. The tiger is found in the eastern sub-Himalayan and plateau regions, and the leopard, wolf and hyena are very widely distributed. Elephants still roam about in the monsoon forests of the Nilgiri hills. Wild goats, deer, antelopes, and other herbivores move in herds over the grasslands. Ibex is found in Kashmir, the yak in the higher Himalayas, and the wild buffalo on the hills of southern India. The rhinoceros frequents the swamps of northern Bengal and Assam, the huge python occurs largely in Assam, while crocodiles and cobras are widely distributed.

The domestic animals are buffaloes and oxen, horses and ponies, mules and donkeys, which are adapted to all climates. Sheep are reared mainly on the dry upland pastures unsuitable for cattle, while goats, which feed freely on scrub vegetation, are confined to arid regions. Fowls are domesticated in all climates, preferably the drier ones, and ducks abound in coastal plains and riverine tracts.

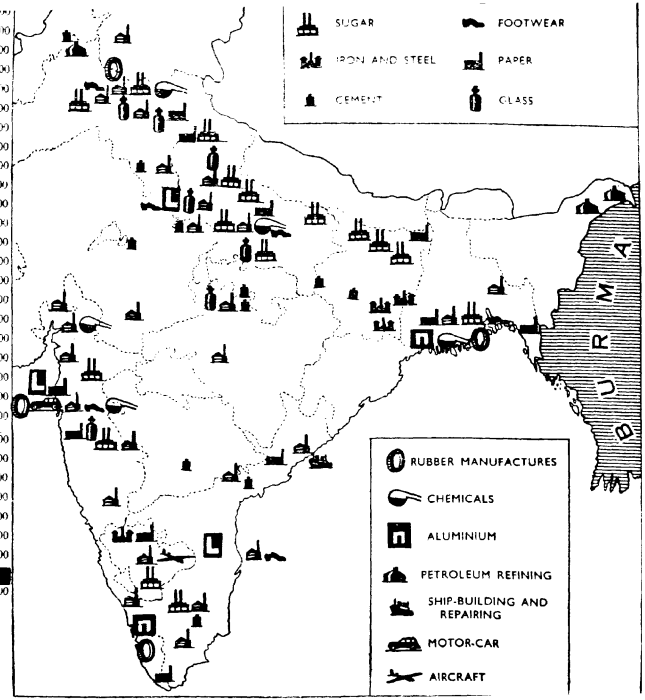
The total livestock in India is 325 million head. India has the largest bovine population in the world, i.e. 207 million out of the world's total of 690 million. India has many more cattle in proportion to its area and population than any other equal area of the earth's surface. The number of cattle per 100 acres of area sown is 63 for India: ranging from 96 in Bengal to 90 in the U.P., 89 in Bihar, 83 in Orissa, 71 in Madras, 60 in the Punjab, 54 in the C.P., 46 in Sind, and 35 in Bombay. Twenty-five cattle per 100 acres of sown area are considered sufficient to meet the requirements of farming and rural transport in India, and the pressure of the cattle population on land and human food resources in almost all provinces is obvious in times of scarcity, such as famines and wars.

The total cash value of animal products and services in India is estimated at Rs.1.021 crores annually. The annual production of milk exceeds 800 million maunds, valued at Rs. 300 crores. Although India's output is four times that of Great Britain, its *per capita* consumption is less than one-fifth of that country's. Six million cattle, six million goats, and one million sheep are slaughtered every year for meat—yielding 620 million lb. of meat valued at Rs. 9 crores. About 130,000 tons of hides and skins (Rs. 9 crores), are produced annually, and the exports amount to over one-third of the world's total demand. The average annual output of raw wool is 85 million lb., one-half of which is exported. India has 10 per cent of the world's total poultry population, i.e. 191 million birds valued at Rs. 8 crores. There are 58 million laying birds producing 3,365 million eggs every year, of which more than 28 million are exported to neighbouring countries. Poultry farming as a subsidiary industry gives casual employment to 40 million workers.



RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF FACTORIES IN 1939

Figures in brackets (423) represent number of establishments. Other figures indicate the average number of workers employed daily.



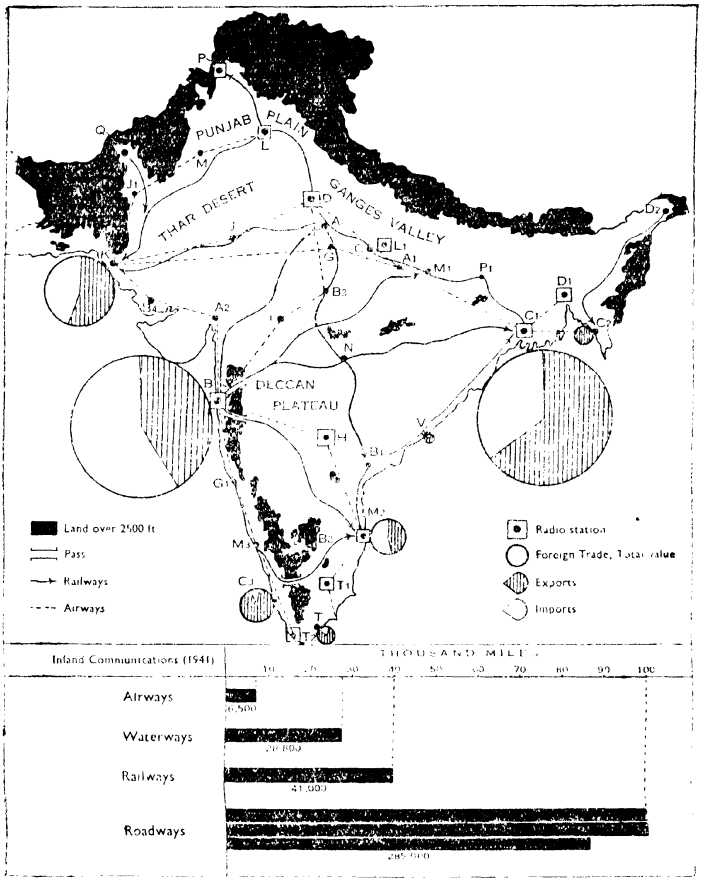
8. MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES

THE proper view of industrial evolution and progress in India is physico-environmental. The principal industries of India tend to segregate in certain well-defined regions. The iron and steel industry is localized in Bengal and Bihar near the coal and iron mines, the centres of production being Jamshedpur, Kulti, Burnpur and Manoharpur; the cotton industry is centred in the province of Bombay because of climatic (humidity) factors and the proximity to raw materials, the centres of production being Bombay, Sholapur, Hubli and Ahmedabad; jute mills cluster around Calcutta in Bengal; sugar mills are dotted along the railway track among cane-producing regions in the U.P. and Bihar; cement is manufactured in the central and southern tableland, near the sources of raw materials, e.g. limestone, gypsum and clays; paper mills are mainly in Bengal, Bombay and the U.P.; leather in the U.P. and Madras; glass in the central and upper Ganges plain.

In 1939 there were in India 9,422 large industrial establishments, daily employing 1,940,477 workers. Of these, 4,085 (employing 368,905 persons) were seasonal in operation and 5,337 (employing 1,571,572 persons) perennial. If we include mining and plantation industries, and also small-scale factories employing not less than ten workers each, we find about 16,000 establishments, employing about 3 million workers.

In 1941 there were 390 cotton mills, employing 459,509 workers, and consuming 148·7 million tons of raw cotton. They manufactured 4,269 million yards of fabrics, and spun 1,349 million lb. of yarn. The 107 jute mills, with 300,000 workers, consumed 984,000 tons of raw jute, and produced 1,968 million yards of sacking and hessians; the 148 sugar mills produced 1,345,000 tons of sugar from all sources, and the output of cement was estimated at 1,200 thousand tons. There were also 12 paper mills with a total annual outturn of 96,000 tons; 118 match factories producing 16 million gross boxes; and 51 leather factories (12,636 workers) and 500 tanneries (16,000 workers), consuming 65,000 tons of hides and skins. Thirteen iron and steel mills and 78 foundries, with 150,000 workers (600,000 including dependants), produced 1,838,000 tons of pig iron, and since September 1940 have been supplying every month 50,000 tons of pig iron to the U.K. The Tata Iron and Steel Co. constitutes today the empire's greatest single arsenal east of Suez. In addition to special steels, Tata's output alone of ordinary steel products is over 800,000 tons per annum, and the concern is manufacturing every month 50,000 tools of various types for the army.

India ranks as one of the eight greatest industrial countries of the world, and its steady progress is discernible from the indices of Industrial Activity, which have moved from 81 in 1932 (1935 = 100) to 127 in 1942. The war gave a great impetus to industrial initiative, and almost all manufacturing industries, formerly few in number and concentrated in a few areas, have of recent years multiplied and spread. The demand for war supplies of all kinds, the difficulties of maintaining imports, and the preparations for the offensive in the Far East, all played their part in hastening the development of Indian industries.



COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMERCE

A — Agra
A1 — Allahabad
A2 — Ahmedabad
B — Bombay
B1 — Bezwada
B2 — Bangalore
B3 — Bhopal
B4 — Bhui
C — Cawnpore
C1 — Calcutta
C2 — Chittagong
C3 — Cochin
D — Delhi
D1 — Dacca
D2 — Dibrugarh
G — Gwalior
G1 — Goa
H — Hyderabad
I — Indore
J — Jodhpur
J1 — Jacobabad
K — Karachi
L — Lahore
L1 — Lucknow
M — Multan
M1 — Moghalsarai
M2 — Madras
M3 — Mangalore
N — Nagpur
P — Peshawar
P1 — Patna
Q — Quetta
T — Tuticorin
T1 — Trichinopoly
T2 — Trivandrum
V — Vizagapatam

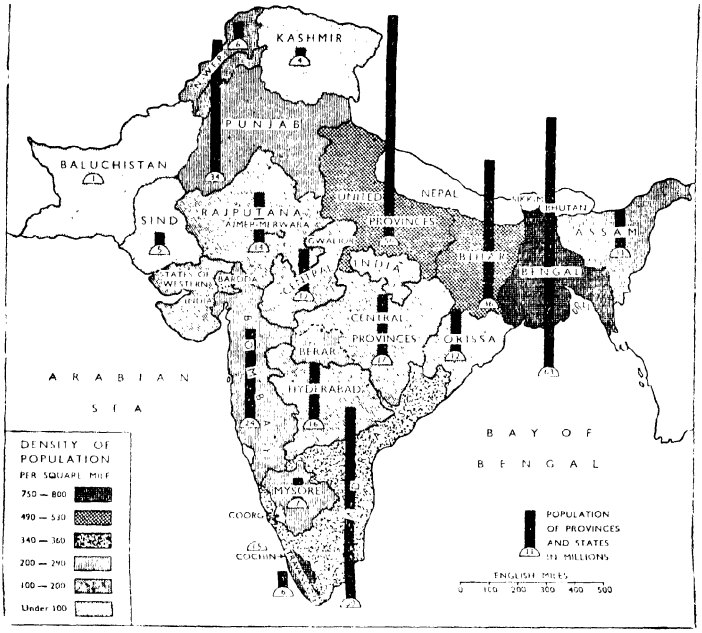
9. COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMERCE

GEOGRAPHICAL conditions largely control the nature and direction of the means of communication in India. Since communications follow the line of least resistance, their absence in the Himalayan region is natural and expected. The relief of Peninsular India offers poor facilities for the construction of roads and railways. The Indo-Gangetic plains have naturally developed the best system of communications.

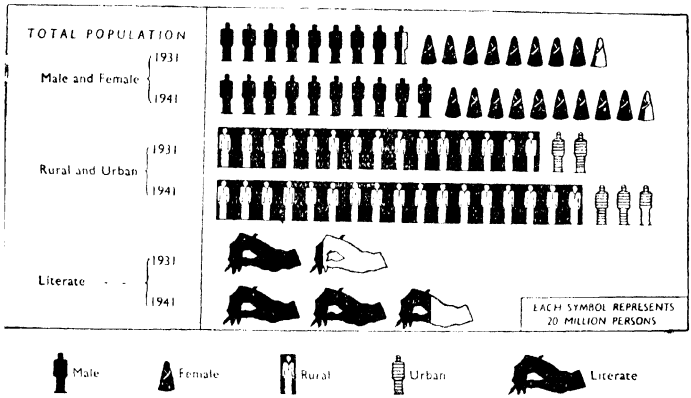
The four principal systems of transport—railways, roads, water- and air-ways—together aggregate 361,300 miles. There are only 3,800 miles of navigation canals, but irrigation canals and rivers are navigable for about 25,000 miles. Air transport has not developed beyond the experimental stage—there being about 6,500 miles of regular routes with an annual traffic of a million lb. of foreign mail. In 1941 the total railway route mileage was 41,052, which is less than one route mile to every 38 sq. miles, or for 9,483 inhabitants. Of the total railway mileage more than 50 per cent is in the Indo-Gangetic plains. In 1941 Indian railways carried 89·2 million tons of goods and 5·5 million passengers and had a surplus of Rs. 8·29 crores, which in 1942 rose to Rs. 12 crores. The total mileage of roads in British India is 285,313, of which 64,070 are modern-surfaced: 186,166 miles of roads are motorable, and there are 174,077 motor vehicles. Roads are the principal feeders of railways and about 50 per cent of railway mileage is paralleled by metalled roads. More than three-fourths of the total road mileage lies in the Indo-Gangetic plains. Several million miles of inter-village *kutcha* roads in rural areas are not to be left out of consideration.

In 1941 there were also 103,600 miles of telegraph line and 648,000 miles of wire and cable; 33,216 straight line and extension telephone connexions; nine (A.I.R.) broadcasting stations with 15 transmitters, and 150,387 licensed wireless receivers. (There are now four radio stations in the States—two in Hyderabad, one each in Mysore and Travancore.) At the end of September 1943 the number of licensed wireless receivers was 171,594.

India is mainly a producer of food-stuffs and raw materials, and this fact dominates the course of its trade. In 1941 the total value of India's foreign trade was Rs. 343 crores, the value of internal trade being Rs. 2,500 crores. Although in volume of trade India ranks fifth in the world, the high population keeps its *per capita* trade figure almost at the bottom of the schedule. India exports raw jute and cotton, tea, oilseeds, hides and skins, lac and jute goods. It imports mainly manufactured goods, e.g. textiles, metals, machinery and millwork, vehicles, oils, paper and rubber. The principal commodities of internal trade are coal and coke, oilseeds, rice and wheat, salt, raw cotton, sugar, cotton piecegoods and livestock. In 1941 India's favourable balance of trade was Rs. 42,13 lakhs. The United Kingdom is the largest single customer for Indian exports, and supplies more than 50 per cent of the total Indian imports. The ports of Bombay (Rs. 150 crores annually), Calcutta (141), Karachi (62), Madras (34), Cochin (15), Chittagong (11) and Tuticorin (10), account for the bulk of the foreign and coastal trade.



DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION, 1941



10. DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION

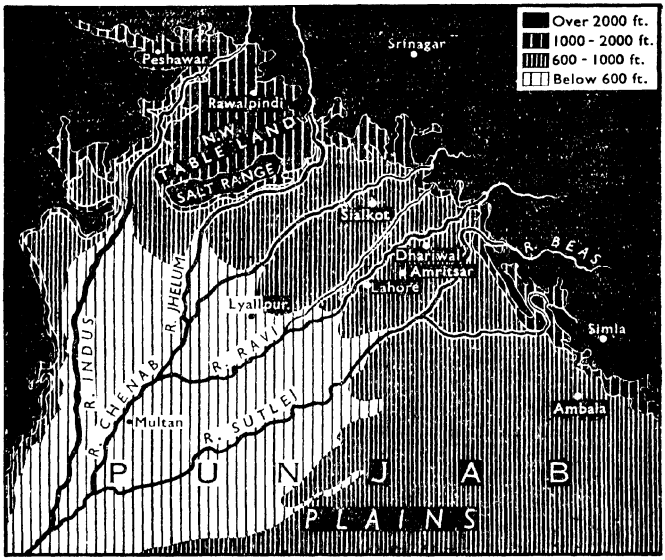
THE total population of India on 1 March 1941 was 388,997,955, representing an increase of 14·7 per cent over 1931, and of 39·1 per cent over 1891. 200·9 millions were male, and 187·9 female; 339·2 millions rural, and 49·6 urban. The urban population is 13 per cent of the total population (ranging from 2·7 in Assam to 26·0 per cent in Bombay) as compared with 80 per cent in England and 56·2 per cent in the U.S.A. Literates numbered 47 million. From the point of view of literacy, Travancore takes the highest place with 47·8 per cent; then follow Cochin (35·4 per cent), Delhi (25·7), Baroda (23), Bombay (19·5), Bengal (16·1) and Madras (13). Female literacy increased by 150 per cent in the decade 1931-41.

Of the total Indian population 171 million or 44 per cent is the working population, and the percentage of workers to the total working population is about sixty-six for agriculture, ten for industries, eight for trade and transport, three for public services and professions, and seven for domestic service.

The density per square mile of population in the major natural regions of India is controlled by climatic and physiographic factors which facilitate or hamper food production, migration and colonization. India, being mainly an agricultural country, shows a very low mean density of 195 persons per square mile as compared with highly industrialized England (684); the U.S.A., however, with an area nearly twice as great as India's, has a population of only 41 per square mile. The density per square mile in India shows large variations, e.g. 5 in Baluchistan (arid tableland) to 646 in Bengal (warm and moist, newer alluvial plains), 87 in Rajputana (desert region) to 814 in Cochin State (hot-wet coastal plains); 43 in Kashmir (Himalayan region) to 456 in the U.P. (older, humid alluvial plains). The highest density is noticeable in the Ganges and Indus valleys and coastal plains which receive adequate rainfall and have fertile soils, whereas it is the lowest in arid tablelands, desert and hill tracts.

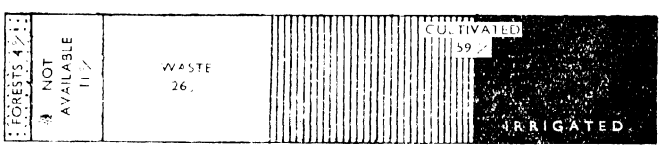
Eighty-seven per cent of the total population of India resides in 655,257 rural settlements, half of which lie in the Ganges valley and Indus basin, and three-fifths of the total rural population is concentrated in about 600,000 villages having less than 1,000 inhabitants each. Urban places have increased from 2,480 in 1931 to 2,739 in 1941, and the percentage of the urban population to the total shows an increase of two per cent during the same period. There are 58 cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants each, six with over 400,000 and only two with over one million inhabitants, namely Calcutta 2,488,000 and Bombay 1,490,000.

The population of major communities in 1941 was 255·4 million Hindus, 91·7 Muslims, 25·1 Animists, 6·3 Christians, 5·7 Sikhs, 4·7 others. Hindus predominate in Madras, Bihar, Orissa, C.I., the U.P., Rajputana and Bombay. Muslims populate the N-W.F. Province, Kashmir and Baluchistan, and form the majority in the Punjab, eastern Bengal and Sind. Christians are concentrated in Travancore, Cochin and Madras and scattered over the northern plains. Sikhs are localized in the Punjab, Jains in Rajputana, and Animists in Assam, Bihar and the central tableland.

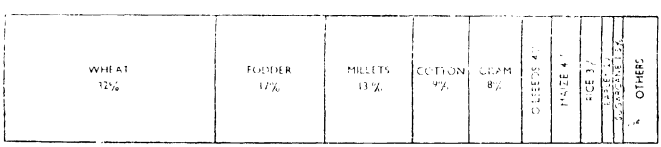


CONTOUR OF THE PUNJAB

100 MILES



THE PROPORTION OF CULTIVATED LAND



RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF CROPS



SHARE OF THE PUNJAB IN INDIA'S TOTAL PRODUCTION

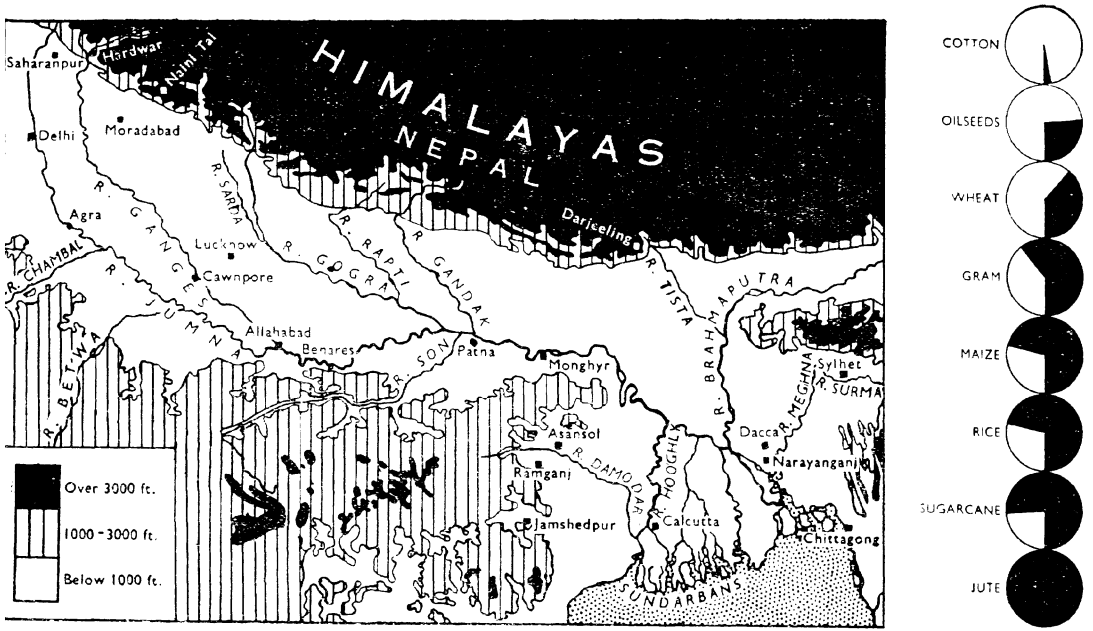
11. THE LAND OF THE FIVE RIVERS

FIVE rivers, the Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej, rising in the snow-clad Himalayas and flowing in a south-westerly direction, enclose a region called the Punjab (*punj* = five, *ab* = waters). This *Panchnad*, or the combined stream of five rivers, flows south-west, eventually to join the Indus river, which forms the western boundary of the region. The Punjab has an area of 135,880 sq. miles and a population of 33,923,000. The region as a whole enjoys a continental type of climate, i.e. extremes of heat and cold—the cyclonic rains rendering the cold weather bracing and invigorating.

The five natural regions of the Punjab are: (i) *The Himalayan Tract* (22,000 sq. miles), with scanty population living by meadow husbandry; (ii) *The North-west Tableland* (11,000 sq. miles), a precarious tract, thinly populated; (iii) *The Submontane Belt* of the north-east (8,000 sq. miles)—most fertile and thickly populated, its population of five millions being mostly agricultural; (iv) *The Eastern Humid Plain* (36,000 sq. miles), with a population of 11 millions, mainly agricultural; (v) *The Dry Western Plain* (59,000 sq. miles), with over seven million people, and the world's most remarkable system of canal irrigation.

The Punjab is essentially a region of peasant proprietors. Agriculture supports 65·5 per cent of the population. In 1941 the net area sown was 25·7 million acres, of which 17 million were irrigated. Here is produced 33 per cent of India's wheat, the other crops being millets, gram, maize, rice, barley, cotton, oilseeds, sugarcane and fodder. Wool, hides and skins are other staple products. Industrially not much advanced, the province has 927 factories—mainly for cotton, woollen and silk weaving, turpentine and rosin, plywood, stationery and sports goods.

Roughly one-half of the people are Muslims, three-eighths Hindus, and one-eighth Sikh. The Jats, about five million, stand high in the social scale; next come the Rajputs (1·5 million). The Gujars are an important agricultural and pastoral tribe. Multan is the natural collecting centre for the south-western regions; and Amritsar, Lyallpur, Ambala and Dhariwal are the seats of large-scale industries. Lahore (pop. 670,000), the largest town and the provincial capital, has one of the biggest railway workshops in India and is the centre of many industries.



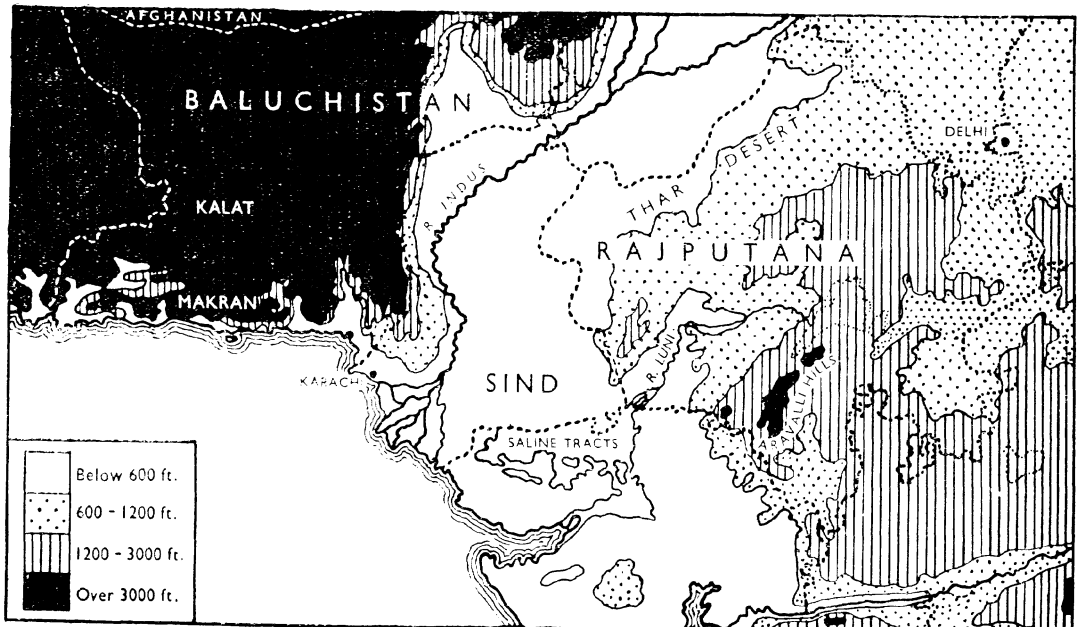
THE GANGES PLAIN AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO INDIA'S TOTAL PRODUCTION

12. THE GIFT OF THE GANGES

THE VAST LEVEL TRACT watered and benefited by the two great river systems of northern India, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, is formed by a process of alluviation, and is the work of many rivers and their tributaries. This region is therefore called 'the Gift of the Ganges'. The climate on the whole is of the Tropical Monsoon type—the hot and dry regions changing imperceptibly eastward into warm and wet lowlands. The average rainfall diminishes from 100″ in the east to less than 20″ in the western extremity, with an average decline of 15″–25″ from the northern to the southern fringe. The vegetation varies from monsoon deciduous in the west to dense evergreen in the east.

The Ganges Plain is divided into three regions: (i) *Bhabar* (submontane belt): wet and riverine, maintaining a densely forested belt. The climate is damp and unhealthy, and wherever forests are cleared, paddy and sugarcane grow well. Fishing and lumbering are subsidiary occupations. (ii) *Bhangar*: the upland plains of older alluvium receiving moderate rainfall (60″–40″) and enjoying a milder climate. Agriculture is the staple industry. The principal crops are rice, sugarcane, wheat, gram, oilseeds, millets, cotton, tobacco. (iii) *Khadar*: the lowland plains of newer alluvium, confined to lower river valleys and deltas, receiving over 80″ rainfall. Intensive cultivation supports a very dense population, the principal crops being paddy, jute, sugarcane, oilseeds and tobacco. Fishing is a prosperous industry.

The Ganges Plain ranks among the most productive and populated regions of the world. It comprises the provinces of Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and the U.P., aggregating an area of 364,841 sq. miles and a population of 177·4 million, which figures represent 23 per cent and 46 per cent of the respective figures for India. The area under crops is 87·8 million acres, 42 per cent of India's total cropped area. Large industrial and commercial centres are dotted throughout on the rivers' banks. Cawnpore (pop. 437,000), one of the largest cities on the Ganges, is a great railway centre, the leading manufacturing town, and the chief collecting and distributing centre for the agricultural products of the whole region. Calcutta (pop. 2,488,000) situated on the Hooghly river, 80 miles from the sea, is the largest port, and the main outlet for the products of the north and the east.



THE ARID REGIONS OF WESTERN INDIA

13. THE ARID WEST

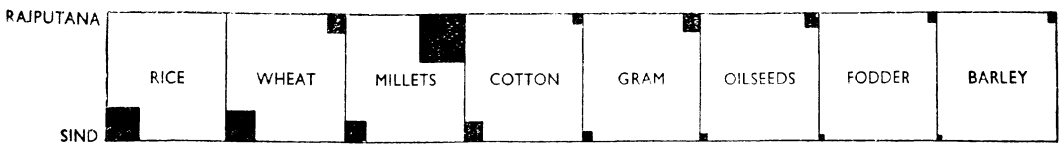
THE WESTERN REGIONS of India are some of nature's most neglected and forsaken tracts. They include the uplands of Rajputana, the Thar Desert, the arid alluvial lowlands of Sind, and the arid Baluchistan tableland—with an aggregate area of 320,265 sq. miles and a population of 19,647,000. With more than 15 per cent of the area of the Indian Empire, they contain less than 5 per cent of the country's population.

Over the greater part of this region rainfall is scanty, and frequently not a drop falls on the parched surface for more than a year. Vegetation is mainly scrub. The main occupation of the people is pasturing, with agriculture in irrigated tracts, the main crops being millets, wheat and cotton. Population is scattered, and the mean density ranges from 9 per sq. mile in Baluchistan to 87 in Rajputana.

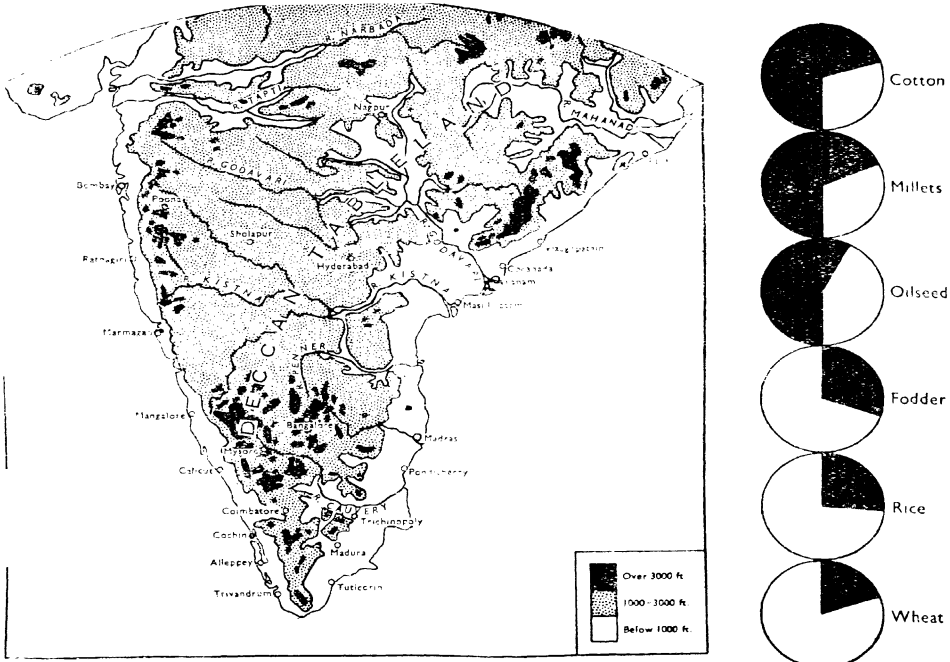
Rajputana is an arid upland, intersected by the Aravalli Hills, with a vast expanse of sandy waste to the NW. and the saline tracts of the Rann of Cutch to the SW. More than half the population is engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry, and the principal products are millets and wool. The people are Rajputs (mostly landholders), Jats, Gujars and Bhils.

Were it not for the inundations of the Indus and the extension of canal irrigation, Sind would be a desert. The net area sown is 4·9 million acres, of which 4·6 is irrigated; 59 per cent of the total working population is engaged in agriculture and 10 per cent in industry. Karachi (pop. 360,000) is the third largest port of India, and the main outlet for the products of the north-western regions.

Baluchistan is a region of rugged, barren, sunburnt mountains, with arid deserts and stony plains (1,000 to 3,000 ft). The climate is subject to extremes of heat and cold; rainfall nowhere exceeds ten inches. Pasturing, with precarious agriculture, supports a scanty population. The inhabitants are Afghans and Baluchs (agricultural) and Brahuis (nomads).



RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF CROPS IN RAJPUTANA AND SIND



THE PENINSULAR REGIONS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION

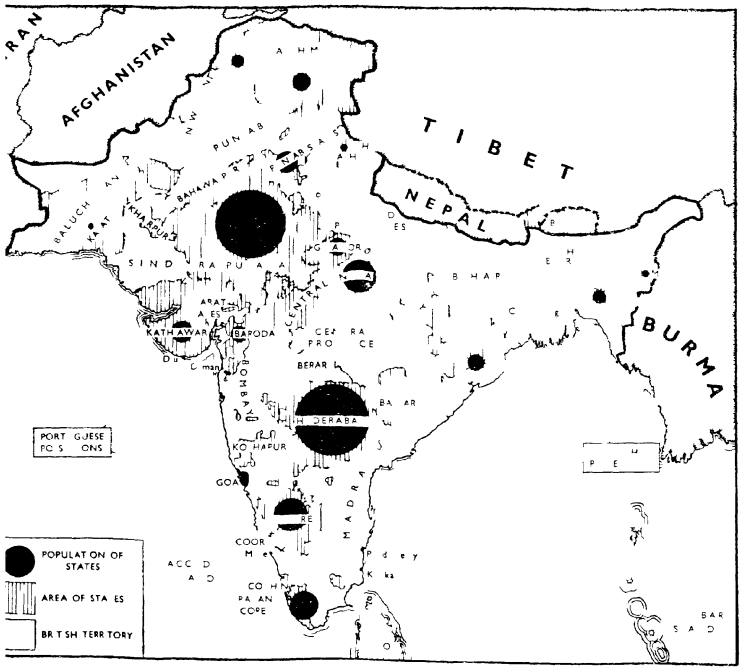
14. THE PENINSULAR REGIONS

SOUTHERN INDIA is built up of old, hard (crystalline) rocks, and covered with thin soil, except where the rivers have cut channels for themselves and deposited silt along their banks, or where beds of black lava soil are found on the Deccan trap. The climate is evenly warm throughout the year, and the vegetation mainly deciduous. Though this region is larger than the plains of northern India it is less fertile, and hence less thickly populated.

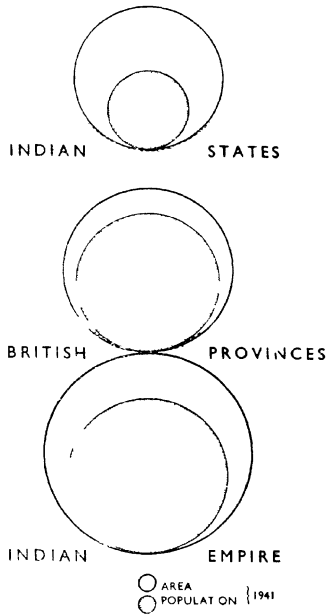
The Deccan is a triangular tableland (1,000–3,000 ft) broken up by many ravines and forest-covered hills. Its seasonal and shallow rivers are mostly unnavigable. Valuable minerals, e.g. iron ore, manganese, chromite, gold, chemicals and clays, occur in large quantities. With a low rainfall and the soil inaccessible to irrigation, intensive cultivation is not possible. The hillsides are bespotted with dry grasslands, and a large section of the population depends on pastoral pursuits ancillary to agriculture. Although millets constitute the chief food crops, the predominance of cash crops, mainly cotton and oilseeds for export, is the outstanding feature of the rural economy of this region. Hyderabad, Bangalore, Poona, Nagpur, Sholapur and Coimbatore are large industrial centres.

The West Coast Strip, composed of alluvial soil, is nowhere more than 40 miles broad. The rainfall exceeds 100 inches, and the vegetation is luxuriant and mainly evergreen. Rice, coconuts, areca (betel) nuts, pepper, chillies and ginger are grown on lowlands; tea, coffee, cardamoms, rubber and cinchona on uplands; and timber on the hills. The west-coast ports, except Bombay, Marmagao and Cochin, are practically closed to traffic from mid-May to mid-September by the violence of the monsoon. Marmagao is a distributing port for the produce of the Bombay Deccan, Hyderabad and Mysore, while Cochin serves the whole south-western region, and its advantages as a passenger port are only just beginning to be realized. Bombay City (pop. 1,490,000), built on the lee side of an island, is a port open throughout the year, and accounts for one-third of India's total foreign trade.

The East Coast Strip is much longer and broader, but its rainfall, received during the winter from the retreating north-east monsoon currents, is much less (60″–40″). The rivers are longer and form large fertile deltas. Rice, sugarcane, groundnuts, tobacco and cotton are the main crops. Vizagapatam, one of the best ports along a coast of indifferent harbours, is the main outlet for the north-eastern tract of the plateau. Madras City (pop. 777,000), the largest port of the eastern peninsula, has an artificial harbour, and ranks fourth in volume of India's foreign trade.



THE INDIAN EMPIRE



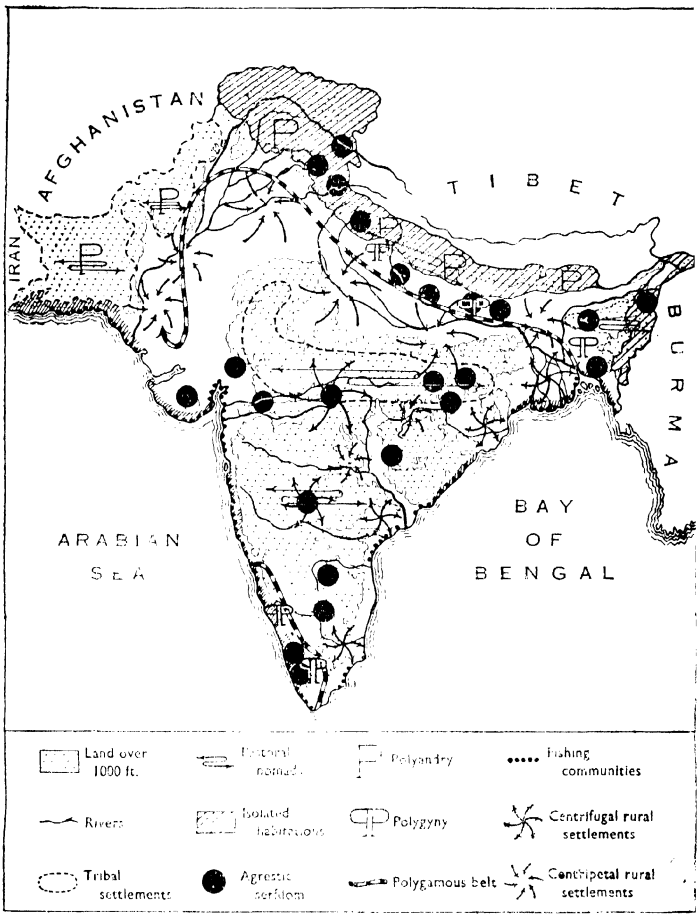
15. INDIAN GEOPOLITICS

INDIA is made up of (i) British territory, (ii) Indian States and (iii) Foreign possessions. British India, divided into eleven Governors' Provinces and five Chief Commissioners' Provinces, has an area of 910,507 sq. miles and a population of 295,808,722 persons. The Indian States, 584 in number, cover an area of 712,508 sq. miles and contain 93,189,233 people. The rulers of Indian States, while they owe treaty obligations to the British Crown, enjoy complete internal sovereignty. The States vary in size from princely realms like Hyderabad (82,698 sq. miles with a population of 14 millions and an annual revenue of Rs. 8½ crores) to a tiny speck like the State of Bilbari with 27 persons and an annual revenue of Rs. 80 only. The five French possessions cover an area of 203 sq. miles and have a population of 323,295; and the three Portuguese possessions have an area of 1,537 sq. miles, and a population of 650,000.

Geographically, the States embrace the widest variety of relief and climate. Sharp regional contrasts are at once noticeable between Kashmir in the Himalayas and Hyderabad in the Deccan plateau; Travancore on the south-west coast and Bikaner in the Rajputana Desert; Kalat in the arid tableland of Baluchistan and Tripura in the wet lowlands of eastern Bengal. Most of the Indian States have no seaboard at all, but are surrounded by and interspersed within British territory, which includes almost the whole Indo-Gangetic plain and the coastal tracts.

Economically, the potential natural resources of the States are inadequately developed. Their estimated total revenue is Rs. 45 crores as against Rs. 90 crores of the British Provinces. Though in recent years there has been improvement in agriculture, industries and transport, the rural economy of States is largely dependent on the markets and industries of British India.

The ratio of mouths to food (man:land) is still a fundamental consideration in determining the geopolitical boundaries within the Empire. In spite of excessive density of population in certain regions the net area sown is 330 million acres or 34 per cent of the area of India (which works out at 0·71 acre per head of population in provinces and 1·3 in States), and 139 million acres or about 26 per cent of the cultivable area is not yet brought under the plough. If the whole cultivable land (area sown, fallow and culturable waste) is cultivated there would be 1·2 and 1·9 acres per head respectively for provinces and States. The disparity of the man:land ratio, or of population and food supply, between British provinces and Indian States, becomes pointed from the fact that while the latter comprise more than 44 per cent of India's area, they contain less than 24 per cent of the total population. The percentage rate of increase of population between 1931 and 1941 was 15·2 for provinces and 14·3 for States, which indicates an ever-increasing pressure in British territories. Large-scale measures of land reclamation and planned agricultural colonization must eventually bring about an equilibrium of population and food-supply in the States and provinces of the Indian Empire.



THE SOCIOLOGICAL MAP

A GEOGRAPHICAL survey of India shows that out of the anatomy and physiology of landscapes and spaces, distinct cultural and social regions are evolved and developed. We find marked regional differences in the types of habitation, social institutions and psycho-social traits of the population.

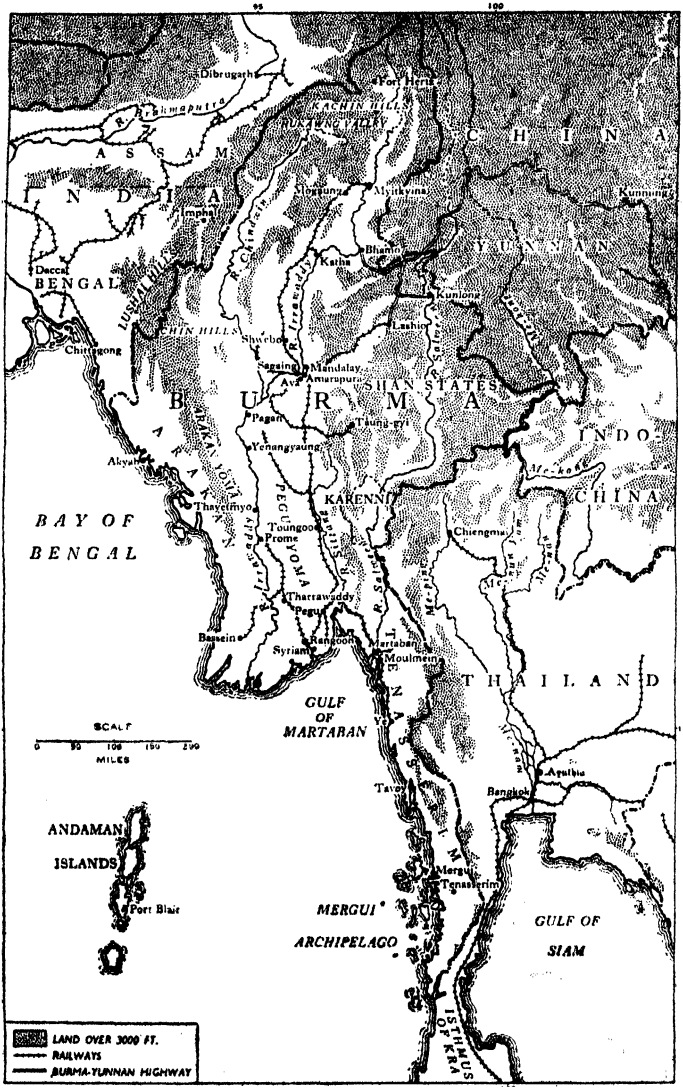
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BURMA

MA MYA SEIN

OXFORD PAMPHLETS ON INDIAN AFFAIRS




95
100
Dibrugarh
Port Hertz
R. Brahmaputra
KACHIN HILLS
HUKAWNG VALLEY
A S S A M
C H I N A
I N D I A
Imphal
Myitkyina
Kunming
YUNNAN
Bhamo
Katha
Kunlong
Lashio
Dacca
BENGAL
LUSHAI HILLS
CHIN HILLS
Shwebo
Sagaing
Mandalay
Amarapura
SHAN STATES
B U R M A
Pagan
Taung-gyi
INDO
CHINA
Yenangyaung
Akyab
ARAKAN YOMA
Thayetmyo
KARENNI
BAY OF
BENGAL
Toungoo
Prome
PEGU YOMA
Chiengmai
Thartawaddy
Pegu
Bassein
Syriam
Rangoon
Martaban
Moulmein
THAILAND
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OF
MARTABAN
SCALE
0 50 100 150 200
MILES
Ayuthia
Bangkok
Tavoy
ANDAMAN
ISLANDS
Port Blair
Mergui
Tenasserim
MERGUI
ARCHIPELAGO
GULF OF
SIAM
ISTHMUS OF KRA
LAND OVER 3000 FT.
RAILWAYS
BURMA-YUNNAN HIGHWAY

BURMA

History

The early history of Burma is made up of a mass of legends from which can be traced the movements of the various immigrant tribes and their petty quarrels and strifes. Wave after wave of Mongolian people infiltrated into Burma and scattered over the country, living in isolated units with little or no political organization. In spite of racial ties, Burmese traditions refer to India rather than to China, for it was the great Hindu expansion overseas that brought writing, customary law and other elements of civilization to Burma. The ruins at Prome, Pegu and along the Arakan and Tenasserim coasts indicate a period when Indian culture was dominant, though never so deeply entrenched in Burma as among the Chams and Khmers of Cambodia and Siam.

Pagan dynasty. The kingdom of Prome lasted about five centuries before it was destroyed by obscure civil wars, when its people moved to the north, and Thamokdarit, the Chief of the Pyu, built his capital at Pagan. Its authentic history begins with King Anawrahta, A.D. 1044–77, who brought Burma under the sway of one king. He conquered the Mons of Thaton and carried away the king and people with their treasure, including the Buddhist scriptures and relics; he razed the walls of Prome and conquered the nearer Shans; he gave help to Pegu when it was raided by Chiengmai, and when the Buddhists in Ceylon suffered under Hindu persecution he sent them monks and scriptures. In his reign, Hinayana Buddhism superseded the Mahayana, Pali became the language of the sacred books, and the people adopted the Mon alphabet. Anawrahta reorganized his kingdom, and tradition credits him with the foundation of the irrigation system and many other beneficial institutions. For more than two-and-a-half centuries Pagan flourished as the centre of Buddhist culture and civilization. It is said of that 'golden age of Burma' that even a widow could afford to build a pagoda, and certainly the millions that still stand today in the barren wilderness of the dry zone give one the impression that it was not only Anawrahta and his successors who took to pagoda-building but that everyone contributed to the architectural magnificence of Pagan.

Shan domination. In A.D. 1253 the Tartars who had swept across Asia annexed Yunnan and demanded tribute from Pagan, which was then beginning to totter under the pressure of the Shans. In 1287 Pagan was sacked and the dynasty collapsed. The Shans overran the entire country, but they had always lacked cohesion and Burma became split into the principalities of Ava, Toungoo, Pegu, Martaban, etc., which were soon fighting one another. The first European traveller who came to Burma, Nicolo di Conti, a Venetian merchant, found the Mon kingdom of Pegu fairly prosperous and settled in 1435, but Upper Burma remained disorganized. The kingdom of Ava could not assert itself; year after year rebellions took place, till in 1527 the Shans finally took Ava. Burmese refugees flocked to Toungoo, an independent state, which now became the centre of Burmese nationalism. It was the king of Toungoo who once again united Burma and enlarged its dominion to its greatest extent.

Toungoo dynasty (1531–1752). Tabinshweti, king of Toungoo, seized Pegu, Prome and Martaban, and invaded Arakan and Siam, but it was left to his successor, Bayinnaung (1550-81), to extend the boundaries of Burma to Manipur and Yunnan on the north and to Chiengmai and Ayuthia to the east. The suzerainty of Burma over the Shan States dates from this time. Bayinnaung twice reduced Ayuthia by siege and destroyed Chiengmai; but his campaigns exhausted Burma, and the strain of the intermittent Burmo-Siamese wars in the next two centuries led to the disruption of the country. By the eighteenth century Lower Burma was depopulated, and the rich Delta gradually became overgrown with jungle and tall grass. When Pegu ceased to be a seaport, the Burmese court, not realizing that the future of Burma lay on the coast, moved back to Ava in 1635. As soon as the Mons recovered their strength, they rebelled and set up a king at Pegu. They made constant raids on Upper Burma, and in 1752 forced their way into Ava and burnt it to the ground.

Alaungpaya dynasty (1752–1885). The Ava dynasty collapsed, but when Alaungpaya of Moksobomyo (Shwebo) defied the Mons and won his first battle, the Burmese

flocked to his standard. The Mons were cleared out of Upper Burma and finally crushed in 1756. Dagon was taken, enlarged and renamed Rangoon (*Yan-kon* or end of strife) and replaced Syriam as the port of Burma. Once again the whole of Burma was united under one king. His vigorous and energetic successors began to widen their kingdom, and once again the kings of Burma frittered away their resources in long campaigns and useless sieges. They sent expeditions into Siam, destroyed Ayuthia and ravaged the country, invaded Manipur and Assam and repelled the Chinese invasions. The Burmese began to think that they were equal to anything. But the country was thinly populated, and the drain on Upper as well as Lower Burma was such that the framework of administration cracked and bands of robbers infested the whole kingdom. Thus when their expansion towards India brought them into hostile contact with the English, the Burmese sustained their first defeat. In 1826, Arakan and Tenasserim were ceded to the British, but relations worsened and the second Burmese war broke out in 1852. The whole of Lower Burma then fell into the hands of the British. After the second Burmese war the British became alarmed over French intrigues, and when a Franco-Burmese treaty was signed in 1885, the British decided to end the independence of Upper Burma. The dispute of the Bombay-Burmah Trading Corporation with the Burmese Government was the immediate cause for the outbreak of the third Burmese war. Mandalay was taken, King Thibaw was deported, and the whole of Burma became part of British India in 1886.

Administration

The Burmese king was an autocrat. Between him and the people there were no intermediate feudal lords, no assemblies —no one to check his power or ambitions or to give stability to the administration. All officials were appointed by the king and held office during his pleasure. There was no definite law of succession; as the king had more than one wife, it was usually the son of a strong-minded queen or a

capable prince with the biggest following who seized the throne and appointed a new set of officials. Until the reign of King Mindon, no salaries were given to the officials, who had to get as much as they could out of the people. This naturally led to so much oppression and cruelty that the Burmese proverb says, 'Fire, war, storms, robbers and rulers are the five great evils'. Away from the centre, however, the administration of local chiefs was good and reasonable and on the whole the peasantry were more comfortable and prosperous in Burma than in many other countries. The people elected their own headman (*thugyi*) who collected the revenue or tribute payable by the village; in distributing the burden among the people, he was assisted by a group of villagers called *thamadi*. Cultivators were generally called upon to give one-tenth of their produce, the rice collected being kept in provincial granaries. In time of war, the village had to supply its quota of men, fully equipped and provided with the necessities for a campaign. Those who stayed at home compensated those who had to go to the front. In the same way, those who were in the service of the king had lands given to them, and their relatives, the *nauk-htauk*, worked on the lands and supported them. The central government seldom interfered in local affairs, so there grew up a system of strong headmen whose authority prevailed over more than one village and whose office tended to become hereditary.

This strong hereditary headmanship was the stable feature in the administration of Burma, but unfortunately it was done away with by the early British officials who came from India. The village system of 'one village, one headman' had worked well in India and was a powerful instrument of pacification, so the larger units were broken up into such small villages that the headman's remuneration was not sufficient to attract any villager of good standing. As the functions of government increased, the headman has gradually become the maid-of-all-work and lost the respect of the villagers. In towns, the ward-headmen fared badly too; they became mere tax-collectors with no power or influence. The situation became worse when, under the Rural Self-

Government Act, another set of elected representatives of the people were created by the establishment of the Circle Boards and District Councils. It would have been much more logical to make the headmen the electorate and to give powers of taxation and expenditure to a committee of headmen of a district.

Burma is now administered by a highly organized permanent civil service. The village tracts are grouped into a township under a *myook* who is in some respects like the old hereditary headman. He supervises the land and village system, helps to suppress crime, collects revenue, settles disputes, acts as Government banker, registers deeds and issues stamps for sale and generally performs the duties assigned to him by higher authorities. In fact, he is the backbone of the administration and corresponds to the *myothugyi* (circle headman) of olden days. Two or three townships form a sub-division under a Sub-divisional Officer. The Deputy Commissioner, who is in charge of two or three sub-divisions, is responsible for all the functions of government in the district. To help him he has the District Superintendent of Police, the Superintendent of Land Records, the Superintendent of Excise, the Divisional Forest Officer and other officials of the different services. Three to eight districts make a division, which is under a Commissioner. The connecting link between the district officials and the Governor, who is at the head of the Government, is the Secretariat consisting of heads of departments and Secretaries of Government.

When Burma was first annexed, it became part of British India for the sake of administrative expediency; after much agitation, Burma was separated in 1937 and the Burmese request for the appointment of a Governor with parliamentary experience was granted. The Governor appoints the Ministers, and they have a constitutional right to determine policy except in the 'reserved' departments of Defence, External Affairs, Excluded Areas and monetary policy, for which the Governor can appoint three Counsellors. In addition the Governor has special responsibilities in the exercise of which he is guided by the Instrument of

Instructions given to each new Governor by the Secretary of State. Thus the constitutional development of Burma ultimately rests with the British Parliament, which can retard or hasten it.

The Constitution inaugurated in 1937 however gave Burma a degree of freedom greater than was enjoyed by any other country of the British Commonwealth of Nations, short of those countries having Dominion Status. It was for example in advance of India, where the delay in implementing the scheme of Federation still leaves the country with a non-responsible Central Government. Many of the powers held in India by the Central Government were held in Burma by the responsible National Ministry. These powers were real and not illusory. For instance, the Burmese Ministry, acting within its constitutional rights, was not prepared, in the interests of the national exchequer, to forgo customs dues on goods going through Burma to China. It was the British taxpayer who finally met the bill in order to placate opinion in America.

The legislature is bicameral, consisting of a Senate with 36 and a House of Representatives with 132 members. The Senate continues for a maximum of seven years and the House of Representatives for five years. Communal representation was introduced into Burma when it was part of India, and forty seats are reserved for the Karens, Indians, Anglo-Burmans, Europeans, Commerce and Industry, Rangoon University, Indian Labour and Non-Indian Labour. Of the 36 members of the Senate, 18 are chosen by the Governor at his discretion and the remaining 18 are chosen by the House of Representatives in accordance with the system of proportional representation, each group voting separately. The qualifications for the franchise are higher than in India, but a larger percentage of the population enjoy the vote in Burma—23 per cent in Burma as against 14 per cent in India. The percentage of literacy among women also being higher in Burma than in India, nearly all the women in towns and many in the villages are able to vote.

BURMA

Resources and Trade

Agriculture. Rice is the staple food of the Burmese and it has been cultivated in Burma for centuries, though its export was forbidden under the Burmese kings. Now rice and rice-products are by far the most important export and comprise 40 per cent of the total.

The great mass of the population, nearly 71 per cent of those working for their livelihood, are engaged in agriculture and forestry. The area occupied for cultivation in 1940 was about 21½ million acres, of which about 18 million acres were cropped in that year, rice cultivation covering more than 12 million acres. Rotation of crops is not unknown, and double-cropping and mixed cropping are quite common in Upper Burma. The Upper Burma cultivator has a fairly constant economy, as he grows a variety of crops—millet, cotton, sesamum, maize, peanuts and beans. More often than not he owns his fields and has cottage industries to supplement his income, so his prosperity is not so dependent on the export price of paddy. In Lower Burma, however, where the soil is rich and rainfall abundant and constant, rice is grown almost universally.

During the years 1930–35, a wave of foreclosures left non-agriculturist bankers and landlords in control of about half the paddy lands of Lower Burma. In 1939, 49 per cent of the total area of 19½ million acres was worked by tenant farmers, in Lower Burma the figure being 59 per cent, and in Upper Burma 32 per cent. In the thirteen principal rice-growing districts of Lower Burma about half the land in the hands of non-agriculturists was in the possession of Chettiyar firms, and the absentee landlords were mostly non-Burmese. A Land and Agriculture Committee to consider the various problems of tenancy alienation and indebtedness was appointed and a Tenancy Act and Land Alienation Act became law in 1939. A Land Purchase Act giving power to the Government to acquire land for distribution to agriculturists was passed in 1941, and further measures were in process of being initiated to provide land mortgage facilities.

The exportable surplus of rice is about 3 to 3½ million tons, of which about half is taken by India, Burma's best customer. Great Britain, Ceylon and Malaya continued to buy Burma rice, and West Africa and the West Indies increased their purchases, but from 1930 to 1938 the six leading food-importing countries of Europe reduced their net imports of rice and wheat by more than half and this decrease fell heavily upon Burma as the nearest source of rice from Asia. The Netherlands Indies, which once exchanged their sugar for Burma rice, also began to grow their own paddy. Burma will have to find new markets for her surplus rice or grow some other marketable crop.

With better means of communication, less rice was shipped in the husk, so rice mills (which prepare the rice for export) constitute the chief industrial enterprise of Burma. The smaller mills are owned by Indians, Chinese or Burmans and the labour is supplied by Indians and Burmans. The rice export trade, indeed almost all export trade, is in the hands of non-Burmans.

Next in importance to the cultivation of rice comes that of sesamum, the expressed oil of which is used in Burmese cooking and is exported. The area sown in sesamum in 1937 was 1,427,132 acres. Groundnut is also grown for the same purpose and its acreage is increasing. The other crops, which normally take up about 1,500,000 acres each, are legumes and cotton. With modern methods it is possible for Burma to have a greater cotton-growing future. Only small quantities of cotton are turned into finished goods within the country, though in olden days nearly every house had its own spinning-wheel and handloom. Textile goods constitute the major portion of Burma's imports.

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BURMA

History

The early history of Burma is made up of a mass of legends from which can be traced the movements of the various immigrant tribes and their petty quarrels and strifes. Wave after wave of Mongolian people infiltrated into Burma and scattered over the country, living in isolated units with little or no political organization. In spite of racial ties, Burmese traditions refer to India rather than to China, for it was the great Hindu expansion overseas that brought writing, customary law and other elements of civilization to Burma. The ruins at Prome, Pegu and along the Arakan and Tenasserim coasts indicate a period when Indian culture was dominant, though never so deeply entrenched in Burma as among the Chams and Khmers of Cambodia and Siam.

Pagan dynasty. The kingdom of Prome lasted about five centuries before it was destroyed by obscure civil wars, when its people moved to the north, and Thamokdarit, the Chief of the Pyu, built his capital at Pagan. Its authentic history begins with King Anawrahta, A.D. 1044–77, who brought Burma under the sway of one king. He conquered the Mons of Thaton and carried away the king and people with their treasure, including the Buddhist scriptures and relics; he razed the walls of Prome and conquered the nearer Shans; he gave help to Pegu when it was raided by Chiengmai, and when the Buddhists in Ceylon suffered under Hindu persecution he sent them monks and scriptures. In his reign, Hinayana Buddhism superseded the Mahayana, Pali became the language of the sacred books, and the people adopted the Mon alphabet. Anawrahta reorganized his kingdom, and tradition credits him with the foundation of the irrigation system and many other beneficial institutions. For more than two-and-a-half centuries Pagan flourished as the centre of Buddhist culture and civilization. It is said of that 'golden age of Burma' that even a widow could afford to build a pagoda, and certainly the millions that still stand today in the barren wilderness of the dry zone give one the impression that it was not only Anawrahta and his successors who took to pagoda-building but that everyone contributed to the architectural magnificence of Pagan.

Shan domination. In A.D. 1253 the Tartars who had swept across Asia annexed Yunnan and demanded tribute from Pagan, which was then beginning to totter under the pressure of the Shans. In 1287 Pagan was sacked and the dynasty collapsed. The Shans overran the entire country, but they had always lacked cohesion and Burma became split into the principalities of Ava, Toungoo, Pegu, Martaban, etc., which were soon fighting one another. The first European traveller who came to Burma, Nicolo di Conti, a Venetian merchant, found the Mon kingdom of Pegu fairly prosperous and settled in 1435, but Upper Burma remained disorganized. The kingdom of Ava could not assert itself; year after year rebellions took place, till in 1527 the Shans finally took Ava. Burmese refugees flocked to Toungoo, an independent state, which now became the centre of Burmese nationalism. It was the king of Toungoo who once again united Burma and enlarged its dominion to its greatest extent.

Toungoo dynasty (1531–1752). Tabinshweti, king of Toungoo, seized Pegu, Prome and Martaban, and invaded Arakan and Siam, but it was left to his successor, Bayinnaung (1550-81), to extend the boundaries of Burma to Manipur and Yunnan on the north and to Chiengmai and Ayuthia to the east. The suzerainty of Burma over the Shan States dates from this time. Bayinnaung twice reduced Ayuthia by siege and destroyed Chiengmai; but his campaigns exhausted Burma, and the strain of the intermittent Burmo-Siamese wars in the next two centuries led to the disruption of the country. By the eighteenth century Lower Burma was depopulated, and the rich Delta gradually became overgrown with jungle and tall grass. When Pegu ceased to be a seaport, the Burmese court, not realizing that the future of Burma lay on the coast, moved back to Ava in 1635. As soon as the Mons recovered their strength, they rebelled and set up a king at Pegu. They made constant raids on Upper Burma, and in 1752 forced their way into Ava and burnt it to the ground.

Alaungpaya dynasty (1752–1885). The Ava dynasty collapsed, but when Alaungpaya of Moksobomyo (Shwebo) defied the Mons and won his first battle, the Burmese

flocked to his standard. The Mons were cleared out of Upper Burma and finally crushed in 1756. Dagon was taken, enlarged and renamed Rangoon (*Yan-kon* or end of strife) and replaced Syriam as the port of Burma. Once again the whole of Burma was united under one king. His vigorous and energetic successors began to widen their kingdom, and once again the kings of Burma frittered away their resources in long campaigns and useless sieges. They sent expeditions into Siam, destroyed Ayuthia and ravaged the country, invaded Manipur and Assam and repelled the Chinese invasions. The Burmese began to think that they were equal to anything. But the country was thinly populated, and the drain on Upper as well as Lower Burma was such that the framework of administration cracked and bands of robbers infested the whole kingdom. Thus when their expansion towards India brought them into hostile contact with the English, the Burmese sustained their first defeat. In 1826, Arakan and Tenasserim were ceded to the British, but relations worsened and the second Burmese war broke out in 1852. The whole of Lower Burma then fell into the hands of the British. After the second Burmese war the British became alarmed over French intrigues, and when a Franco-Burmese treaty was signed in 1885, the British decided to end the independence of Upper Burma. The dispute of the Bombay-Burmah Trading Corporation with the Burmese Government was the immediate cause for the outbreak of the third Burmese war. Mandalay was taken, King Thibaw was deported, and the whole of Burma became part of British India in 1886.

Administration

The Burmese king was an autocrat. Between him and the people there were no intermediate feudal lords, no assemblies —no one to check his power or ambitions or to give stability to the administration. All officials were appointed by the king and held office during his pleasure. There was no definite law of succession; as the king had more than one wife, it was usually the son of a strong-minded queen or a

capable prince with the biggest following who seized the throne and appointed a new set of officials. Until the reign of King Mindon, no salaries were given to the officials, who had to get as much as they could out of the people. This naturally led to so much oppression and cruelty that the Burmese proverb says, 'Fire, war, storms, robbers and rulers are the five great evils'. Away from the centre, however, the administration of local chiefs was good and reasonable and on the whole the peasantry were more comfortable and prosperous in Burma than in many other countries. The people elected their own headman (*thugyi*) who collected the revenue or tribute payable by the village; in distributing the burden among the people, he was assisted by a group of villagers called *thamadi*. Cultivators were generally called upon to give one-tenth of their produce, the rice collected being kept in provincial granaries. In time of war, the village had to supply its quota of men, fully equipped and provided with the necessities for a campaign. Those who stayed at home compensated those who had to go to the front. In the same way, those who were in the service of the king had lands given to them, and their relatives, the *nauk-htauk*, worked on the lands and supported them. The central government seldom interfered in local affairs, so there grew up a system of strong headmen whose authority prevailed over more than one village and whose office tended to become hereditary.

This strong hereditary headmanship was the stable feature in the administration of Burma, but unfortunately it was done away with by the early British officials who came from India. The village system of 'one village, one headman' had worked well in India and was a powerful instrument of pacification, so the larger units were broken up into such small villages that the headman's remuneration was not sufficient to attract any villager of good standing. As the functions of government increased, the headman has gradually become the maid-of-all-work and lost the respect of the villagers. In towns, the ward-headmen fared badly too; they became mere tax-collectors with no power or influence. The situation became worse when, under the Rural Self-

Government Act, another set of elected representatives of the people were created by the establishment of the Circle Boards and District Councils. It would have been much more logical to make the headmen the electorate and to give powers of taxation and expenditure to a committee of headmen of a district.

Burma is now administered by a highly organized permanent civil service. The village tracts are grouped into a township under a *myook* who is in some respects like the old hereditary headman. He supervises the land and village system, helps to suppress crime, collects revenue, settles disputes, acts as Government banker, registers deeds and issues stamps for sale and generally performs the duties assigned to him by higher authorities. In fact, he is the backbone of the administration and corresponds to the *myothugyi* (circle headman) of olden days. Two or three townships form a sub-division under a Sub-divisional Officer. The Deputy Commissioner, who is in charge of two or three sub-divisions, is responsible for all the functions of government in the district. To help him he has the District Superintendent of Police, the Superintendent of Land Records, the Superintendent of Excise, the Divisional Forest Officer and other officials of the different services. Three to eight districts make a division, which is under a Commissioner. The connecting link between the district officials and the Governor, who is at the head of the Government, is the Secretariat consisting of heads of departments and Secretaries of Government.

When Burma was first annexed, it became part of British India for the sake of administrative expediency; after much agitation, Burma was separated in 1937 and the Burmese request for the appointment of a Governor with parliamentary experience was granted. The Governor appoints the Ministers, and they have a constitutional right to determine policy except in the 'reserved' departments of Defence, External Affairs, Excluded Areas and monetary policy, for which the Governor can appoint three Counsellors. In addition the Governor has special responsibilities in the exercise of which he is guided by the Instrument of

Instructions given to each new Governor by the Secretary of State. Thus the constitutional development of Burma ultimately rests with the British Parliament, which can retard or hasten it.

The Constitution inaugurated in 1937 however gave Burma a degree of freedom greater than was enjoyed by any other country of the British Commonwealth of Nations, short of those countries having Dominion Status. It was for example in advance of India, where the delay in implementing the scheme of Federation still leaves the country with a non-responsible Central Government. Many of the powers held in India by the Central Government were held in Burma by the responsible National Ministry. These powers were real and not illusory. For instance, the Burmese Ministry, acting within its constitutional rights, was not prepared, in the interests of the national exchequer, to forgo customs dues on goods going through Burma to China. It was the British taxpayer who finally met the bill in order to placate opinion in America.

The legislature is bicameral, consisting of a Senate with 36 and a House of Representatives with 132 members. The Senate continues for a maximum of seven years and the House of Representatives for five years. Communal representation was introduced into Burma when it was part of India, and forty seats are reserved for the Karens, Indians, Anglo-Burmans, Europeans, Commerce and Industry, Rangoon University, Indian Labour and Non-Indian Labour. Of the 36 members of the Senate, 18 are chosen by the Governor at his discretion and the remaining 18 are chosen by the House of Representatives in accordance with the system of proportional representation, each group voting separately. The qualifications for the franchise are higher than in India, but a larger percentage of the population enjoy the vote in Burma—23 per cent in Burma as against 14 per cent in India. The percentage of literacy among women also being higher in Burma than in India, nearly all the women in towns and many in the villages are able to vote.

BURMA

Resources and Trade

Agriculture. Rice is the staple food of the Burmese and it has been cultivated in Burma for centuries, though its export was forbidden under the Burmese kings. Now rice and rice-products are by far the most important export and comprise 40 per cent of the total.

The great mass of the population, nearly 71 per cent of those working for their livelihood, are engaged in agriculture and forestry. The area occupied for cultivation in 1940 was about 21½ million acres, of which about 18 million acres were cropped in that year, rice cultivation covering more than 12 million acres. Rotation of crops is not unknown, and double-cropping and mixed cropping are quite common in Upper Burma. The Upper Burma cultivator has a fairly constant economy, as he grows a variety of crops—millet, cotton, sesamum, maize, peanuts and beans. More often than not he owns his fields and has cottage industries to supplement his income, so his prosperity is not so dependent on the export price of paddy. In Lower Burma, however, where the soil is rich and rainfall abundant and constant, rice is grown almost universally.

During the years 1930–35, a wave of foreclosures left non-agriculturist bankers and landlords in control of about half the paddy lands of Lower Burma. In 1939, 49 per cent of the total area of 19½ million acres was worked by tenant farmers, in Lower Burma the figure being 59 per cent, and in Upper Burma 32 per cent. In the thirteen principal rice-growing districts of Lower Burma about half the land in the hands of non-agriculturists was in the possession of Chettiyar firms, and the absentee landlords were mostly non-Burmese. A Land and Agriculture Committee to consider the various problems of tenancy alienation and indebtedness was appointed and a Tenancy Act and Land Alienation Act became law in 1939. A Land Purchase Act giving power to the Government to acquire land for distribution to agriculturists was passed in 1941, and further measures were in process of being initiated to provide land mortgage facilities.

The exportable surplus of rice is about 3 to 3½ million tons, of which about half is taken by India, Burma's best customer. Great Britain, Ceylon and Malaya continued to buy Burma rice, and West Africa and the West Indies increased their purchases, but from 1930 to 1938 the six leading food-importing countries of Europe reduced their net imports of rice and wheat by more than half and this decrease fell heavily upon Burma as the nearest source of rice from Asia. The Netherlands Indies, which once exchanged their sugar for Burma rice, also began to grow their own paddy. Burma will have to find new markets for her surplus rice or grow some other marketable crop.

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India, had similarly to begin to grow its own sugar requirements and set up sugar factories.

Tea is cultivated in the Northern Shan States. The plant is indigenous, and has been under the supervision of European experimentalists. The production of tung oil has also been successful. Burma tobacco is considered to be of excellent quality and flavour, but in general the tobacco trade suffers from unscientific methods, lack of standardization and uneconomic marketing.

Forests. Teak has always been the most valuable tree commercially, while bamboo is probably the most useful forest product from the point of view of the people. The necessity of getting and keeping up the supply of teak for naval purposes first turned the attention of the Government of India to the question of the conservation of forests. When the annexation of Burma added rich forests of teak to the Empire, the Government selected the best tracts of teak forests and land not suitable for other cultivation and formed state forest reserves, which now total more than 20,000,000 acres. About 500,000 tons of teak are felled annually, 80 per cent of which is exported to India. The Forest Department has also begun systematic plantations of teak so as to ensure a constant supply. Pyinkado, the next most valuable tree, is used mainly for railway sleepers because of its resistance to white ants. There are also other jungle and rare woods which find a ready sale. Forest earnings, which form approximately 20 per cent of the total revenues of Burma, show a good margin of profit.

Mineral Production. Burma has a wide variety of minerals, of which the most valuable is undoubtedly petroleum. For centuries the Burmese have dug oil from the shallow wells of Yenangyaung area along the Irrawaddy river, the right to dig for oil being restricted to a few families. In 1886 the Burmah Oil Company was established and boring for oil was started in the next year. The production in 1887 was 2,335,305 gallons, and in 1904, when the first modern well was sunk by American drillers, it rose to 118½ million gallons. In 1937 the total production was more than 300 million gallons, or one-half per cent of the world yield. The Burmah Oil

Company is the largest single employer of labour. In 1935, it had 19,094 employees in the fields in addition to its workers in the refinery and tin plate workers in Syriam.

The other important mineral products are silver, lead, tungsten, tin, copper, precious stones, limestone and clay. The largest mines are those of the Burma Corporation at Namtu, not far from the Chinese frontier. Before the war, Burma was the largest producer of tungsten in the world, the main deposits lying in the Shan States and Tenasserim. In 1938 Burma produced 212,827 carats of rubies and sapphires. Jade of all varieties and colours is found in the Mogaung valley and exported mainly to China. The amber mines are situated in the thickly wooded Hukawng valley. The cutting and polishing of stones is quite an important industry in Mandalay and Rangoon.

Foreign Trade. Being an agricultural country, Burma's main imports were manufactured goods, mainly textiles and iron and steel. In 1937–8, the total imports amounted to Rs. 23,80,00,000, of which India accounted for about half, Britain about one-fourth and Japan about one-tenth. The exports were valued at Rs. 50 crores, 2,842,838 tons of rice valued at Rs. 20 crores accounting for 40 per cent. The foreign trade fluctuated widely, depending mainly on the price obtained for rice. When the depression came and the price of rice fell, the value of foreign trade fell to as low as Rs. 65 crores in 1933–4 from Rs. 105 crores in 1929–30. During the decade ending 1936–7 Burma had a trade balance of about Rs. 30 crores, a large part of which was cancelled by overseas remittances, and rice exports were about three million tons.

Communications

Waterways form the most important means of communication in Burma. There are innumerable craft, from the village canoe carrying fruit and vegetables to a local market to the large cargo steamers of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company. The Burmese love water. Wherever possible, they establish their villages by the bank of a river, and the riverside is the playground of the children and the meeting-

place of the village maidens. Nearly the whole population turns out to greet a steamer. These people are not likely to abandon their beautiful waterways for the dusty roads unless there is a strong compensating advantage. The whole of the timber and quite three-fourths of the rice are carried by water from the forests and fields to the ports for export.

The Irrawaddy river, which flows through the middle of the country from north to south, is the main artery for freight; its tributaries bring down the produce of the hinterland; its delta with its innumerable creeks has a canal system which provides transportation for all parts of the great rice-producing areas. The Twante Canal, widened and deepened in 1935, enables the largest river steamers to go direct from Rangoon to Mandalay. The Pegu-Sittang Canal, which connects the Irrawaddy and Sittang rivers, was the only line of communication between Rangoon and Toungoo before the railway was built in 1885, and even now it is used a great deal for the transport of grain to Rangoon and all the timber that is floated down the Sittang. The Salween river, hemmed in by hills and mountains, has rapids extending a score of miles which make navigation impossible, but there are stretches where the river is calm and deep and boats can be used. A boat connexion between the Salween and the Irrawaddy is possible during the rains. Tenasserim and Arakan have many navigable rivers, and a large boat traffic exists between the islands that cluster round these coasts.

The first railway, from Rangoon to Prome on the Irrawaddy river, was opened to traffic in 1877. Eight years later another line was built to Toungoo, then a frontier town between British Burma and the Burmese Kingdom, and now most of the important towns are linked by over 2,000 miles of metre-gauge line. The building of the Ava bridge across the Irrawaddy in 1934 made through traffic from Rangoon to Myitkyina possible. The opening of a road and railway from Mandalay to Lashio in 1903 revolutionized transport in the Shan States, hitherto dependent on pack-animals for the China trade.

From time to time the question of linking the railway

systems of Burma and India has received attention. Three routes have been surveyed, but the desire to develop internal communications and the fear of greater Indian immigration have prevented any schemes from being worked out. After this war, the question of linking up the railways of India, Burma and China will, no doubt, be revived.

Road construction has been slow in Burma. Roads were looked upon as feeders to the rivers and railways, which already provided transportation for inland traffic. The cost of making metalled roads is high because of the scarcity of good stone and the high cost of labour, and in 1940 the mileage of roads suitable for wheeled traffic was only 17,000, of which 12,500 was motorable. The main trunk highway is from Rangoon to Mandalay, parallel to the railway. Another road goes from Rangoon to Prome, along the banks of the Irrawaddy and through the oilfields of Yenangyaung. The Shan States now have excellent roads. The Mandalay-Lashio road has been extended to the frontier, from whence the highway leads on to Kunming, the capital of Yunnan.

Since European travellers reached the Bay of Bengal, they have been trying to find a short-cut land route to China. Many attempts were made before and after the British annexation of Burma, but it was not until after the Chinese moved their war-time capital to Chungking that anything materialized. The Burma-Yunnan Highway is a great achievement. It has been of great value as an emergency measure, but its usefulness after the war is still doubted by most people. Ordinarily the volume of inland trade between Burma and China is not very great and it has declined in recent years. Between 1927 and 1937, the value of Burmese exports to China fell from 5½ million to 1 million Shanghai dollars. Some eighty per cent of the Chinese imports into Burma consist of raw silk, and with the preference for imported silk goods any large increase in this trade is improbable. There are products of Burma like tung oil, bristles, skins and hides and the minerals of Yunnan which would use this road, but the Burmese still feel that the Sino-Burmese trade can never be more than a fraction of their

maritime trade and they fear the increase of Chinese immigration.

There is no through road from Rangoon to Bangkok, though in the dry weather a trip can be made to Siam by way of Kengtung and Chiengrai.

Education and Religion

Early writers on Burma have emphasized the fact that 'few among the Burmese did not know how to read and write because the monk, to whose care little boys were entrusted, always taught them to read and write'. It is not known how far back this state of things can be traced, but it is a remarkable fact that Burma had universal education of a sort long before anything of the kind existed in Europe. Education is co-extensive with Buddhism, which is professed by about 85 per cent of the people. According to Burmese Buddhism, every boy joins the Order when he is in his teens. The story of Prince Siddhartha's renunciation of worldly pleasures is re-enacted when the boy, dressed in his best clothes, goes round the town or village in a procession and then exchanges his finery for the yellow robe and follows the monks to the monastery. He remains there for any length of time he desires—some never return to lay life again. Thus every Burman Buddhist is in close touch with the clergy and his whole life is coloured by the teachings of the Buddha. There are no organized Buddhist missions, but the wandering monk is ready to live in any village which will give him food and shelter and a boy or two to live with him and attend to his wants. These boys, and others who come from home every day for lessons, are taught to read and write Burmese and to understand the Buddhist scriptures. In no other Buddhist country do the monks occupy themselves in education to anything like the extent they do in Burma.

The Burmese king was the protector of the Buddhist religion and the ecclesiastical commission appointed by the king was the mechanism on which the Buddhist clergy relied for power to unfrock its undesirable members. The British

policy of non-interference in religion did away with this power. The *thathanabaing* who was appointed by the British Government was merely the nominal chief *pongyi*, and without the backing of the state he had no means of preventing undesirable elements creeping into the priesthood. Unfortunately some *pongyis* have been persuaded by political agitators to help in elections and political movements and have become disinclined to teach the young. When the Government proposed to assist vernacular education, it made many attempts to induce the monks to come into the educational system. They were supplied with books; instructors were sent round to the monasteries to train teachers; money grants were given; and lay teachers, appointed and paid by the Government, were supplied to the monasteries. None of these measures succeeded, however, in raising the standard of efficiency of the monastic schools.

As part of British India, Burma was greatly influenced by Lord Macaulay's Minute on Education, 1835, which committed India and Burma to a system of English education. The aim no doubt was utilitarian; the East India Company wanted clerks and the schools were expected to supply them. The trouble is, that that is the only thing the schools ever did. There has been little relationship between the subjects taught in school and the conditions of life in Burma. Emphasis was laid on English; parents believed that they were giving their children the best start in life by sending them to an English school. Soon there grew up a number of young men and women who could not read or write their own mother-tongue correctly, who did not know the history and traditions of their country and who became cut off from the mass of people whose educational needs had been neglected. The Government spent large sums of money on secondary education of boys and girls regardless of the means of the parents or the ability of the pupil, while pupils in primary schools and the children of poor parents received little or no assistance. The average annual cost to the Government per student in the University was about Rs. 800, in the secondary schools about Rs. 40, while in the primary schools it was Rs. 7-5-0 in 1935–6, Rs. 8-9-0 in 1937–8 and Rs. 9-2-0 in

1938–9. It should be the reverse: there should be one state system of education whereby primary education is offered free to all who choose to avail themselves of the offer, while secondary education is not assisted without some kind of selection. In Burma, the towns have been favoured at the expense of the villages, the rich have been favoured at the expense of the poor, and the gulf between the educated townspeople and the ignorant peasants has been growing wider. When rural self-government was introduced, the lack of educated intelligent men in the rural areas prevented the scheme from being properly worked. The same drawback appeared in the elections of the members of the legislature, when English-educated town-bred men, elected to represent a rural constituency of which they had very little knowledge, used it merely as a stepping-stone to a political career, leaving the rural areas without leaders or representatives.

In spite of all the defects of the educational system, when Burma was part of India it was the most literate province. In Rangoon, where most of the wealthier Burmans live, 820 men in 1,000 are literate, a figure most probably not equalled in any other city in Asia of comparable size outside Japan. Burma has a smaller number of university students in proportion to her population than Bengal, Bombay, Madras or the Punjab. Wealth and intelligence are more widely diffused in Burma than elsewhere, and hereditary ability is likely to be found among the descendants of generations of headmen, who now seldom have any opportunity of higher education. The only way to get more men of ability for the administration of the country is to seek them up and down the land and to educate them at public expense.

Relations with India

For many centuries intercourse has taken place between Burma and India, but Indian culture has never been as deeply entrenched in Burma as in other parts of south-eastern Asia. Behind the mountain barriers, the various groups of Mongolian immigrants had become welded into a nation and at no period do we find any tendency for union between the

two peoples. It was by accident that the political union was brought about, and it was administrative expediency that kept them together. From the beginning there was opposition to the placing of Burma under the political tutelage of India, and in the decade before the separation of Burma from India many unfortunate incidents occurred which made Indo-Burmese relations one of the most difficult problems facing the administrators of Burma.

The final Report of the Riot Enquiry Committee, established by the Government of Burma after the Indo-Burma riots of 1938, put forward a strong plea for the re-examination of the whole Indian question. Indian immigration, in its modern phase, had its origin in the change that took place in the economic life of Burma when the Suez Canal opened up new markets for Burma's rice. There were large tracts of cultivable land in Burma, and a rapid extension of the area under paddy-cultivation followed. For the most part the waste lands were cleared and brought under cultivation by Burmese, but the chain of services intervening between the agriculturist and the consumer of his produce fell into the hands of non-Burmans, especially Indians. Indian traders and Indian labour came into Burma not only for the rice trade but also for the development of trade and industry in general. The Chettiyar community in particular, though events have made it unpopular, performed a useful service in providing agricultural credit. Burma therefore has been greatly developed by Indians, but the fact remains that the Burmans are none the richer for it. The bulk of the earnings of Indians was remitted yearly to India. Hundreds of Indians were also brought in to fill the subordinate posts in Government and commercial offices. For some time there was no competition between the two peoples: each had their own sphere in the economic life of the country; but conditions changed. As education expanded, and Burmans became ready to take their place in the various departments of administration and in commercial firms, they were faced with keen Indian competition. Among the uneducated, there was the same rivalry. The small peasant proprietors have increasingly lost their lands to non-agricul-

India, had similarly to begin to grow its own sugar requirements and set up sugar factories.

Tea is cultivated in the Northern Shan States. The plant is indigenous, and has been under the supervision of European experimentalists. The production of tung oil has also been successful. Burma tobacco is considered to be of excellent quality and flavour, but in general the tobacco trade suffers from unscientific methods, lack of standardization and uneconomic marketing.

Forests. Teak has always been the most valuable tree commercially, while bamboo is probably the most useful forest product from the point of view of the people. The necessity of getting and keeping up the supply of teak for naval purposes first turned the attention of the Government of India to the question of the conservation of forests. When the annexation of Burma added rich forests of teak to the Empire, the Government selected the best tracts of teak forests and land not suitable for other cultivation and formed state forest reserves, which now total more than 20,000,000 acres. About 500,000 tons of teak are felled annually, 80 per cent of which is exported to India. The Forest Department has also begun systematic plantations of teak so as to ensure a constant supply. Pyinkado, the next most valuable tree, is used mainly for railway sleepers because of its resistance to white ants. There are also other jungle and rare woods which find a ready sale. Forest earnings, which form approximately 20 per cent of the total revenues of Burma, show a good margin of profit.

Mineral Production. Burma has a wide variety of minerals, of which the most valuable is undoubtedly petroleum. For centuries the Burmese have dug oil from the shallow wells of Yenangyaung area along the Irrawaddy river, the right to dig for oil being restricted to a few families. In 1886 the Burmah Oil Company was established and boring for oil was started in the next year. The production in 1887 was 2,335,305 gallons, and in 1904, when the first modern well was sunk by American drillers, it rose to 118½ million gallons. In 1937 the total production was more than 300 million gallons, or one-half per cent of the world yield. The Burmah Oil

Company is the largest single employer of labour. In 1935, it had 19,094 employees in the fields in addition to its workers in the refinery and tin plate workers in Syriam.

The other important mineral products are silver, lead, tungsten, tin, copper, precious stones, limestone and clay. The largest mines are those of the Burma Corporation at Namtu, not far from the Chinese frontier. Before the war, Burma was the largest producer of tungsten in the world, the main deposits lying in the Shan States and Tenasserim. In 1938 Burma produced 212,827 carats of rubies and sapphires. Jade of all varieties and colours is found in the Mogaung valley and exported mainly to China. The amber mines are situated in the thickly wooded Hukawng valley. The cutting and polishing of stones is quite an important industry in Mandalay and Rangoon.

Foreign Trade. Being an agricultural country, Burma's main imports were manufactured goods, mainly textiles and iron and steel. In 1937–8, the total imports amounted to Rs. 23,80,00,000, of which India accounted for about half, Britain about one-fourth and Japan about one-tenth. The exports were valued at Rs. 50 crores, 2,842,838 tons of rice valued at Rs. 20 crores accounting for 40 per cent. The foreign trade fluctuated widely, depending mainly on the price obtained for rice. When the depression came and the price of rice fell, the value of foreign trade fell to as low as Rs. 65 crores in 1933–4 from Rs. 105 crores in 1929–30. During the decade ending 1936–7 Burma had a trade balance of about Rs. 30 crores, a large part of which was cancelled by overseas remittances, and rice exports were about three million tons.

Communications

Waterways form the most important means of communication in Burma. There are innumerable craft, from the village canoe carrying fruit and vegetables to a local market to the large cargo steamers of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company. The Burmese love water. Wherever possible, they establish their villages by the bank of a river, and the riverside is the playground of the children and the meeting-

place of the village maidens. Nearly the whole population turns out to greet a steamer. These people are not likely to abandon their beautiful waterways for the dusty roads unless there is a strong compensating advantage. The whole of the timber and quite three-fourths of the rice are carried by water from the forests and fields to the ports for export.

The Irrawaddy river, which flows through the middle of the country from north to south, is the main artery for freight; its tributaries bring down the produce of the hinterland; its delta with its innumerable creeks has a canal system which provides transportation for all parts of the great rice-producing areas. The Twante Canal, widened and deepened in 1935, enables the largest river steamers to go direct from Rangoon to Mandalay. The Pegu-Sittang Canal, which connects the Irrawaddy and Sittang rivers, was the only line of communication between Rangoon and Toungoo before the railway was built in 1885, and even now it is used a great deal for the transport of grain to Rangoon and all the timber that is floated down the Sittang. The Salween river, hemmed in by hills and mountains, has rapids extending a score of miles which make navigation impossible, but there are stretches where the river is calm and deep and boats can be used. A boat connexion between the Salween and the Irrawaddy is possible during the rains. Tenasserim and Arakan have many navigable rivers, and a large boat traffic exists between the islands that cluster round these coasts.

The first railway, from Rangoon to Prome on the Irrawaddy river, was opened to traffic in 1877. Eight years later another line was built to Toungoo, then a frontier town between British Burma and the Burmese Kingdom, and now most of the important towns are linked by over 2,000 miles of metre-gauge line. The building of the Ava bridge across the Irrawaddy in 1934 made through traffic from Rangoon to Myitkyina possible. The opening of a road and railway from Mandalay to Lashio in 1903 revolutionized transport in the Shan States, hitherto dependent on pack-animals for the China trade.

From time to time the question of linking the railway

systems of Burma and India has received attention. Three routes have been surveyed, but the desire to develop internal communications and the fear of greater Indian immigration have prevented any schemes from being worked out. After this war, the question of linking up the railways of India, Burma and China will, no doubt, be revived.

Road construction has been slow in Burma. Roads were looked upon as feeders to the rivers and railways, which already provided transportation for inland traffic. The cost of making metalled roads is high because of the scarcity of good stone and the high cost of labour, and in 1940 the mileage of roads suitable for wheeled traffic was only 17,000, of which 12,500 was motorable. The main trunk highway is from Rangoon to Mandalay, parallel to the railway. Another road goes from Rangoon to Prome, along the banks of the Irrawaddy and through the oilfields of Yenangyaung. The Shan States now have excellent roads. The Mandalay-Lashio road has been extended to the frontier, from whence the highway leads on to Kunming, the capital of Yunnan.

Since European travellers reached the Bay of Bengal, they have been trying to find a short-cut land route to China. Many attempts were made before and after the British annexation of Burma, but it was not until after the Chinese moved their war-time capital to Chungking that anything materialized. The Burma-Yunnan Highway is a great achievement. It has been of great value as an emergency measure, but its usefulness after the war is still doubted by most people. Ordinarily the volume of inland trade between Burma and China is not very great and it has declined in recent years. Between 1927 and 1937, the value of Burmese exports to China fell from 5½ million to 1 million Shanghai dollars. Some eighty per cent of the Chinese imports into Burma consist of raw silk, and with the preference for imported silk goods any large increase in this trade is improbable. There are products of Burma like tung oil, bristles, skins and hides and the minerals of Yunnan which would use this road, but the Burmese still feel that the Sino-Burmese trade can never be more than a fraction of their

maritime trade and they fear the increase of Chinese immigration.

There is no through road from Rangoon to Bangkok, though in the dry weather a trip can be made to Siam by way of Kengtung and Chiengrai.

Education and Religion

Early writers on Burma have emphasized the fact that 'few among the Burmese did not know how to read and write because the monk, to whose care little boys were entrusted, always taught them to read and write'. It is not known how far back this state of things can be traced, but it is a remarkable fact that Burma had universal education of a sort long before anything of the kind existed in Europe. Education is co-extensive with Buddhism, which is professed by about 85 per cent of the people. According to Burmese Buddhism, every boy joins the Order when he is in his teens. The story of Prince Siddhartha's renunciation of worldly pleasures is re-enacted when the boy, dressed in his best clothes, goes round the town or village in a procession and then exchanges his finery for the yellow robe and follows the monks to the monastery. He remains there for any length of time he desires—some never return to lay life again. Thus every Burman Buddhist is in close touch with the clergy and his whole life is coloured by the teachings of the Buddha. There are no organized Buddhist missions, but the wandering monk is ready to live in any village which will give him food and shelter and a boy or two to live with him and attend to his wants. These boys, and others who come from home every day for lessons, are taught to read and write Burmese and to understand the Buddhist scriptures. In no other Buddhist country do the monks occupy themselves in education to anything like the extent they do in Burma.

The Burmese king was the protector of the Buddhist religion and the ecclesiastical commission appointed by the king was the mechanism on which the Buddhist clergy relied for power to unfrock its undesirable members. The British

policy of non-interference in religion did away with this power. The *thathanabaing* who was appointed by the British Government was merely the nominal chief *pongyi*, and without the backing of the state he had no means of preventing undesirable elements creeping into the priesthood. Unfortunately some *pongyis* have been persuaded by political agitators to help in elections and political movements and have become disinclined to teach the young. When the Government proposed to assist vernacular education, it made many attempts to induce the monks to come into the educational system. They were supplied with books; instructors were sent round to the monasteries to train teachers; money grants were given; and lay teachers, appointed and paid by the Government, were supplied to the monasteries. None of these measures succeeded, however, in raising the standard of efficiency of the monastic schools.

As part of British India, Burma was greatly influenced by Lord Macaulay's Minute on Education, 1835, which committed India and Burma to a system of English education. The aim no doubt was utilitarian; the East India Company wanted clerks and the schools were expected to supply them. The trouble is, that that is the only thing the schools ever did. There has been little relationship between the subjects taught in school and the conditions of life in Burma. Emphasis was laid on English; parents believed that they were giving their children the best start in life by sending them to an English school. Soon there grew up a number of young men and women who could not read or write their own mother-tongue correctly, who did not know the history and traditions of their country and who became cut off from the mass of people whose educational needs had been neglected. The Government spent large sums of money on secondary education of boys and girls regardless of the means of the parents or the ability of the pupil, while pupils in primary schools and the children of poor parents received little or no assistance. The average annual cost to the Government per student in the University was about Rs. 800, in the secondary schools about Rs. 40, while in the primary schools it was Rs. 7-5-0 in 1935–6, Rs. 8-9-0 in 1937–8 and Rs. 9-2-0 in

1938–9. It should be the reverse: there should be one state system of education whereby primary education is offered free to all who choose to avail themselves of the offer, while secondary education is not assisted without some kind of selection. In Burma, the towns have been favoured at the expense of the villages, the rich have been favoured at the expense of the poor, and the gulf between the educated townspeople and the ignorant peasants has been growing wider. When rural self-government was introduced, the lack of educated intelligent men in the rural areas prevented the scheme from being properly worked. The same drawback appeared in the elections of the members of the legislature, when English-educated town-bred men, elected to represent a rural constituency of which they had very little knowledge, used it merely as a stepping-stone to a political career, leaving the rural areas without leaders or representatives.

In spite of all the defects of the educational system, when Burma was part of India it was the most literate province. In Rangoon, where most of the wealthier Burmans live, 820 men in 1,000 are literate, a figure most probably not equalled in any other city in Asia of comparable size outside Japan. Burma has a smaller number of university students in proportion to her population than Bengal, Bombay, Madras or the Punjab. Wealth and intelligence are more widely diffused in Burma than elsewhere, and hereditary ability is likely to be found among the descendants of generations of headmen, who now seldom have any opportunity of higher education. The only way to get more men of ability for the administration of the country is to seek them up and down the land and to educate them at public expense.

Relations with India

For many centuries intercourse has taken place between Burma and India, but Indian culture has never been as deeply entrenched in Burma as in other parts of south-eastern Asia. Behind the mountain barriers, the various groups of Mongolian immigrants had become welded into a nation and at no period do we find any tendency for union between the

two peoples. It was by accident that the political union was brought about, and it was administrative expediency that kept them together. From the beginning there was opposition to the placing of Burma under the political tutelage of India, and in the decade before the separation of Burma from India many unfortunate incidents occurred which made Indo-Burmese relations one of the most difficult problems facing the administrators of Burma.

The final Report of the Riot Enquiry Committee, established by the Government of Burma after the Indo-Burma riots of 1938, put forward a strong plea for the re-examination of the whole Indian question. Indian immigration, in its modern phase, had its origin in the change that took place in the economic life of Burma when the Suez Canal opened up new markets for Burma's rice. There were large tracts of cultivable land in Burma, and a rapid extension of the area under paddy-cultivation followed. For the most part the waste lands were cleared and brought under cultivation by Burmese, but the chain of services intervening between the agriculturist and the consumer of his produce fell into the hands of non-Burmans, especially Indians. Indian traders and Indian labour came into Burma not only for the rice trade but also for the development of trade and industry in general. The Chettiyar community in particular, though events have made it unpopular, performed a useful service in providing agricultural credit. Burma therefore has been greatly developed by Indians, but the fact remains that the Burmans are none the richer for it. The bulk of the earnings of Indians was remitted yearly to India. Hundreds of Indians were also brought in to fill the subordinate posts in Government and commercial offices. For some time there was no competition between the two peoples: each had their own sphere in the economic life of the country; but conditions changed. As education expanded, and Burmans became ready to take their place in the various departments of administration and in commercial firms, they were faced with keen Indian competition. Among the uneducated, there was the same rivalry. The small peasant proprietors have increasingly lost their lands to non-agricul-

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WAR-TIME PRICES

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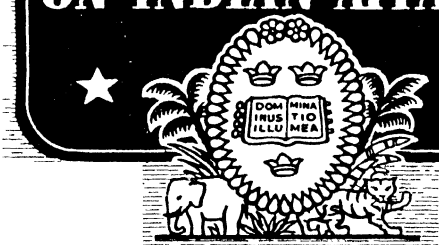


TABLE I

Movement of Currency and Prices in India[1]

In Crores of Rupees

MONTH	NOTES IN CIRCULATION	INDEX OF NOTES IN CIRCULATION AUGUST 1939 = 100	PRICE INDEX 19TH AUGUST 1939 = 100
1939			
August	170·29	100	100·3
September	186·06	109	112·9
October	199·82	117	114·9
1940			
January	226·35	133	133·2
April	227·78	134	125·0
July	230·71	135	112·1
October	220·20	129	112·1
1941			
January	230·20	135	114·8
April	249·28	146	116·4
July	256·93	151	140·9
October	273·69	160	142·1
1942			
January	328·39	193	145·0
April	401·60	236	145·9
July	449·53	264	161·2
October	508·77	294	175·0
1943			
January	587·60	345	195·6
April	661·55	389	227·9
July	737·00	430	239·3
October	774·47	454	240·9
1944			
January	851·65	500	237·8
April	896·14	526	238·3
July	928·07	544	247·6
October	956·44	560	241·9

[1] Monthly Statistical Summary, Reserve Bank of India. The index of prices is taken from the Economic Adviser's Index.

TABLE III

Working Class Cost of Living Indices (5 Centres)

Base: August 1939 = 100

PERIOD	BOMBAY	AHMEDABAD	CAWNPORE	MADRAS	LAHORE
1939					
August ...	100	100	100	100	100
October ...	103	103	105	106	104
1940					
January ...	109	111	114	109	108
April ...	105	107	110	108	110
July ...	108	108	109	109	102
October ...	108	108	112	111	111
1941					
January ...	111	108	110	110	113
April ...	115	111	107	111	120
July ...	120	121	126	115	114
October ...	119	126	134	117	133
1942					
January ...	130	130	145	119	143
April ...	131	136	149	121	146
July ...	160	160	190	136	166
October ...	164	166	206	155	186
1943					
January ...	193	237	225	164	264
April ...	214	256	268	176	267
July ...	225	288	341	185	275
October ...	236	329	349	188	320
1944					
January ...	227	293	304	197	293
April ...	220	278	319	205	292
July ...	230	289	327	207	282
October ...	*	*	329	208	*

* Not available.

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WAR-TIME PRICES

BY
P. J. THOMAS

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Is the present rise in prices due to inflation? Are prices likely to soar further, or has the peak been reached? Are prices likely to fall in the post-war period? This pamphlet attempts to answer these and similar questions. Inflation has taken place, if by that is meant an increase in the quantity of money in circulation without a corresponding addition to goods, and the rise in prices of most commodities is due to there being more money available at a time when essential war needs have reduced the quantity of goods available for purchase. If, however, by inflation is meant the issue of money without adequate backing in gold or securities, there has been no inflation in this country, for the Government's credit is as good as ever. The peak in prices has probably been reached, and as the internal purchasing power of a rupee will be much greater in the post-war period than it is today, nation-wide saving is recommended now, when goods are scarce and dear, in order that post-war development can be financed. If such saving is not voluntarily undertaken, the writer recommends that it should be enforced by compulsory saving in some form.

P. J. Thomas, M.A., B.Litt., D.Phil. (Oxon), Professor of Economics in the University of Madras, is at present on loan to the Government of India. He is the author of many books on Economics, and contributes a paper to the symposium *The Economic Background* (No. 3 in this series), in which he suggests lines of post-war development.

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WAR-TIME PRICES

Introductory

As everyone knows, the prices of most commodities have risen during the present war. At first the rise was gentle and halting; after the middle of 1942, it was rapid and continuous, till certain arresting factors came into operation towards the close of July 1943. Although no definite downward trend followed, the rate of increase has slowed down. As conflicting explanations have been given in the press and elsewhere regarding the rise of prices, it may be advisable to begin by stating certain elementary principles.

The price of a commodity may rise by a decrease in its supply or an increase in its demand. Supply may decrease either because production has failed or because some people hoard goods. But when a general rise in the price of most goods takes place, it is usually associated with an increase in the supply of the exchange medium, i.e. money. The quantity theory of money, in its crude form, states that, other things being equal, the value of money will be in inverse proportion to its quantity, but 'other things' are seldom equal, and especially in war-time, owing to the play of psychological factors, the relation of money to prices is not so simple or certain. Under war-time conditions, prices may rise without an increase of money or a diminution of goods; on the other hand by the operation of speculators, the price rise may far exceed the bounds of currency expansion.

An abnormal rise of prices has been a normal feature of most wars and the result has been that while profiteers got rich quick, the common people had to suffer. The worst of such experiences came during and after World War I, and currency inflation was the principal cause. By this bitter

experience, the nations of the West have learnt a more correct method of financing war, and have stuck to it more or less closely in the present war. That method is this: when a Government at war purchases people's goods for war purposes, the goods must be paid for by money raised from the people themselves as tax or loan. If the Government takes the people's goods and leaves their money with them, a growing amount of money will compete for a dwindling quantity of goods, and this will surely push up prices. Therefore the Government must raise by taxation or borrowing the money which it uses for war purposes. There will thus be less money with the people and the scarcity of goods will be counterbalanced by the scarcity of money. When the Government makes further purchases, the money will go back to the people; this must also be drained off as far as possible by the same methods. The money borrowed must be from genuine savings, and not from expanded bank credit as was common in the last war. Goods as well as money must be kept under control, and in the case of necessaries rationing may be necessary. It is by following such a policy that in the U.K. and U.S.A. prices in this war have been kept under severe check.

India's War Finance

The Government of India has nearly always pursued a strict financial policy even at some inconvenience, and in conformity with this tradition the war was for more than two years fully financed by taxation and borrowing (see below). Some control was also exercised on commodities as necessity arose. Consequently prices were successfully kept under check. From the beginning of 1942, however, the position became more complicated, as we shall see presently.

With the entry of the U.S.A. and Japan into the war, India became the base for operations in the East, and vast

purchases of all kinds of goods—textiles, timber, construction steel, cement, shoe-leather, etc.—came to be made at fairly high prices on behalf of our own Government and the Governments of the United Kingdom and the U.S.A. Some of the articles thus purchased were in little demand previously. Some were specially made to meet the new requirements. Not only commodities but human labour has come into great demand. Large numbers of people were also employed in the military forces and in all kinds of auxiliary services. Fresh recruits to the Indian military forces alone number about two millions. The construction of roads, aerodromes, camps and fortifications gave employment to numerous unskilled labourers and artisans, who were hitherto inadequately employed. Under the agreement in force between the U.K. and India, between one-half and two-thirds of the war expenditure in India is now being met by the U.K. and the Allied Nations, and the payment is being made in sterling. As against sterling received in London, rupees are being paid out in India to those who deliver goods or render services. In this way our note circulation increased from Rs. 170 crores in August 1939 to about Rs. 950 crores in October 1944. As may be seen from Table I (p. ii), a large part of this increase has happened in the last two years. In addition to this, the deposits in the scheduled banks increased by more than Rs. 200 crores. All this has had serious consequences on the price level.

Sterling Credits. Before proceeding, it is necessary to explain that this large accumulation of sterling balances has greatly enhanced India's financial status. By its help, nearly all of India's external debt, amounting to about £300 millions (Rs. 400 crores), has been wiped off. When these securities held by residents in the U.K. were liquidated, rupee counterparts were sold to investors in India. Thus the debts of the Government of India have been transferred to

residents in this country, and India has ceased to be a debtor country. Nay more, she has become Britain's creditor for a large amount of money. The interest and sinking fund charges on the whole sterling debt used to be an embarrassing item for the Government of India, especially in the years of the Great Depression (1930–4), when their burden increased owing to the slump in the price of India's export staples and the fall in their demand. Thus the resources of India have been relieved to the extent of about Rs. 13 crores annually.

All this was not achieved without some sacrifice. War effort means the diversion to defence purposes of hundreds of things previously used for civilian consumption. Such a large diversion of the country's resources involves some real sacrifice to the people, especially in the case of total war. Thus even in 1918 Britain devoted half its national income to its war expenditure, and the diversion of resources must be much greater in the present war. In the case of India, the diversion has been comparatively smaller, but the sacrifice involved has not been small, thanks to the peculiar conditions of India's economy—large masses living on the margin of subsistence owing to the under-utilization of resources. It is true that of the total supply of food-grains, not even 1 per cent was bought for defence purposes, even in 1942–3; and although the cloth bought was a larger proportion of the total supply, considerable stocks remained for civilian requirements. But owing to various causes (to be described presently) the prices of necessaries rose to high levels, and therefore the mass standard of living, already low, was pushed down to lower levels, thereby leading to severe distress in areas like Bengal and the Malabar coast. Participation in total war thus caused a serious strain on India's not very high war-potential.

How Currency Expansion has Operated

A certain amount of currency expansion is inevitable in war-time, especially in the case of a country like India, which owing to its limited extent of exchange had only a small stock of currency in comparison with its teeming population. The currency notes in circulation in India amounted to only Rs. 170 crores in August 1939 (Rs. 4½ per head). Vast purchases for Defence purposes and the employment of large numbers in the various Defence services called for an expansion of the currency, but this expansion came rather rapidly and soon outstripped the supply of goods. This latter point calls for further explanation.

In normal times an expansion of currency could be used to capital advantage, especially in a country like India, by turning our idle resources of men and material to the production of consumable goods. But in war, especially total war, the scope for private productive effort is severely limited, as most of the capital goods available are required for war production, and importation from outside is difficult owing to lack of shipping space. There is perhaps greater scope in agriculture for increasing production, but in a country of small and scattered holdings, this is not feasible—at any rate in the short run. In the case of certain industries, production has increased to some extent on Government account, partly by working double and treble shifts in existing factories, and partly by setting up new plant imported from abroad and installed at Government cost for the manufacture, chiefly, of munitions. The production of footwear, woollens, paper, etc., thus increased considerably, but the bulk of it was appropriated for Defence uses. Cotton mills also put their plants to the fullest possible use, though owing to political disturbances which began early in August 1942 the rate of production was slowed down for some weeks. Thus

in the result, the stock of goods available for civilian consumption diminished in most lines, while the money available for purchasing them increased rapidly. The result has been a widening gap between the amount of currency and the supply of goods, and in consequence prices rose rapidly. In other words, as there was no addition to the goods for purchase, the extra money was used for pushing up the prices of the existing stock of goods. Such a rise in prices is generally called inflationary.

A word of caution is necessary here about the use of the word 'inflation'. Although this term can be used in a generic sense as above, it is often associated in common parlance with budget deficits, mounting Government debts, and the free use of the printing press. This is what happened in Germany and certain other European countries during and after the last war. In India, on the other hand, in spite of the war strain, the annual budgets have been balanced largely by taxation, and borrowing has been from genuine savings. The external debt has been wiped out. The internal debt has indeed increased in the meantime, but addition to unproductive debt has been small; in fact, owing to the favourable terms on which fresh borrowing has been carried out, the total interest payments have decreased substantially—a fact which indicates the strength and stability of Government finance. The currency circulation has also increased, but not by the free use of the printing press. Every rupee issued has against it gold or sterling or rupee securities, according to the strict provisions of the Currency Act. In these circumstances, the currency expansion is far from being a 'deficit-induced fiat-money inflation' (as was once believed by some). The lie direct to this is given by the fact that not only is there no disposition to fly from the rupee, but it is today a tower of strength, much sought after in neighbouring countries. Although the *internal* value of the

rupee fell owing to the inflationary gap remaining wide, its *external* position has been strong, and today an unpegged rupee should go up.

Aggravating Factors

At first the increase of currency did not have a corresponding effect on prices, owing partly to the hoary practice of hoarding money; thus the gap between money and goods was kept fairly narrow. But subsequently, not only did currency circulation increase rapidly, but other forces also began to operate. The continuous rise of prices gives opportunities for speculators to make large profits by fanciful dealings in commodities. This is what happened when prices began to rise rapidly in the middle of 1942. By using idle money in banks and elsewhere—money which should have been absorbed in Government loans earlier—the speculators indulged in 'bull' operations, and thus pushed up the rising prices to higher levels. This encouraged not only business men but even agriculturists to hoard commodities in expectation of still higher prices. Imperfect attempts at price control also led to the same result. Thus not money but goods came to be hoarded, and this set in motion mischievous forces. As land dues and debt charges could be met by selling less of the produce, agriculturists could hold more produce than formerly. The effect of this is seen best in the case of food-grains. Although the fall in the total supply of food-grains was hardly 5 per cent, although the purchases on Defence account were below 1 per cent, the actual available supply in the market fell greatly; thus the gap between money and goods became wider and prices soared. On the side of money also, the wage increases and dearness allowances given to labourers, and the generous bonuses distributed to employees in many businesses, have worked as aggravating factors.

Prices and Cost of Living

The result of all this can be studied in the behaviour of prices. Changes in prices are generally measured by index numbers. Index numbers of wholesale prices are maintained at Calcutta, Bombay and elsewhere. The index numbers maintained by the Economic Adviser to the Government of India has August 1939 as the base; an extract from it is given in Table II (p. 32). From this we may see that the general index rose to 239 by July 1943, but the index of foodstuffs and cotton manufactures went up much higher (294 and 493 respectively). At Calcutta, the advance in the case of rice was highest (951). (Elsewhere, especially in Madras, rice prices rose much less.) The general index rose only to 239, because the prices of sugar, salt, tea, pig iron, cement, kerosene, etc., being controlled, have not risen very much. It may be stated here that the general price index in the Calcutta index numbers for the month of June was 319. The wholesale price index numbers being unweighted, it is not possible to obtain a clear indication from them of the actual inconvenience caused by the soaring of the price of necessaries on which the poorer classes spend the bulk of their income.

What has interested the average man more intimately therefore is the rise in the cost of living. Indices of cost of living are now available for Bombay and certain other industrial centres. The Bombay index had risen by 132 points by June 1943. Similar rises have been recorded in Ahmedabad, Lahore, Madras and other centres for which indices are available (see Table III, p. iii). The rise in the Cawnpore index was the highest. The index for Calcutta should record an even higher rise, but unfortunately no index numbers of working class cost of living are available.

Effects of Inflation

All sudden and drastic changes in prices are bound to have injurious effects on the community. A sudden rise in prices hits all persons with fixed incomes, because while prices go up, their incomes remain stationary. Wage-earners may obtain higher wages and dearness allowances, but these are a boon of doubtful value, because they rather aggravate the evil than cure it, by setting in motion the fatal spiral of rising prices and wages trying to catch up. Wages will never catch up (it is like running after a lost train); and the price rise will be accelerated.

The producers and dealers in goods, and business men generally, benefit in periods of rising prices, because they are able to sell their goods at prices much higher than their actual costs. In India, owing to the wide prevalence of small-scale production, the number of producers is large, and the advantage of high prices is reaped by a very great number of persons. This advantage, however, has been whittled down by the rise in the price of cattle, implements, seed, manure, etc., which they have to buy. But important items of expenditure like land revenue, water rates, money rents and debt charges remain at the old levels. As for wages, the rise has not kept pace with the price rise (owing to the inevitable time-lag), and in any case the great majority of cultivators do their own labour and are not materially affected by the rise of wages. The middlemen perhaps knocked off a good part of the enhanced value at the early stages of the price rise, but this has not been the case lately. Thus it is certain that the cultivating classes have obtained larger net incomes than before. It may be that their cost of living has also gone up owing to the large increase in the price of the consumption goods they buy, but such purchases, especially in the case of food-grain growers, who form the majority of

the cultivators, are limited to cloth, salt and condiments, domestic utensils, etc. It is no wonder that cultivators are withholding sales of produce. The primary producer certainly deserves this extra income, because the price parity between his products and finished goods has nearly always been unfavourable to him, and especially during the years of the depression (1930–4) he lost heavily. But many have frittered away these gains by panicky purchases; it would be wise for all agriculturists to build up a reserve, as will be explained later on.

On the other hand, the numerous agricultural labourers, who receive money wages, have lost heavily by the rise in prices, because they spend chiefly on food-grains, and their incomes have not kept pace with the rise in grain prices. Hence the severe distress among this class, especially in Bengal, where many starvation deaths occurred.

The greatest benefit of inflation goes to the debtor classes. Those who had borrowed before the war could clear off their debts by paying back less value than they originally received; in the present conditions, an agricultural debtor has only to pay six to eight annas in the rupee to get clear of debt. This is just the reverse of what happened in 1930–4, when the burden of debt increased inordinately owing to the drastic fall in prices. All debtors should use this golden opportunity to discharge their debts; else their burdens will greatly increase after the war, and the costly experiences of the early thirties will have been in vain.

Inflation is an inequitable system of regressive taxation. It places the burdens of war on the weaker shoulders of the poorer classes and gives inordinate profits to the business community. Inflation thus aggravates inequalities of distribution. It makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. The higher the rise of prices, the greater is the burden of wage-earners and persons with fixed incomes. The standard of

living of the masses must necessarily go down, and this affects the national economy adversely in many ways. Such aggravation of social inequalities is bound to affect social harmony, and it is no wonder that inflation gives rise to serious social discontent.

The higher the rise of prices, the more disastrous will be the evils of deflation, which generally follows such wars.

Inflation of the type that happened in Germany after the last war can be disastrous. In 1922, the German mark depreciated to one-billionth part of its original gold value, and prices went up to astronomical figures, because with foreign credits depleted after a crushing defeat in war, and with colossal foreign dues to meet, that country made a frantic use of the printing press for balancing its budgets. Fortunately the position in India, as stated above, is altogether different. India's financial position is as sound as ever; confidence in the rupee remains high, and external balances are expanding at a rapid rate.

The Problem before India

The situation that faced India in 1942 would not have been inflationary provided the extra purchasing power had not been allowed *for the moment* to impinge on the volume of goods. As pointed out above, in a land like India with large resources of men and material lying idle, an influx of purchasing power need not be inflationary in normal times when the resources could be used for producing goods, but in the circumstances of war-time, when the production of goods for civilian consumption is heavily handicapped, any influx of new purchasing power was bound to be inflationary. But this could have been prevented by bottling up the new purchasing power, to be released in the post-war period when it could be effectively used. This was the crux of the situation in 1942–3, but it was not properly understood, nor

acted upon, for long. Hence the progress of inflationary forces for a time.

People in India have always been anxious that their goods, especially primary products, should fetch high prices abroad so that more money might come into the country. In this way it was expected that the spending power of the Indian masses would increase, and with it their standard of living also — a development highly desirable from every point of view. Such an opportunity came when the U.K., along with the U.S.A., began to purchase all kinds of goods from us and gave employment to a good number of people in this country. This has brought much money into India. Shrewd business men like Mr G. D. Birla said that this money would be a blessing to the country, if more goods were produced. But, to produce any large quantity of goods for civilian use then was not feasible. Therefore wisdom lay in concentrating all efforts on mopping up the extra purchasing power by all possible ways. But this truth did not dawn on many persons at the time and those who spoke of saving were a voice in the wilderness. The upper classes realized what was happening and saved their money to be used effectively after the war, but many persons of the middle and lower classes used their money for purchasing goods which were becoming scarce, and thus prices were pushed up.

When the Government began to make vast purchases and pay for them in newly issued money, action was urgently called for, both on the side of goods and on the side of money. On the side of money, immobilization by means of heavy taxation and extensive borrowing was necessary. On the side of goods, provision was needed for equitable distribution, at least of the necessaries, by strict commodity control and systematic rationing, and for increasing the supply of goods. The Government, it must be pointed out, did not act promptly

along either of these lines. This was perhaps due to the overwhelming difficulties in the way of all-India efforts, but the seriousness of the situation called for action at any cost. The result was that goods already scarce came to be hoarded, thus pushing up prices and causing widespread misery. The excess purchasing power should have been mopped up by an active policy of borrowing supported by an intensive and countrywide campaign for savings. But the action taken in this regard was tardy and did not win public support. The consequence was that money which should have gone into Government loans, or into productive ventures to increase food supply, went into speculative dealings, and this made matters worse. Business men made hay while the sun shone; but (whether they knew it or not) it was at the cost of their poorer brethren that they made high profits. Not the Government, but the public — the middle and lower classes — have paid the penalty.

Anti-inflationary Measures—Early Stage

In the first two years of war, the Government of India adopted a policy of war finance. In the budget for 1940–1, an Excess Profits Tax was levied on all incomes above Rs. 36,000, first at the rate of 50 per cent (raised to 66⅔ per cent in 1941). Together with the income-tax and super-tax (13⅓ per cent), the total assessment came to 80 per cent. At the same time, a surcharge of 25 per cent was levied on income-tax and super-tax and this was subsequently raised to 50 per cent on incomes above Rs. 15,000. A similar surcharge was levied on the corporation tax also.

A borrowing programme was also initiated at the outset, and this was merged in a Defence Savings Movement. Various types of loans were raised, with a view to appealing to the different classes of investors, namely: (i) Three-year Interest-free Defence Bonds, (ii) Six-year Defence Bonds

and (iii) Ten-year Defence Savings Certificates. By February 1943, the first three Defence loans brought in Rs. 108 crores. At the same time, in order to encourage small investors, the Government issued Ten-year Defence Savings Certificates in many denominations. A scheme of Post Office Savings Bank Accounts was introduced, under which blocked deposits were received, not repayable till one year after the war. These devices did not bring in much money, but they have been of great educative value and have given opportunities to small investors. The sale of counterparts of sterling debt also immobilized some part of the surplus money. As a result of these measures, the rise of prices was kept under check.

After the large purchases for war purposes began, the Government of India redoubled its efforts at absorbing the surplus money, both by taxation and by borrowing. The surcharges on income-tax, super-tax and corporation tax were increased, and new excise duties were levied on tobacco and vegetable ghee (*vanaspati*). The income from railways, posts and telegraphs and other commercial services, has been mounting up although the rates and charges have not been enhanced to any great extent.

The importance of savings was also recognized. The budget for 1942–3 made provision for certain optional savings schemes in the income-tax and Excess Profits Tax. Incomes between Rs. 1500 and Rs. 2000 were made liable to income-tax at 6 pies per rupee, but exemption from this tax is given if deposit is made into a separate account in the Post Office Savings Bank at the rate of Re. 1 for every Rs. 25 by which the income would exceed Rs. 750, i.e. about $1\frac{1}{4}$ times the amount of tax which would otherwise be charged. Such deposits cannot be withdrawn till one year after the war, but earn interest at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Further, in order to mitigate the incidence of enhanced surcharge

on incomes between Rs. 2000 and Rs. 6000, which works out at more than 50 per cent, a provision was made to refund a portion of the tax equal to half per cent of the assessee's total income, after the end of the war. A provision was also made in the Excess Profits Tax, by which if an assessee deposits with the Government a sum in excess of the tax assessed, the Government will contribute an amount equal to half the sum so deposited, but no greater than one-tenth of the net E.P.T. The deposit earns interest at the rate of 2½ per cent and is blocked for the duration of the war and a year after. This is a reserve to be used for assisting industrial rehabilitation after the war. A Savings Campaign was also initiated, although no proper organization was set up for carrying it through.

It was soon discovered that these measures were not adequate to narrow down the inflationary gap, which had been rapidly widening owing to the large currency expansion accompanied by a growing scarcity of goods. The optional saving schemes above mentioned did not immobilize much money; they were hardly known. Currency circulation was growing at the rate of more than a crore of rupees a day, but the loan money taken off the market was hardly a third of this. The excess money thus left in the market was used for speculative ventures. Mushroom companies were being floated for banking and other purposes in order to attract the idle money, and some of these went on competing for industrial plant which was urgently needed for existing factories. In some cases private concerns were converted into joint-stock companies at inflated prices. Most of these ventures did not make any addition to the productive sources of the country, but swelled the speculative boom which had been assuming an unhealthy form, and aggravated the inflationary tendencies already at work. The emphasis in the Finance Member's speech presenting the

Central Budget for 1943–4 on the favourable aspects of the price situation was also taken advantage of by speculators.

Energetic Action

At last the Government of India decided to take drastic action to counteract inflation. In May 1943 measures were taken to discourage forward transactions, chiefly in cotton, bullion, cotton cloth and yarn, and to put the trade on a cash basis. In order to prevent the excess money going into speculation, it was also found necessary to tighten up the provisions of the E.P.T. Accordingly, on 17 May, an Ordinance was promulgated by the Government for speeding up the process of collection of the E.P.T. and for drawing off a part of the surplus purchasing power seeking speculative avenues of short-term investment. The provision for optional deposit in the E.P.T. scheme was made compulsory, and steps were taken to discourage the tendency to distribute too-generous bonuses and commissions. An allied measure was the Capital Issues Control Order, intended for preventing the growth of mushroom companies in the present abnormal conditions. All these measures have had their effect, and there is every indication that a certain part of the idle money which hitherto did mischief has lately been flowing into Government loans.

Last, but not least, the Government took powers (in July) under the Defence of India Rules to restrict and control advances against commodities (including bullion). This was a master-stroke, and even before the powers were used in any way commodity prices registered a fall and there was quite a landslide in the bullion market. A valuable lesson was thus brought home to speculators, and the result was a swing back from commodities to money as against the previous tendency to move from money to goods.

WAR-TIME PRICES

Price Control and Rationing

Even in countries where immobilization of surplus money is easier, price control is essential in order that goods (especially necessaries) which are in short supply may be available to the poorer classes. Only by rationing can the available supplies be equitably distributed. The importance of price control was realized at an early stage and the prices of several articles, such as sugar, matches and kerosene, have been successfully controlled. Cloth remained a tough problem for long, and partly owing to speculative forces the prices of certain varieties in common wear rose five times from the pre-war level. A scheme for standard cloth was devised at an early stage, but various difficulties prevented the production in adequate quantities of such cloth. Taking advantage of the more favourable atmosphere created by the anti-speculative drive, the Government of India with the co-operation of the textile industry launched a cloth control scheme in June 1943, and as a result prices came down by 30 to 40 per cent. The enforcement of the Cloth Control Order disclosed large hoards of cloth and by effective action it has been possible to scale down ceiling prices from the levels fixed earlier. This and the more abundant sales of standard cloth have improved the position further. If a long view is taken, the industry will agree to keep at a reasonable level the price of this important necessary.

Food-grain Prices

The problem regarding food-grains became important only after the cessation of the Burma rice supplies, but it soon became a thorny one. Apart from inflationary influences, even a small shortage in the supply of a necessary like rice was bound to raise its price. Price control was attempted in certain provinces, but it only resulted in driving stocks underground and in creating black markets. Rationing was

for long considered impracticable, and was only introduced in deficit areas like Cochin. At last Bombay (May 1943) gave the lead to other Indian cities by working a successful scheme of rationing, but other cities were slow in following it up. The Government must have a secure hold over the supply if price control and rationing are to be successful; but in a land where the marketable surplus has to come from not less than 50 million growers scattered all over India, this is extremely difficult, especially in times of war when transport facilities are necessarily insufficient. The price of rice rose six to seven times above the pre-war level in Bengal, but only two to three times in Madras. The problem before the Government is to increase the marketable surplus by discouraging hoarding among traders and producers, to supplement it by imports, and to distribute the available supplies equitably. Under a Food-grains Control Order, promulgated by the Central Government in May 1942 and enforced by Provincial Governments, wholesale traders in food-grains have to take out licences and submit monthly returns of their transactions. The Order did not limit the stocks that licencees could hold and therefore has hardly served as a check on speculation. The food situation grew worse and rapidly developed into a crisis in Bengal. In July 1943, the Government appointed a Committee under the chairmanship of Sir Theodore Gregory to go into the whole question of food-grains policy.

The Committee reported in September. An important conclusion reached was that while the absolute physical volume of food-grain supply had not contracted to any appreciable extent, the available supply had decreased considerably. Accordingly proposals were made for securing an increase under both. The more important of the Committee's recommendations in this regard relate to the acceleration of the Grow-More-Food campaign by the greater

use of machinery and artificial fertilizers, and the importation, annually, of one million tons of food-grains, part of which would go towards the building up of a Central Food-grains Reserve. Drastic enforcement of the Food-grains Control Order and of anti-hoarding measures was urged to bring more of the supplies to the market. On the distribution side, rationing in urban areas was urged. A majority also favoured statutory price control for the major food-grains in the provinces, and a tentative formula for arriving at the surplus and deficits of the various areas was also enunciated.

The Government of India has been making efforts to carry out the Committee's recommendations. Rationing has now been introduced in important towns and in some rural areas as well. Imports of foodstuffs have been slow and inadequate, in spite of active steps. Within the country, procurement of grains on the 'basic plan' of the Committee has been proceeding so far as the transport bottleneck made it possible. Largely as a result of the record rice crop in the 1943–4 season, food-grain prices even in Bengal have fallen substantially, as indicated by the index figures (see Table II, p. 32). Prices of all food-grains excepting rice have been statutorily fixed on an all-India basis. A special committee of the Governor General's Executive Council has been working with the Viceroy as Chairman for carrying out a co-ordinated policy in all matters relating to food.

Although the crisis has perhaps passed, the necessity for mobilizing the food-grain supplies within the country still remains.

Action against Hoarding

The unfairness of curbing food-grain prices while not controlling at the same time the price of important articles consumed by agriculturists was strongly felt by many and, partly owing to this, the Government promulgated on 16 October 1943 an Ordinance against hoarding and profiteering in all

commodities, except those already under control (food-grains, cloth, etc.). The Government thus took powers to fix the maximum stock which traders and producers at any particular time can hold, the maximum amount which can be transferred in any one transaction and the maximum price.

These powers have been freely utilized to discourage profiteering and to bring the price of many necessaries within reasonable limits. A central organization with staffs in the provinces has been engaged in this task, and effective action has been taken over a wide range of articles including bicycles, drugs and medicines, toilet goods, etc. Efforts have also been made to increase the supply of consumer goods partly by importation and partly by the release of goods which had hitherto been appropriated for war purposes (e.g. woollens, footwear, etc.). The cost of living has tangibly fallen in most centres and although the general index of wholesale prices has not declined, the drastic fall in the price of food-grains and cloth indicates that the stickiness is due to the price of less important articles.

Stopping Currency Inflation at the Source?

Further action on the side of money is also called for. As monetary expansion in India is closely related to the accumulation of sterling in London in payment for purchases by the U.K. and the Allied Nations, it is pointed out by some that currency expansion should be stopped at the source by obviating the need for accumulating sterling. This was what India did when she paid off her external sterling debt, but that debt has been wiped out. The large sales of sterling concerns in India to rupee interests, which have lately been going on, especially in southern India, have also had the same result. The scope for the application of such a remedy is limited, and other remedies have therefore to be sought. One suggestion made in this connexion is

that the U.K. should directly raise rupee loans in India and thus avoid the necessity for continuing the currency expansion. The Government of India is prepared to take all the loan money available. Is it likely that rupee loans raised by Britain in India will be more popular? Not in the present circumstances. There is no ground for believing that Indian investors would prefer rupee loans raised by Britain to rupee loans raised by the Indian Government, since investors in India are likely to have more confidence in their own than in any external Government, be it even His Majesty's Government. This may be all the more true now, seeing that the people of India are going to have greater control over their Government after the war. The war effort takes precedence over everything else, and must go on without interruption. Is it then wise to make it depend on the doubtful results of such loan experiments?

Even assuming that some suitable device for obviating sterling accumulation can be found, the major issue before us now is to immobilize the surplus purchasing power which has already gone into people's hands, and therefore we have to devise means whereby such purchasing power can be sterilized for the duration of the war.

Taxation and its Limits

The money creating the trouble has to be drained off by taxation and borrowing. Taxation has been pushed up to record levels, and all public revenues have greatly expanded. The Central Government's budget for 1944–5 is for Rs. 359 crores; the total revenue in 1937–8 amounted only to Rs. 122 crores. The taxes on income which in 1937–8 yielded only Rs. 13 crores rose to Rs. 118·5 crores (including E.P.T.) in 1943–4 (revised estimates), and for the current year the estimate is for Rs. 158 crores. There are, however, serious limits to the expansion of tax-revenue in India. In spite of

recent enhancements in tax rates, the burden of direct tax in India still remains comparatively low. In the U.K., Australia and Canada, income-tax and super-tax are levied at such high rates that very little money is left in private pockets. The highest annual income that any person in England is able to have now after payment of taxes is £6000, and very few persons are able to have incomes above £4000. Even a casual inquiry will show that this is not the case in India. The system of war taxation in Britain has not only brought in the necessary funds for war effort, but has also helped in rectifying the inequalities of income. Just the contrary has happened in India. This is largely due to the lack of active public interest in India in this matter among classes that are worst hit by inflation. These classes are hardly vocal in India; nor are they even aware how they are hit. As has already been shown, inflation enriches the wealthy at the expense of the middle and lower classes. When a wage-earner scrambles for the purchase of goods that are becoming scarce by hoarding, he is directly putting a part of his meagre income into the pockets of well-to-do business men. The rupee today fetches us hardly eight annas (in goods). Who gets the remaining eight annas? Business men get the bulk of it, in one form or another. In this way a good part of the extra money with the masses, rural as well as urban, has gone into the coffers of big business, and the inequalities of distribution have been greatly aggravated. These circumstances call for more energetic public support in India for direct taxation.

But there are severe limits to direct taxation in India owing to peculiarities of income structure and other circumstances. The fact that in British India, with a total population of 296 millions, only about 300,000 persons paid income-tax when the untaxed minimum was Rs. 2000 per annum shows that in India the vast majority of incomes are below the income-tax level. Further, the bulk of incomes

accrue from land, but these cannot be touched by the Central Government. Therefore active co-operation on the part of the Provincial and State Governments is essential if the object is to be attained. Unfortunately the Provincial Governments, until lately, had not been adjusting their financial policy to the requirements of immobilization. The position in regard to the States has proved even more difficult owing to various obstacles of a constitutional character.

The Importance of Borrowing

The circumstances noted above make it necessary to depend more on borrowing than on taxation. There are difficulties in taxing lower incomes, but it is the scramble for goods of these small-income earners that aggravates the price situation, and therefore if these excess incomes are not immobilized, inflationary forces cannot be effectively checked. This is done best by borrowing. While it may be necessary to lop off by taxation the large surplus incomes of the richer classes, it is enough to put out of mischief, by borrowing, the small incomes of the poorer classes. Nor will this inconvenience the Government, because there is no special reason why that part of the currency expansion due to purchases by the U.K. and Allied Nations—and this is a large part—should be immobilized by taxation, except that borrowing will add to our internal debt. But the great bulk of our national debt is of the productive variety and is backed up by excellent assets. India's unproductive debt is still small in spite of her participating in two world wars in the space of a generation. There is an additional reason why the Government should borrow from the middle and lower classes. So far the creditors of the Government have been mainly among certain urban business communities. Would it not be desirable in every way to spread that privilege more widely among other economic groups also, so that

people of all classes, both in town and country, may feel an interest in the financial security of the Government?

How Saving can be Encouraged

Borrowing from the lower economic groups is only possible if those groups save. This involves two processes, namely (i) cutting down purchases (frugality) and (ii) investing such savings in Government loans. Saving involves a sacrifice, because we have to abstain from satisfying many wants. But such a sacrifice is worth making, because it will check inflation and thereby prevent the inequitable income transfers from the poor to the rich which have been going on lately. In the present circumstances, the sacrifice involved is little. In 1942–3, when prices were rocketing, it perhaps involved a sacrifice for people to save, because money had been steadily depreciating, but today it is the other way. By the energetic measures recently taken by the Government, money has begun to appreciate, and therefore saving will enable us to lay by a nest-egg, and in the present circumstances the egg is likely to grow bigger with the lapse of time. The rupee is already on the high road to appreciation and it is bound to give full value after the war. Hence the clear advantage of saving, today.

Some people imagine that this talk of frugality is aimed at making matters convenient for the Government. What has been said above will make it clear that frugality today is primarily in the public interest. The Government will in any case take steps to meet all its needs, and war effort must take precedence over every other need. It is for us to make the best use of this diminished supply of commodities. If we make panicky purchases, prices will go up and all will lose; but if we put off buying as far as possible, both we and the country as a whole will gain by it. Hence the powerful appeal of world leaders like Roosevelt 'to cut our needs to the

bone'. The motto of the American Price Administration must also be ours:

Use it up, wear it out,
Make it do, or do without.

There are indeed severe limits to frugality. We must all have a certain amount of food, clothing and other necessaries, but we can reduce these requirements to the minimum. We can use up our old clothes and furniture. We can travel less, entertain more sparingly, and cut down spending on marriages and other ceremonies. What we save now will enable us after the war to raise our standards of living, because much of the production equipment now used for war effort will then be diverted to the making of civilian goods, which can thus become more plentiful and cheap, even without a disastrous inflation taking place.

It is important that agriculturists in particular should save now, because such opportunities come to them only once in a blue moon, and this numerous class should obtain higher purchasing power if rapid industrialization is to become feasible in India. 'Why then take away this increased purchasing power from their hands?' ask some well-meaning persons. The answer is that using the new purchasing power *now* will give them bad value, while using it later will give them full value; because goods (both production and consumption goods) which are scarce now will become plentiful then, and money will regain its value and enable its possessor to use it to capital advantage. *Then* will be the time for the agriculturist to build houses and make capital improvements on land, and also to raise his standard of living.

Whether for agriculturists or for others, if ever the bartering of the present for the future pays, it is *now*. This is also the propitious time to convert goods into money, because while money is bound to appreciate, goods are sure to go down. Now that victory is in sight, this has become certain.

Holding goods is no longer secure; all speculation is becoming increasingly risky. Nor is gold or silver safe investment, because their value is also bound to go down.

Wisdom of Money Savings

Wisdom therefore lies in the present circumstances in investing all your savings in *money*. The question is as to where to deposit the money savings. Savings could be put into banks, but the ease of withdrawal is a source of weakness in the case of most human beings. Money can be hoarded, following the traditional practice in India; but, apart from our having to forgo interest on our savings, hoards may be opened at any time, by ourselves if not by the thief, and then the hoarded money will become active purchasing power, and act on prices. Therefore it is best to deposit our savings into such institutions as will keep it safely, and are sure to return it to us with reasonable interest after the war. These purposes are properly fulfilled only by the Defence loans in some form. We may buy Defence Bonds or Defence Savings Certificates or make blocked deposits in the Defence Savings Bank. Wherever Co-operative Societies receive deposits for the duration of the war, they also may be resorted to. Subscriptions for insurance policies are also desirable.

For those who want to obtain full value for their money after the war and who want to curb the rising prices, there is therefore no alternative but to place their savings at the disposal of the state in one form or another. Those who refuse to buy War Bonds in order to defeat the Government's object are on the wrong track, because in the peculiar circumstances of India borrowing is now needed chiefly for checking inflation, and if this is not done the people and not the Government will be hit hardest. Therefore it is the people's interest to force the money on the Government, if borrowing is not actively carried out.

Frugality and savings may clearly be in our best interests; but human nature being what it is, some persuasion is needed to call forth a special effort. Even in America it has been found necessary to give positive inducements for saving by methods like the 'reversed instalment plan', under which people can pay now instalments for the purchase of definite commodities to be delivered after the war. It may be possible for our Co-operative Movement to make a similar provision for the purchase of cattle, implements, etc., by members after the war. There have been working in India various indigenous forms of co-operation by which the small savings of the rural people were conserved. Such are the Nidhis and Chit funds of southern India. Members contribute to such institutions with a view to accumulating sums with which they may build houses or pay dowries. Such systems attuned to the habits of the people will be efficacious in the encouragement and collection of savings and may still be utilized, with variations suited to the conditions of each province.

If voluntary savings will not mop up enough of the surplus purchasing power, it may be necessary for the Government, in the public interest, to resort to compulsory methods. Schemes of compulsory borrowings or deferred pay, like the one of Lord Keynes, may be feasible among those who work under Government or other employers. but such persons are comparatively few in India, and at the present level of prices they may not have much to save. The bulk of small savings in India must come from the numerous agricultural population. Many agriculturists do not realize their true interests and therefore it may be advisable to devise some scheme of compulsory savings for them. The alternative would be taxation of agricultural incomes with a low untaxed minimum. May we hope that our people will forestall such action by resorting to voluntary saving, which will cause least annoyance and create most valuable assets for post-war use?

Produce More Goods

Both as a patriotic duty and as a sure means of making money, increased production of consumer goods can be warmly recommended today. To grow more foodstuffs is a life-and-death necessity; other goods are also in great demand. Production involving large capital equipment may not be feasible today, but not so are foodstuffs and the many goods which could be made by handicraft—cloth, paper, pottery, simple tools, etc. The Centre and the provinces are pushing on a Grow-More-Food campaign, and are keen on distributing seeds and procuring manure. Agriculturists must make full use of these opportunities to help themselves and the country.

Ensure Post-War Prosperity

It is perhaps clear from the foregoing that in the interests both of the nation and of the individual, a concentrated effort for inducing frugality and saving is called for. To the individual it is the unfailing method whereby post-war prosperity could be ensured. There will be a great difference in status after the war between a farmer or other earner who spends his income now and another who lays aside a nest-egg for use after the war. To the nation also, this provides a splendid opportunity. India's economic backwardness in the past was due to (i) paucity of fluid capital and (ii) meagreness of purchasing capacity. If a good part of the new money issued during the war is securely saved, it will be available after the war for the expansion of industrial enterprise. Hitherto the ownership of fluid capital in India has been concentrated in certain small business communities; with the accumulation of small savings, such ownership will spread to other communities also and this would be a healthy development in every way. The meagreness of purchasing capacity which has been a serious impediment to industrial

advancement could also thus be tackled. If properly planned, this can set in motion an upward spiral of economic activity with increasing production and growing spending-power.

In 1943, with a note circulation of hardly Rs. 700 crores, India experienced inflationary tendencies, but after the war if under a proper plan the labour force and the capital equipment now employed in war effort are liberated and re-employed on the exploitation of our large natural resources, production and national income will increase and with it exchange transactions will also expand. Then a currency circulation of even Rs. 1000 crores (Rs. 25 per head, as against Rs. 147 in Great Britain) need not be inflationary. Saving the extra money now is the sovereign way for leading to such a desirable development. Thus what has so far been a source of weakness can be made an asset of great value. It can give a powerful initial impulse to capital formation, and enhance India's prosperity by more fully utilizing her large resources for the lasting good of her teeming millions. India can thus become a United States of the East, with a prosperous countryside, advancing industrialization, growing purchasing capacity and rapidly rising standards of living.

All this is possible, *if* proper plans for post-war development are devised in good time, and boldly carried out. This will of course involve the continuance of many of the war-time controls, but there is no short cut to prosperity. Under such a discipline, it may even be possible to solve the strange paradox that 'money is forthcoming in any quantity for a war, but that no nation has ever yet produced the money on the same scale to fight the evils of peace —poverty, lack of education, unemployment, ill-health'.[1]

[1] Lord Wavell.

TABLE II

Index Numbers of Wholesale Prices[1]

MONTH	RICE	FOOD AND TOBACCO	RAW MATERIAL	MANUFACTURED ARTICLES	COTTON MANUFACTURES	GENERAL
1939						
August 26	100	100·3	100·2	100·0	100	100·3
October	117	112·7	109·6	121·7	106	114·9
1940						
January	110	122·1	125·9	140·8	127	133·2
April	117	112·7	122·8	131·5	122	125·0
July...	119	106·5	118·4	113·5	115	112·1
October	133	109·6	120·2	112·9	113	112·1
1941						
January	141	107·4	126·3	121·6	119	114·8
April	146	103·5	128·6	131·5	134	116.4
July...	180	127·0	146·2	157·3	169	140·9
October	171	126·6	150·5	163·0	187	142·1
1942						
January	151	130·6	158·4	161·4	190	145·0
April	169	138·5	162·4	157·6	193	145·9
July...	207	155·5	163·5	175·6	242	161·2
October	218	169·9	166·3	194·4	300	175·0
1943						
January	218	190·8	171·5	224·1	415	190.4
April	634[2]	283·7	174·2	235·6	469	227·9
July...	951	294·4	182·8	259·5	493	239·3
October	602	303·4	184·6	255·8	417	240·9
1944						
January	487	291·6	193·2	251·3	381	237·8
April	347	280·9	199·4	261·1	324	238·3
July...	318	276·4[3]	203·7	260·7	295	247·6
October	333	261·9[3]	205·5	255·8	285	241·9

[1] Economic Adviser's Index.

[2] This sudden jump is due to the removal of Government control of rice prices.

[3] All agricultural commodities.

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No. 19

THE PROBLEM OF POPULATION

BY
GYAN CHAND



HUMPHREY MILFORD
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PROFESSOR Carr-Saunders has defined over-population as meaning that 'there are too many people in relation to the whole set of facts'. In this pamphlet the author considers the facts in India: a birth-rate that is probably the highest in the world; a death-rate that is almost certainly the highest; a pressure of population that cannot be relieved by emigration or further extension of cultivation; a deadlock between agriculture and industry — agriculture unable to develop until the surplus population has been absorbed by industry, industry unable to develop until the agriculturalists are prosperous enough to buy its manufactures. The author has no doubt that India is over-populated and, until the 'whole set of facts' can be changed—a task stupendous in its magnitude—he argues that every effort should be made to reduce the birth-rate and to seek quality rather than quantity.

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THE PROBLEM OF POPULATION

Dynamics of Population

THE population of India in the last decade, 1931–41, has increased by over 15 per cent, i.e. by nearly 35 million persons since 1931. That is a very large increase. Is it a matter for congratulation or the reverse? Are we, as a nation, weaker or stronger on this account? Views on this point differ widely. A stationary or even a slowly-growing population is regarded by some as a sign of stagnation, even of decay. France has for more than fifty years been struggling to increase the growth of her population, and Pétain in a memorable utterance after the fall of France attributed her collapse, among other things, to 'too few babies'—to the 'small family' system which had become the rule among her people. Most countries of Europe and the countries peopled by the races of European blood, like the U.S.A., Canada and Australia, have of late been deeply concerned over their declining birth-rates and the prospects of their population ceasing to grow. In several of these countries what has been called the struggle for population has been in progress, and Germany and Italy have striven not only to arrest the fall in their birth-rate but to make it as high as possible. From their point of view a country with a fast-growing population is a country with a future—a country whose people are bound to multiply and fill the world. If this point of view is sound, India is obviously doing better than she knows. She may be poor and weak, but has in her the dynamic of the future, the vitality which will eventually carry her forward and give her the urge and strength to fulfil her destiny.

The above view seems to be singularly unsuited to the case of a country like India. But it is possible to hold that,

viewed in its historical perspective, the growth of her population is the index of her inner strength and will in the fullness of time make the solution of her problems by territorial expansion a matter of necessity. On the other hand the growth of population has for long been regarded as the root cause of misery, disease and death; and in India the abject poverty of her people and their inability to rise above the sub-human level of existence are attributed to it. It has been urged that if India has, in spite of what the British have done for her, lagged behind the rest of the world in almost every respect, it is because her people are reckless in the matter of procreation and take no heed of the future. Whatever the political future of India and the extent of power it gives her over her own affairs, she will not be able to solve the problems of poverty, disease and death as long as her people let the natural impulses have free play and children are born without any rational forethought. No change of political status or economic and social structure will, according to this view, save our people from famines, epidemics and chronic poverty unless the growth of population is checked and regulated according to a careful estimate of the population that this country can support in health and reasonable comfort.

Political Freedom and Population

The latter view, i.e. the view that over-population is *the* cause of poverty, was very commonly held in the West up to the second decade of this century, but now is only of historical interest owing to what is generally called the disastrous decline of the birth-rate and a sounder understanding of the question. The former view, according to which the growth of population is an index of the dynamic energy of a people, was the creed of militant nationalism in Germany, Italy and Japan but has also been an

important factor in shaping the apprehension very widely felt regarding the future of their population by a large number of other Western countries. The view that the decline in the birth-rate is 'a symptom of the disease of the will, the decay of faith, the denial of life' cannot be held in India without a reckless disregard of facts, as in spite of the high birth-rate maintained over a very long period our people are suffering from just those evils which are attributed by the advocates of this view to the decline of the birth-rate. But the distressing poverty of our people has been accounted for by the rate at which the population has been increasing; and though this view is rejected by nationalist public opinion as an apology for British rule in India, there is growing appreciation of the importance of the population factor in determining the well-being of a nation and recognition of the need for giving it its due place in framing the national policies of the future. The situation is so baffling and the practical necessity for finding an adequate solution for our political problem so urgent that the more fundamental problems of our national life — and the population problem is a fundamental problem of our national life—get crowded out of the public mind and receive hardly any attention. But if the view that our people will soon be in a position to make their own future and take their place in the community of free nations is not a delusion we have to make a serious effort to outgrow our lack of interest in our population problem and understand its essentials.

The population problem in India, as elsewhere, is not merely a quantitative one. It is not merely a problem of numbers. The qualitative aspect of the problem, the problem of making the people of a country healthy, strong, creative, purposeful, full of hope, faith and courage for action on a grand scale is, as a matter of fact, far more important,

and the quantitative aspect is relevant only because of its bearing on the qualitative aspect. India is a country of death and poverty-ridden, derelict people. Anyone who suggests restriction of numbers as the panacea for our economic ills betrays an ignorance of the real nature of the problem. The population problem of the country is essentially a part of the problem of remaking the nation and its solution will have to be undertaken as part of an all-round plan for the country. This cannot be done without the complete economic and political emancipation of the people. We have to take a realistic view of the future and regard a continued struggle for political freedom as a post-war task. There is, however, lack of unity and unifying purpose in the country and the absence of a well-organized party of action with clearly defined social objectives. We must, therefore, discard the view that once India is politically free our population problem, any more than other fundamental problems of national life, will solve itself. This view is based on the facile assumption that once we are politically free, there will be no need to worry about the basic needs of India for we shall have the power to develop our enormous resources and provide for our rapidly growing population. The inhibiting effects of our political subjection is a fundamental difficulty; but even if the fundamental difficulty can be overcome, there are other difficulties which are no less fundamental and which we shall come up against squarely for the first time.

Need for Rise in the Standard of Living

The lack of power and a clearly defined objective as to what it is to be used for are serious handicaps. But even if they were not there, the stupendousness of the task of raising one-fifth of the human race to a level worthy of a civilized

nation should in itself be a good corrective for over-optimistic anticipation. We know that our people are incredibly poor and we have the testimony of everyday experience that they have been hardened into accepting appalling loss of life as a normal state of things. We also know that we have to give our people new faith and hope and make life worth living for them. Yet when a rise in the standard of living of the people is spoken of as an object to be striven for, a good many of us feel that we are introducing a vulgar and even degrading conception into our national life and setting up a 'materialistic' view of life which is alien to our history, genius and make-up. This view shows an intelligible but none the less a real confusion of ideas. Plain living and high thinking is a noble ideal. It has been practised in all countries throughout the ages by men with a mission in life and it is being practised to no small extent even in money-crazy countries like the U.S.A., Great Britain and Japan. That it is a special legacy of our own, which we have to treasure with particular care, is a national vanity engendered by the need to seek compensation for the abject conditions of our actual life. Never has the pattern of Indian national life been determined by this ideal to a greater extent than elsewhere; and if the indulgence in the acquisitive instinct is any index of unhealthy devotion to material pursuits of life, the behaviour of moneylenders, landlords, merchants and industrialists in India is as acquisitive as in any other country of the world. We are living in an age in which money-values have acquired ascendancy and created a disastrous world situation which cannot be redeemed without their replacement by values of an entirely different order—truly human values. This has to be done in India as much as in other countries. But men were not born to live in pigsties, to die in millions for want of means to satisfy the

elementary needs of life; and unless our people are made to feel that the level at which they are living is utterly unworthy of human beings and has to become a thing of an almost forgotten past within a comparatively short time, we shall not be able to start that upsurge of life which is essential to bring about a change of the dimensions necessary in India. India needs badly a 'life through joy' movement in the best sense of the phrase—life of radiant health, social efficiency, and common endeavour with full zest for living. In this sense the standard of living of our people must be raised and all that has to be done to accomplish this result must be given a pre-eminent place in our national efforts.

A rise in the standard of living in India therefore does not mean a gospel of indiscriminate multiplication of wants or 'Fordism', as some call it, but a new way of life based upon a well-ordered material existence. It has to be realized that this end is at present beyond our national means. The level of production and the total output are so low that we cannot give to our people a national minimum—that is, the income necessary for maintaining them at a level which will place them above want, give them security and provide a margin for cultural development. The national income of India is known to be about the lowest in the world. It is not possible to discuss here the various estimates, which are all more or less speculative and of very little value for comparison as the data on which they are based are faulty and in certain important respects without any factual basis whatever. But we do not need elaborate statistical estimates to know that our people are living in a state of chronic want, without the physical and economic reserves to satisfy the daily needs of life, to say nothing about the emergencies which are unfortunately frequent. Ours is an insolvent economy, and even at the miserably

low level at which we are living our expenditure exceeds our income and the dues against us have been and are increasing at a cumulative rate. This cannot go on. Breakdown is inevitable in spite of our subhuman capacity for endurance. India fortunately has been spared the worst horrors of the war, and yet, as the enormous loss of life in the man-made famine of Bengal clearly shows, we are lacking in capacity to stand up to any severe strain, our whole position is extremely precarious, and our resources are strictly limited.

We must achieve a balanced national economy, and owing to the deficit being what it is, a very large, an almost colossal, increase in our national income is essential if we are to achieve this result. Our resources are undeveloped and we can tap them to good effect if we have the power and the will to do so. But if we keep on increasing our population, if we go on adding thirty to thirty-five lakhs of mouths every year to the existing size of our population, as we are doing at present, we shall be increasing our deficit continuously and progressively. We need all the increase in wealth that we can produce now and for a long time to come for raising the standard of living of our people, for feeding, clothing and housing them according to any decent standard—any standard which will be accepted as decent even by such an apostle of the simple life as Mahatma Gandhi—and we cannot afford to draw upon this increase for supporting an increase in our population. The point is simple, almost obvious. The gap between our means and needs is so large, and is so evident in the shrivelled bodies of the vast majority of our men, women and children, that it is the path of ordinary prudence and wisdom to add to our means but not to our needs. The 'deficit economy of India' has become one of the stock phrases of clever orators, journalists, social reformers, administrators and even economists. It is used

to cover a lot of ignorance and is a deliberate evasion of the real issues. But the phrase is grim in its significance and represents a tragic reality of our national life.

High Cost of the Growth of Population

The above conclusion, of course, implies that the population of India is already excessive and therefore its rapid growth undesirable. This conclusion however is hotly contested. We have Mahatma Gandhi's well-known statement that 'by a proper land system, better agriculture and supplementary industry this country is capable of supporting twice as many people as are in it today', and though this view is less commonly shared than it used to be some time ago, there is still a fairly widespread feeling that the fear of over-population is an imaginary scare and, if our resources are developed to the utmost, we need have no anxiety regarding our ability to support a growing population. As a reply to the argument that the misery of our people is due to their numbers, the statement has a good deal of sense in it, and there is no doubt that the growth of our population has been unscrupulously used to explain away grave shortcomings of British rule in India. We are here concerned, however, not with the historical causes of India's poverty but its existence as an all-pervasive fact of our national life. The simple facts of the present situation have to be borne in mind in this connexion. The first is that ours is a death-ridden country. We might very well adopt the human skull as our national emblem, not to proclaim that we do not fear death or can carry it to other lands in pursuit of our national aims but to drive into the minds of our people the fact that death in its most gruesome forms is our common lot, 'the badge of all our tribe'. The tabulated figures of death-rates cannot present this fact in its grim reality. They in cold print

cannot convey the horrors of reality but they sum up the real position very well. The death-rates of India and some important countries are given in the following table:

ANNUAL DEATH-RATE PER 1000 OF POPULATION

	1911–13	1921–5	1926–30	1931–5	1936	1937	1938	1939[1]
India ...	29·9	26·0	23·5	24·3	22·6	22·4	24·3	21·1
Germany ...	14·8	13·3	11·2	11·8	11·8	11·7	11·6	12·3
France ...	19·7	17·2	15·7	16·8	15·3	15·0	15·4	15·3
United Kingdom ...	14·2	12·4	12·5	12·3	12·3	12·8	11·8	12·2
U.S.A. ...	14·1	11·8	10·9	11·8	11·6	11·3	10·6	10·6
Australia ...	10·9	9·5	9·0	9·3	9·5	9·4	9·6	9·9
Japan ...	20·7	21·7	17·8	19·3	17·6	19·1	17·6	17·6

This table gives comparative figures of India and six advanced countries of the world, but these figures are really not comparable. The standard of accuracy of the six countries is known to be high, but the vital statistics of India are notoriously defective and the recorded death-rates are far below the actual death-rates. It is difficult to state what the actual rates are, but according to a conservative estimate the records are in defect by about 33 per cent; if this basis is adopted, the average death-rate in India can be taken as about 33 per thousand, which is nearly three times as much as that of Germany, the U.S.A. and the United Kingdom, over double the rate of France and a little less than double that of Japan.

[1] These figures do not include war losses.

The average rate, however, does not give an idea of the real disparity. The figures of total deaths convey a better idea of the excess of the loss of life in India. The average reported total deaths in British India per year from 1921 to 1938 were 6·40 millions, and in Europe excluding Russia the average was 5·28 millions, an excess of 1·12 millions; but as the total actual deaths in India must be more than 8 millions, an excess of about 3 millions every year can be assumed. That means there were about 54 million more deaths during this period in British India than in Europe, a total nearly equal to the population of the United Kingdom and Australia taken together. The annual average for the U.S.A. for the same period is 1·37 millions. As the population of the U.S.A. is one-third of the population of India, if the deaths in India were no more numerous than the deaths in the U.S.A., our total deaths every year would be 4·11 millions. The most significant point about Indian population is not its increase, but the high cost at which the increase is being maintained. If our net increase every year is about 35 lakhs, it is being secured at the cost of 40 lakhs more deaths than would occur in the U.S.A. That is a tremendous price to pay for the growth of population—a price which we have to count not only in the lives that are lost but in many more lives that are shattered by ill-health.

In Europe and America also there takes place a considerable preventible loss of life and the above figures therefore are not a measure of the lives that could be saved in this country; but if we remember that in India nearly one out of four babies dies before it is one year old (60 per cent of them in the first week after birth) and only 35 out of 100 children born attain the age of thirty (the corresponding figure for the United Kingdom being 73, for Sweden 76, for Germany 68, for France 68 and for Japan 65), we have a

rough idea of how destructive this growth in population is for our people. It can be urged that this enormous loss of life is due to the fact that health services have not been developed in this country and that it could be prevented if we had a sufficient number of properly equipped hospitals, maternity homes and well-developed public health services of all kinds. In a sense this is true. The health services, like all social services, have been woefully neglected and so far as the countryside is concerned they are practically non-existent. Nine-tenths of our people are left to be cured by quacks or left to their own fate. Much more could be done to save life. But there are two essential pre-requisites for achieving this result. First is the expansion of our public revenues. The rich are very much undertaxed but 'poor people, poor state' is an ancient maxim of public finance and, granting that in a free India the state could go much farther in taxing the people than is practicable now, the poverty of the people cannot but set a very low limit to the enlargement of the state resources.

The other pre-requisite is, however, far more important. Our people die of many diseases, though the cause of 85 per cent of the deaths is unknown. The root cause of the overwhelming number of these deaths is poverty and the utter lack of vitality and resisting power due to it. Malaria, cholera, kala azar, beri-beri, smallpox, influenza and the dreaded tuberculosis, which is now increasing faster than ever in villages as well as towns, are all diseases for which remedial treatments are available; but no real cure is possible unless the general health and vitality of the people are such that the germs of disease find their way barred by the stubborn and almost insurmountable opposition of the defensive forces within the human organism. If we can substitute simple but healthy cottages for the miserable hovels in which

most of our people live and provide for them simple but wholesome food containing a fair proportion of milk, vegetables and other ingredients necessary for health, we shall give them the means to fight disease without doctors or medical institutions. So long as these are out of their reach, as they certainly are at present, the medical services, whatever the extent of their development, will continue to fight a losing battle with not even a remote chance of victory. The fact that in India out of four babies one is doomed, while in countries like Holland and New Zealand twenty-nine out of thirty can expect to survive the ordeal of the first year after birth, is due to a number of causes, but if our expectant and nursing mothers could get sufficient milk for themselves and their babies, this single fact would go much farther than all other measures for improving our babies' chances of survival. The hand of death is upon us. If we save our people from one disease they will die of another until they have reserves within them to fight all death-dealing forces.

Population and the Indian Land System

In other words India's mortal disease is poverty. We have not enough to go round for all, and if a decent standard is adopted, not even enough for half our total population. Mahatma Gandhi's view is that twice as many men as there are at present in India can be supported by (among other measures) a proper land system, and he believes that the present political condition makes it impossible to carry out the necessary reform. The land system, as it exists today, was created by the British, who wished to have a class of people upon whom they could depend and who would be bound to them by ties of personal interest. This, and the convenience of collecting the land revenue, were the real

reasons for creating what are called 'intermediate interests' between the state and the cultivators. This was the real motive for investing these interests with proprietary rights in Bengal and Bihar in 1793, and the same motive determined the policy in Madras in 1802, in the Central Provinces in 1818, in Oudh in 1859, in Sind soon after its occupation in 1842 and in the *jagirs* granted to 'grandees' in the Punjab in the new colony areas. For the British this was the line of least resistance. It was in accordance with the traditions of the feudal country from which they came, and to administer their vast estate the alien rulers needed the support of important local elements. If such elements did not exist it was a political necessity to create them. The British have succeeded admirably in their original object and have brought into being a conservative class, who, though growing progressively poorer, desire the maintenance of British rule. The 560 rulers of the Indian States belong to this class: they fear for their future in a free democratic India; but millions of landlords also (most of whom, like the smallest among the State rulers, have not the means to support the status which they claim for themselves) feel they are living dangerously on the edge of a precipice below which surges a sweating and starving mass of cultivators, growing increasingly restive and threatening to engulf them. They belong to the class for whom the known frying-pan is better than the unknown fire, and politically and socially see grave dangers to their own class in the changes that have come and are coming. As their numbers increase, their small properties are sub-divided and their position made all the more precarious.

The Bengal Land Revenue Commission has stated that there are about 3,000,000 *rentiers*—landlords of all grades—with assets of about Rs. 12,00,00,000, which gives an income

of about Rs. 40 per head. If to these are added the so-called tenants, who have let out about three million acres of land for which they charge at least twice the prevailing rate of rent in the province, we have in the whole class what the Commission calls 'an incubus on the working agricultural population, which finds no justification in the performance of material services so far as agricultural improvements are concerned and fails to provide any effective means for the development of the resources of the land which is the greatest asset of the province'. What is true of Bengal is true of the country as a whole. Bihar, Assam, Orissa, one-third of Madras, the Central Provinces and the United Provinces, 'are known to be areas in which the landlords are supreme'; but even in Bombay, the Punjab, the ryotwari area of Madras, Sind and the North-West Frontier Province, the position is essentially the same. In the Punjab, which is called the province of peasant proprietors, about 52 per cent of the soil is cultivated by crop-sharing cultivators for whom the law provides no statutory protection of any sort In these provinces also sub-letting is common, distribution of property in land is becoming increasingly unequal and the *rentier* class is growing in importance and power, a class which in the opinion of competent students of the subject is doing little to justify its existence and which is, to quote the Bengal Land Revenue Commission again, 'an incubus on the working agricultural population'.

What about the working agricultural population itself? It is contributing most to the growth of our population owing to its numerical preponderance, it has no outlet worth speaking of other than agriculture and it is putting unbearable pressure on the soil. Its need for land is becoming more desperate on that account and competition is acute. In Bengal only half the holdings are, according to the Land

Revenue Commission, sufficient for the families who own them (i.e. in which they have occupancy rights), and the position in the other provinces, in spite of local variations, is not very different. Bengal has an average density of about 800 per square mile of cultivated area and all over the country there are large agricultural regions, with a population greater than those of some European states, where density exceeds 1200 persons to the square mile and there are considerable tracts in which it approaches and even exceeds 2000. The result is fragmentation of land—a rapid increase in the numbers of midget holdings which are insufficient either to support the families of the cultivators at the miserable level to which they are accustomed or to permit full utilization of the labour, knowledge and skill available in the family. The density of population in purely agricultural regions exceeds that of highly industrialized countries like Great Britain and Belgium, and it is in the agricultural regions of eastern Bengal, northern Bihar and Travancore that the largest increases of population have been recorded in the past two decades. This fact is impeding the progress of agriculture in this country and all the ameliorative devices which have been, or can be, suggested must have very limited application in this country so long as this deep-seated problem remains unsolved. The rate of agricultural progress in this country is painfully slow and it cannot be stepped up so long as this problem remains 'incapable of remedy'. The working agricultural population of India has much traditional skill and knowledge and given the chance it can give as good an account of itself as peasantry anywhere, provided it can find a rational basis for its work and livelihood.

The rent-receiving and land-cultivating classes and their inter-relations are, however, not the whole of our land system.

Under them is a class of landless labourers—the agricultural proletariat—which is in a more important and almost hopeless position. Its size has been variously estimated, but probably is not less than 60 to 70 millions, about one-fifth of the total agricultural population of India. Most of the 'depressed classes' belong to this class, but its ranks are being rapidly swollen by the descent of the 'surplus' from the class of cultivators above. This class has no land, it gets only seasonal work and is therefore without employment for at least half the year, and its wages are even lower than the general level. This class has no labour legislation to protect it, is without organization and lacking in organizing capacity, and has no voice in our public life, not even in the red-flag-waving peasant unions. A considerable part has been reduced to the position of bonded servitude.[1] This proletariat is an integral part of our rural economy—of our land-system—and neither the state nor public associations have done anything to alleviate the economic position of its members. They are desperately in need of work and are prepared to cultivate land on any terms. By over-bidding, they put up the rental value of land beyond their own or the cultivators' paying capacity. They are the main source of the class of share-croppers who, under different names, abound in all provinces and are almost the mainstay of agriculture in many parts of the country.

This is our land system. That it is not 'proper' is beyond question. But all the measures which have so far been suggested or put into practice, including hand-spinning and the programme of the Village Industries Association, have failed to transform it—to divest it of its 'improper' features. Mahatma Gandhi has recently stated that 'we have land but

[1] In one district of Bihar, Purulia, there are known to be 60,000 Kamias—debt-slaves.

no land system. Uneconomic holdings and methods have reduced us to the level of the beasts of burden'. The latter part of the statement is true but the first part is not. We have an extremely complicated land system and it is our most baffling problem—a problem which after the war will acquire an urgency hitherto unknown; but in spite of the mass of tenancy legislation recently enacted to palliate the situation and the certain opposition of the present beneficiaries of the system, the problem cannot be shelved. It has been dodged so far, and administrators, economists and politicians continue to dodge it in their schemes for improvement of agriculture and for rural reconstruction. But it has to be faced, for it has all the subversive possibilities of a truly dangerous situation. Our population problem is intimately interwoven with it and therefore reflects its baffling perplexities. If we realize the true nature of the problem and its inherent difficulties, we shall appreciate the fact that we cannot expect any mere land system to support even our existing population.

Industrialization and Population

The stock remedy to relieve the pressure of population on the soil is industrialization. The industrialization of India is a big problem and its discussion would demand more space than is available here, but such development of industries as has taken place since 1920 (and relatively speaking the development has been rapid) has absorbed only a small fraction of our population,[1] and has at the same time probably accelerated the decay of many cottage industries, thereby causing unemployment rather than reducing it; and the utmost industrial development that is possible under existing

[1] Not even one in a hundred of our total population is employed in modern industries.

conditions cannot touch the fringe of our population problem—the problem of finding work for our existing and growing population—and may even aggravate the situation. Industrialization is for India a political, economic and military necessity, which has been inhibited by political factors. But so long as the bulk of our people remain extremely poor, the size of the market in India will be limited by the lack of purchasing power. This applies equally to goods produced by cottage workers or large-scale manufacturers and makes it unnecessary to discuss the relative merits of the two forms of production.

We are thus caught in a real vicious circle. There is an economic deadlock in our national life which has to be ended if we are to go ahead. Our agriculture and industries are reciprocally inhibitive. Agriculture cannot thrive and become progressive unless the surplus population on the land is taken off it. Industry, which alone could provide the alternative means of livelihood, cannot be developed because the products of industry cannot be purchased by the agriculturist owing to his extreme poverty. Agriculture and industry, instead of being complementary and mutually helpful, are repressed by a situation which includes and transcends them both. The vicious circle will be broken. The deadlock will be resolved. There can be no standstill agreements in the affairs of men; and the times in which we are living make it impossible for any country, especially a country in India's unstable position, to stand still. But the point which matters is that the change in the situation is going to be a rigorous task involving far-reaching political, economic and social changes, the nature and scope of which will be largely determined by the course of world events in the next five years. Their course is unpredictable and therefore the whole position quite inscrutable.

We do not know what the future has in store for this country and what alignment of forces we shall have to face in

the years that lie ahead. There are certain things, however, which we do know. The whole of India is politically frustrated and one-fourth (the population of Indian States) is not only frustrated but politically petrified by dead hands of the past, by treaties, sanads and engagements which are, we have been authoritatively told, to be maintained in their integrity. That means that 90 million people living in one-third of the country are to live, not only under medieval autocracy, but also in fragmented political units which cannot be made to function as efficient units of progressive administration. We have the declaration that India after the war will be free to determine her own future, but it is clear that our political future is still very obscure and a long struggle lies ahead if we are to win and retain political freedom.

We also know that even when India's political future is assured and national reconstruction begins, a lot will remain to be done. In the winning of political freedom we shall have gained experience and knowledge which will be of great value. We shall have acquired strength to combat the forces of obstruction within the country. But the necessary social readjustments will take a long time. As we have to take world factors into account and to co-operate with forces making for world co-operation, our internal policy will have to be fitted into a framework of world economy whose form and principle remain for the present indeterminate. Even if we can steer our course in the rough seas of national and international affairs, the magnitude of the task of raising 400 million people to a level at which life can really become creative, at which it ceases to be an unremitting struggle for existence and provides opportunity and scope to participate in a broad-based culture, will absorb all our energy and necessitate all possible expansion and development of our material resources.

In the light of these considerations, what is our answer to the question posed at the beginning? Is the addition of nearly 70 million people to our population in the last two decades a matter for satisfaction or the reverse? Does it increase our strength or our difficulties? The answer has already been given. This increase is our liability, it has to be put on the debit side of our national account. It strains our already limited resources further, it intensifies our struggle for subsistence, it handicaps us in the task of working out our national liberation and it increases the already large arrears that will have to be cleared up when we are masters of our own fate. What is true of the growth of population that has already taken place is also true of the growth that is taking place now and will take place in the years through which we have to pass before we come to the end of our national struggle.

Socialism and Population

This brings me to the end of my argument, but before I conclude it, I have to deal briefly with two points the relevance of which will not be questioned. The trend of the argument is depressing. Its underlying assumption is that further growth of population in India, even when she is fairly set on the path of national reconstruction, would be undesirable. It seems to be an argument for crying halt to the increase of population. That it is, but not for all time to come. The distant future is completely hidden from us. It must be when the immediate and near future is so very obscure. But the next step, in the light of what we know, has to be a serious attempt to still what H. G. Wells has called 'the breeding storm', to exercise our reproductive powers with extreme caution and reserve. This conclusion may, however, be questioned by ardent believers in socialist

construction and in the light of the experience of Soviet Russia.

The strides which Soviet Russia has made in developing her material and human resources, and the severe test which she has stood in resisting the mighty German onslaught, may be considered to be a contemporary refutation of the line of argument developed in this pamphlet. The legacy of Czarist Russia to the makers of modern Russia was as bad if not worse than our own legacy will be. Soviet Russia has had to pass through terrible trials and yet, since 1928, in a period of less than 12 years, she was able to develop enormously her agriculture and industry, create a new spirit in her people and tap those hidden human reserves which have been more valuable for her than the vast reserves of oil, metals, hydro-electric power and agriculture which were revealed and exploited in those twelve prolific years. The Russians have not worried about over-population in the least. They have been convinced that a rapid growth of population was necessary and desirable and that they would be able to raise the standard of living of the fast-increasing population to a level unknown before. This was their socialist faith and they have acted up to it.

The population of Soviet Russia has increased since 1926 by 15 per cent and in 1939 it was nearly 173 millions. Russia's birth-rate is 40 per thousand, twice as high as the birth-rate of Germany in spite of the frantic efforts made by the Nazis to increase it, and is 166 per cent higher than the birth-rate of most countries of north-western Europe. The next highest birth-rate in Europe is 26 per thousand, in backward Rumania. This high birth-rate has been maintained in spite of a considerable reduction of the death-rate and infant mortality and alongside a remarkable rise in the standard of living of the people, striking development of the social services.

and rapid increase in permanent investments in various forms. Soviet Russia has not been able to give her people the standard of living prevalent in the most advanced countries of the world and is still far from attaining her goal in surpassing all nations in respect of the living conditions of her people, but what she has accomplished in a period of great difficulties and with a fast-growing population is very creditable and may be urged as an argument against the view expressed above that we in India should make stationary population the aim of national policy for a fairly long period.

The conclusion of the counter-argument would be that what Soviet Russia has done India can do provided she chooses to develop on socialistic lines and makes use of Russian experience for expanding her national resources. This conclusion involves so many points and counter-points that it is not possible to consider them here. It has to be considered, for there is a wide diffusion of socialistic thought in this country and the traditional socialist view is that under their system there can be no population problem or over-population. The experience of Soviet Russia is generally taken as confirmation of this view and the facts cited above make it highly plausible. Soviet Russia has embarked upon a great adventure, one of the greatest in human history, and the achievements to its credit make it necessary to understand their bearing on the population problem, as on all problems of social life.

All that is true, yet it is necessary to bear in mind the special circumstances under which the Soviet system was established and brought into operation in Russia.

It has to be realized that the position in India, though in many respects not unlike the position in Russia before the Revolution, is in as many, if not more, respects significantly different. The points of difference cannot be enlarged upon,

but for our purpose the most significant is that India is already densely populated and has no open spaces to fill. Soviet Russia, it is well known, covers one-sixth of the world, which is five times the total area of India. Of this three-fourths is in Soviet Asia and one-fourth in Soviet Europe (which itself covers nearly four-fifths of all other European countries put together). With five times the area of India it has one-half its population; and as three-fourths of the population of Soviet Russia lives in Europe, one-fourth, i.e. less than 45 million persons, are living in 6 million square miles, which gives a density of less than 8 per sq. mile. A considerable portion of Soviet Asia is frost-bound and otherwise unfit for habitation and cultivation; but there is very large room for expansion in Russia, and this and their enormous resources have placed the Russians in a favourable position in dealing with their problem—an advantage which is not present in this country.

Soviet Russia answered the call of suffering humanity by responding to the call of the open spaces. The call of suffering humanity in India is also insistent and will have to be answered, but it cannot be answered by seeking and finding adventures in space, by spreading out our population over larger areas. There are open spaces outside India which we, and the people of other overcrowded countries, could fill speedily and with advantage. But they are mostly reserved for white races and we are in no position to force our way into them. Re-distribution of population is a problem which will have to be faced when a basis for enduring peace is sought; but it is unlikely that an earnest attempt to tackle it will be made in the near future. We can build no hopes on finding areas for settlement outside India. At present the total number of Indians domiciled overseas is less than one per cent and even they, like Indians in South Africa, are, in the words of Lord Hailey, treated as an alien element in the

population and their repatriation is being practically enforced. Even our neighbours Burma and Ceylon have placed restrictions on Indian immigration. India is the only *lebensraum* (living-space) for our people.

And this *lebensraum* is limited in the extreme. The cultivated area of India is about three-fourths of an acre per head and has suffered progressive diminution in the last two decades. This is 34 per cent of the total area; and superficially it may be inferred that the extension of cultivation should be possible. About 22 per cent of the area in British India (154 million acres) is actually classified as 'cultivable' waste, but in spite of the increasing pressure of population very little of it has been brought under cultivation, and we have it on good authority that most of it is uncultivable. The cultivated area in different provinces shows wide variations, but that does not indicate that there is wide scope for inter-provincial migration. Assam has received 500,000 immigrants from Bengal and may be able to take as many more. The development of irrigation has made it possible for the Punjab to relieve congestion in the eastern and central districts by settling the peasants in the new canal-irrigated areas, and Sind and Bikaner have also served as outlets for the same reason. But considering the total population of India and the rate of its growth, these migrations have not given appreciable relief from the pressure of population and there is nothing to show that internal migration can materially ease the situation.

We shall have to grow more food even if the population of India ceases to grow. Our present population is, it is certain, suffering from a deficiency of food, the extent of which cannot be known owing to our agricultural statistics being extremely defective. One simple fact will, however, illustrate the meagreness of our food supply. In British

India less than 2 per cent of the area is under fruits and vegetables. Nutrition experts say that an adult has to take about 10 ounces of vegetables and fruits every day to secure the requisite quota of vitamins and mineral salts. The people of India are mostly vegetarians and need neither education nor persuasion to eat more fruits and vegetables. If less than 2 per cent of the area is under these essential foods, it is because the people cannot buy them; and if they can have the means to increase their daily consumption, the area under fruits and vegetables would have to be multiplied many times to meet the demand. As things are, this multiplication can only be done at the expense of the area under food grains. It is of no use telling people who, whether they are in towns or villages, live in dwellings worse than the worst slums of the West, that 'every house should have a vegetable garden or else vegetables should be grown on some suitable piece of ground'. In this country most of the holdings are not larger than allotments, and vegetables and fruits are grown over such a small area because the land is badly needed for growing cereals. We are suffering from a deficiency of food in spite of 80 per cent of our sown area being under food crops, and we cannot increase the quantity of fruits and vegetables, because the cultivated and cultivable land falls short of our minimum requirements. What is true of fruits and vegetables is also true of milk, the ideal food of the dieticians. In order to maintain even the present population in health we sorely need a vast extension of cultivation, and this is ruled out by limits set by nature.

Our mineral resources have not been fully surveyed, and even our known reserves are not efficiently exploited. We have to make the most of what we have and look for more. The need for expanding our resources is imperative

but the point to realize is that the limitations which we have to surmount are serious and any assumption of our being able to have access to some Alladin's cave once we are in a position to set our own course is simply not true to the facts. The attainment of political freedom, the right social perspective and drive are essential preliminaries of any material advance; but granting that these have been secured, we have to reckon with the limitations of our resources in raising our people to the level of life that should be the national minimum. Even if conditions favourable for the introduction of socialism in India can be established, socialist reconstruction here is going to be a different and far more difficult proposition than it has been in Soviet Russia, and it is our population problem which will make most of the difference.

That means, of course, that when India is free and sets about the task of nation-building the population problem will at once be recognized as one of the foremost problems. Whether we have socialism or some other form of society in this country, our central task will be to free our people from the ceaseless struggle for existence and give them health, joy and the will to live. In this sense the population problem must remain our problem and the problem of all nations and under all social systems. It has to be treated as a problem in the remaking of the nation and not merely a problem of numbers. But it also follows from what has been said above that the numerical aspect of the problem has to receive its due consideration and restriction of numbers is essential for the remaking of the nation.

Birth-control and Population

In other words, we have to reduce the birth-rate in India if we are to succeed in solving the problem of want and

misery. Mere reduction of numbers will not accomplish anything. It may create a vacuum but will not give us a nation of healthy and happy people. But if we do not restrict our numbers, we shall be severely handicapped in our efforts and may fail to make any headway at all. We must, therefore, have fewer babies born and aim at giving a fair chance in life to those that are born. We must reduce the birth-rate. Officially the birth-rate in India is 35 or 36 per thousand, and it has remained about the same for the last sixty years; but as at least one-third of the births go unreported, our actual birth-rate is somewhere near 47 or 48 per thousand. This is the highest birth-rate in the world and not far below the highest possible, i.e. 52 per thousand. Only the Arabs of Palestine have about the same birth-rate. There are three or four rather unimportant countries whose birth-rate is about 41 or 42, but the birth-rates of most countries are below 40 and a large number of them are between 15 and 20. About 120 to 130 lakhs of babies are born every year in India: only one-third of them live to be 30 and, as already stated, one-fourth of them die before they are one year old. The reduction of births is necessary to avoid or reduce the preventible loss of life, but the point to be emphasized here is that it is necessary to improve the quality of our people by reducing their quantity. This brings me to the question of birth-control versus self-control as alternative ways of reducing the birth-rate, of limiting the size of the family. There is no other voluntary method of achieving this result except abortion, which may without argument be ruled out as undesirable as a normal method of family limitation. The choice has, therefore, to be made between birth-control and self-control as methods of preventing the birth of unwanted children. The opinion on this point is divided in India as everywhere else and the

division raises fundamental issues which it is not possible to consider even briefly here. But the opinion in favour of birth-control has been gaining ground, and educated men and women are accepting the view in increasing numbers that birth-control is both necessary and desirable. My own view is that the fear of those who believe that birth-control is an easy and dangerous path to self-indulgence is based on a misconception. There is a very good case for continence in sex relations. Continence is necessary for refinement and culture and for experiencing sex at its best. Over-indulgence is ruinous to health and happiness. But continence is not abstinence. Abstinence is a policy of negation, which causes avoidable strain and undermines the stability and sweetness of relations between men and women. Moreover, we have the testimony of ages against abstinence as a method of preventing conception. The method does not work in practice; and though there may be individual cases in which it may be used with advantage, as a general method of contraception it is both unreliable and harmful. The theological arguments against birth-control are arguments against reason and experience, and though they have still their traditional hold over the minds of many men there is no doubt that they are based upon prejudice.

The question of birth-control, however, cannot be settled by merely stating the case for it. Its use is a matter of education and change of outlook on the part of the people. In a country in which ninety per cent of men and ninety-eight per cent of women are illiterate, and most of them extremely poor, widespread adoption of birth-control is not possible unless a great change is brought about in their lives. It is true that it is less costly to use contraceptives than to have unwanted children, but appreciation of this point involves an act of judgement which is

beyond the power of thought of most people owing to their ignorance and poverty. When the knowledge that escape from involuntary parenthood is possible is made available for our people, they will use it as readily as the people in other countries. At present they do not know that such an escape is possible, and unless birth-control becomes a part of our health services, the knowledge cannot be brought within their reach. Voluntary clinics and propaganda agencies can play a valuable path-breaking role but cannot do constructive work on a large scale; this work has to be undertaken and performed by the state in a country like India. Conditions needed for the introducton of birth-control as a part of a country-wide policy for the physical regeneration of the nation are non-existent at present and can only be created when the nation is fully awakened to its urgent need and importance.

Conclusion

It need not be added that this cannot be done now and will not be done until the political change, to an Indian National Government, has actually taken place. This change, howsoever distant it may appear on account of our horizon being darkened by the turn that events have taken, has to come. For the time being we may feel that the tide is running against us and many among us may regard the future with doubt and even dismay. But this is a passing phase. Faith in our future will be revived and sustain us in the trials which may still lie ahead. At the end of 'a long and dark tunnel' there is, to adopt for my purpose the words once used by Mr Churchill, 'light'—yes, also for us. We have to look ahead and plan for the future. Knowledge and understanding of the basic facts of national life are essential, and one of the most important of these facts is that India

is an over-populated country. Of over-population many definitions have been given. One of the simplest is that of Carr-Saunders, who says that 'over-population means that there are too many people in relation to the whole set of facts'; and the view urged in this pamphlet has been that if we review 'the whole set of facts' in India, there are too many people in the country. For solving the problem of population in India we have to lay more stress on changing the whole set of facts, i.e. the set-up of our national life, than on the reduction of numbers; but it is also necessary to realize that if our efforts are to bear fruit we have to attack the problem from both ends. In other words, the reduction of numbers has to become a part of the policy of national renovation. The time will come when this policy will become a practical proposition. In the meanwhile we have to do in thought what later we shall have to put into practice. We have to realize how cheap life is in this country and how precious it ought to be. In one of his books H. G. Wells, speaking of the peasants of Bengal, describes how 'man-eating beasts will come into the villages and carry off people in the night from their houses. Locks, bolts and bars cost money and peasants cost nothing'. This is the essence of our population problem. Men cost nothing and it does not pay to give them protection, not only against wild beasts but against other ravages of nature, and what is worse against the ravages of men. To solve the problem of population we have to change our measure of values and regard the protection and enrichment of human life as our paramount duty, our all-absorbing concern. We have to think in terms of this measure, we have to put a right value on life.

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TARIFFS AND INDUSTRY

BY
JOHN MATTHAI



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A SURVEY of the policy of Discriminating Protection followed by the Government of India since 1923 shows that, in the rather limited sphere where it has been applied, substantial success has been achieved: the steel, cotton piecegoods, sugar, match and paper industries have all registered remarkable progress in the past fifteen years. But should the policy be continued in the post-war period? The most urgent prerequisite for increasing the national income is rapid and widespread industrialization, and India's tariff policy should be determined by that need. It is argued that, in view of the lengthy period of reconstruction throughout the world that will follow this war, restrictions on the import of consumer's goods will be desirable at first in order to conserve foreign exchange for the purchase of capital goods; but tariff protection for Indian industries will be unnecessary for many years to come.

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TARIFFS AND INDUSTRY

IT is proposed to deal in this pamphlet, *first*, with the origin and working of the present policy of Protection in India and, *secondly*, with the problem of industrial development in India and the extent to which protective tariffs can help it in the post-war period.

I. Origin and Working of Discriminating Protection

From the middle of the nineteenth century until the outbreak of the last war, the tariff policy pursued by the Government of India was based on the principle of Free Trade. This was in keeping with the traditional policy which England had followed for many years in respect of the Colonies. Since the days of the Industrial Revolution, England had gradually achieved the position of the principal supplier in the world of manufactured goods, which she exported in return for the foodstuffs required by her population. Hence the economic existence of England came to depend on a free and uninterrupted flow of trade with other countries. Free Trade became a necessity for her and what originated as a necessity gradually grew into a principle of universal validity.

As India was a Dependency, she was hardly in a position to assert her freedom in tariff matters, and Free Trade, which was the cornerstone of

England's economic policy, was imposed on her without sufficient regard for the circumstances of the country. When after the Indian Mutiny it became necessary to impose import and export duties as a means of relieving the financial situation, it was laid down as a general principle that customs duties should be levied only for revenue purposes and should not be employed as an instrument of Protection. Later in the century this principle was reaffirmed and it was specifically declared that where manufactured articles were produced by Indian industries, the protective effect of customs duties should be nullified by countervailing excise duties. The excise duty on cotton manufactures, which was for many years a controversial feature of India's revenue policy, was a result of the application of this principle.

The first stage in the evolution of Protection in India was the famous Parliamentary Resolution of August 1917 which initiated the constitutional reforms based on the Montagu-Chelmsford Report. That Resolution declared that the policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India were in complete accord, was 'that of increasing the association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire'. The principle of self-determination to which this Resolution gave expression carried with it as a necessary corollary

freedom to carry out modifications in the commercial and financial policy of the country. Public opinion in India as voiced by the elected representatives of the people was markedly in favour of a policy of Protection and it was, therefore, obvious that once the British Parliament accepted the principle of responsible government for India, the adoption of a policy of Protection was a matter of time.

That fiscal independence would be a logical consequence of the grant of responsible government was recognized by the Joint Select Committee of Parliament which examined the Government of India Bill of 1919. In their Report the Joint Committee expressed their views on this question as follows: 'Nothing is more likely to endanger the good relations between India and Great Britain than a belief that India's fiscal policy is dictated from Whitehall in the interests of the trade of Great Britain. That such a belief exists at the moment there can be no doubt. That there ought to be no room for it in the future is equally clear. . . . A satisfactory solution of the question can only be guaranteed by the grant of liberty to the Government of India to devise those tariff arrangements which seem best fitted to India's needs as an integral portion of the British Empire. It cannot be guaranteed by a Statute without limiting the ultimate power of Parliament to control the administration of India and without limiting the power of veto which vests in the Crown and neither of these limitations finds a place in any of the Statutes in the British

Empire. It can only, therefore, be assured by an acknowledgement of a Convention.' This was the origin of the well-known Fiscal Autonomy Convention which was finally adopted in 1921. The Convention represented an important advance in India's progress towards self-government. Since the beginning of the British Empire in India, the main conflict between the two countries has centred round matters of trade and, therefore, the declaration of Fiscal Autonomy as a principle of government marked a stage of fundamental significance in the relations between the two countries.

Apart, however, from the fact that it set forth a new principle of constitutional importance, it is doubtful whether in effect the advance was as great as was expected at the time of its introduction. The Convention states that the Secretary of State should as far as possible avoid interference as regards tariff arrangements when the Government of India and its legislature are in agreement and that his intervention, when it does take place, should be limited to safeguarding the international obligations of the Empire or any fiscal arrangements within the Empire to which His Majesty's Government is a party. What happens in actual practice is that all tariff arrangements are first discussed by the Government of India with the Secretary of State. Although the proposals which the Government place before the legislature are arrived at by them on their own responsibility, previous consultation with the Secretary of State is an invariable feature of the procedure followed by the Government in determining their own

proposals. Moreover, if—as often happens—the legislature does not accept the Government's proposals, the Convention becomes inoperative and the Government of India resume consideration of the proposals as a subordinate government under the control of the Secretary of State. In spite of the autonomy provided in the Convention, it is obvious that the Secretary of State still holds a position of great influence in the determination of tariff arrangements in India and, as the Government of India hold authority under the Secretary of State, it is a legitimate inference that the fiscal autonomy provided by the Convention lacks substance. This impression is strengthened by various cases which have occurred during the past twenty years where the recommendations of the Tariff Board as well as those of the non-official section of the legislature have been rejected by the Government of India.

The final stage in the evolution of a protective policy in India was the publication of the Report of the Indian Fiscal Commission in 1922 and the acceptance of their main recommendations by the Government of India in 1923. The policy which resulted from the report of the Indian Fiscal Commission is what is known as Discriminating Protection. Under this policy not all industries are eligible for Protection but only industries which fulfil certain necessary conditions. These conditions as stated in the Majority report of the Fiscal Commission are as follows:

(1) The industry must be one possessing natural advantages such as abundant supply of raw material,

cheap power, a sufficient supply of labour or a large home market. Such advantages will be of different relative importance in different industries but they should all be weighed and their relative importance assessed. The successful industries of the world possess certain comparative advantages to which they owe their success. No industry which does not possess some comparative advantages will be able to compete with them on equal terms and, therefore, the natural advantages possessed by Indian industry should be analysed carefully in order to ensure as far as possible that no industry is protected which will become a permanent burden on the community.

(2) The industry must be one which without the help of Protection either is not likely to develop at all or is not likely to develop so rapidly as is desirable in the interests of the country. This is an obvious corollary from the principles which have led us to recommend Protection. The main object of Protection is either to develop industries which otherwise would not be developed or to develop them with greater rapidity.

(3) The industry must be one which will eventually be able to face world competition without Protection. In forming an estimate of the potentialities of this condition being fulfilled, the natural advantages referred to in condition (1) will, of course, be considered carefully. The importance of this condition is obvious. The Protection we contemplate is a temporary Protection to be given to industries which will eventually be able to stand alone.

The conditions laid down by the Fiscal Commission closely follow the line of thought by which the protection of an infant industry was recognized by the older economists as a legitimate

exception to the doctrine of Free Trade. Protection, that is to say, is to be granted only to such industries as have a reasonable chance of establishing themselves in the country and only as a temporary measure to enable them to surmount the period of initial struggle. Although the conditions formulated by the Fiscal Commission are generally unexceptionable in theory, the way in which Protection has been administered with reference to these conditions has been the subject of considerable criticism.

The first condition is that the industry concerned should possess natural advantages such as a local supply of raw materials, adequate market, etc. The factors mentioned in this condition are illustrative of the kind of natural advantages which an industry applying for Protection should possess. It was not intended by the Fiscal Commission that any one of these factors or all of them should be necessarily present, but that, on a general review of the position of the industry, it should be established that the balance of advantage is in favour of the industry. In recent years the Government of India have placed a more rigid interpretation on this condition and have insisted that the principal raw materials required for the industry should be available in India before Protection can be granted. The application of the glass industry was refused on the ground that soda ash was not available in India, although in the opinion of the Tariff Board, on a review of all the circumstances, the industry possessed sufficient advantages to compensate it

for the absence of soda ash. In the earlier years the Government of India had adopted a more liberal interpretation of this condition. For instance, the match industry was declared protected although an essential raw material, wood of quality suitable for the manufacture of splints, was not, in the opinion of the Tariff Board, available in commercial quantities in India. The interpretation placed in recent years is neither fair to Indian interests nor justified by economic considerations. The cotton textile industry has established itself as one of the most important industries in England and in Japan. In neither case is the principal raw material, raw cotton, present in the country of manufacture. The rubber goods industry is one of great importance in the U.S.A., but America does not produce natural rubber.

The second condition is that the industry cannot develop unless Protection is given. This is really a truism and can hardly be called a condition because if the industry is in a position with reasonable economies to carry on without Protection, the effect will necessarily be reflected in the estimate of the degree of Protection required by the industry. If the industry can stand competition unaided, the margin between the import price and the fair-selling price which, according to the practice of the Tariff Board, measures the amount of Protection required will reach vanishing-point.

The third condition requires that the industry will be able eventually to dispense with Protection. This is really the effective condition of

Discriminating Protection because if this condition is satisfied, it necessarily implies that the first condition is also satisfied. It is obvious that unless there is a balance of advantage in favour of an industry, it cannot establish itself eventually. In actual practice it is most difficult to express an opinion of even approximate accuracy regarding the applicability of this condition. It is practically impossible even for the best-informed and most competent Tariff Board to forecast the position of an industry over a period of years so as to judge with sufficient precision whether it will eventually require assistance or not. The economies in costs of production and the level of import prices which may eventuate during a specified period depend on so many uncertain factors that no Tariff Board can be expected to pronounce a reasonably valid judgement on the extent to which an industry fulfils this condition. In the whole course of the Tariff Board's existence there has been only one case in which the Board has declined to grant Protection to an industry on the ground that it will not be able to dispense with Protection eventually. This is the magnesium chloride industry. The Tariff Board declined to grant Protection to the industry in 1924 on this ground. The Government accepted the Tariff Board's conclusion. Three years later, in pursuance of the Government's policy of reducing or abolishing the duties on materials required by the cotton textile industry, even the revenue duty on magnesium chloride was removed. In 1928 the industry came up

again for Protection and in this inquiry it was found by the Board, on a review of costs and prices, that the industry would not merely be able to dispense with Protection ultimately, but that it did not require any greater assistance than the restoration of the original revenue duty. The case of the magnesium chloride industry provides an interesting illustration of the practical difficulties involved in the application of the crucial condition on which Discriminating Protection is based.

In spite of these criticisms of the policy of Discriminating Protection, it is necessary, if we are to form a fair and correct judgement regarding its working, to recognize the substantial successes achieved by it. The progress made by industries which have received Protection is illustrated by the following figures:

	Steel (ingots)	*Cotton Piecegoods*	*Sugar* (Direct from cane)	*Match*	*Paper*
	1,000 tons	Million yards	1,000 tons	Gross (lakhs)	1,000 tons
1922-3 ...	131	1,725	24	8	24
1939-40 ...	1,070	4,013	1,242	220	70

It is a remarkable fact that while industrial production in most countries showed a heavy decline during the period of the great depression which started in 1929, the output of the principal industries in India showed a steady and, in

some cases, a marked increase. The favourable position in which India found herself during this period as compared with other countries was due largely to the fact that it was during these years that the effect of the policy of Protection began to manifest itself. Whatever criticism may be made regarding the protective policy adopted in India, the immediate success of that policy, as disclosed by these facts, deserves recognition as an achievement which testifies in some measure to its soundness and efficacy.

The question has often been asked what the burden which Protection has thrown upon the community has been. Several attempts have been made by economists in India to estimate the cost of Protection to the community, but none of them has yielded any reliable conclusions. There are certain elements in the burden of Protection which in the nature of things are almost impossible to assess accurately. We can measure the variation in the prices of individual commodities since the grant of Protection, but unless we can at the same time determine the extent to which foreign manufacturers have reduced their prices in the Indian market in consequence of Protection and also the level of prices which might have ruled in the country if no Protection had been granted, no correct estimate can be made of the burden of Protection. In view, however, of the character of most of the commodities which bear protective duties in the Indian tariff system, it is possible to venture the opinion that such burden as Protection has

involved has been borne in the main by the more well-to-do classes in the country.

II. Future Industrial Development and Tariffs

In any scheme of economic reconstruction in India after the war, industrialization is bound to occupy an important place. There has been for many years a strong and widespread feeling in the country that a rapid development of industries is essential to economic progress. The extent to which Indian industries have expanded under the stress of war requirements has given further impetus to the demand for industrialization.

The most important reason why we want more industries in the country is that they will help to bring about a more balanced economy. At present we are dependent to a preponderant extent upon agriculture as our means of livelihood. This is, to say the least, a precarious position since agriculture is conditioned largely by climatic factors and in our country principally by the state of the monsoon. The failure of the natural factors on which agriculture depends may cause such serious damage to crops as to affect vitally the resources of the population during the year. It is necessary to offset this by the establishment of manufacturing industries which depend less directly upon natural conditions. The precariousness of an economy which depends primarily upon agriculture is not merely confined to the livelihood of the population, but affects also the financial resources of the Government. Indian

budgets, especially in the Provinces, are so largely determined by the condition of the crops that the natural factors affecting agriculture are a matter of grave concern to the Government.

Closely connected with this is the consideration that the establishment of more industries in the country will help to some extent to relieve the terrific pressure which the population exerts upon the land. It is the increasing pressure exerted by a growing population upon the land which accounts for one of the gravest difficulties of our agricultural economy, namely, the increasing tendency to minute division and fragmentation of agricultural holdings. It is extremely difficult to introduce improved methods of agriculture unless some check is placed upon this tendency. If some alternative occupation could be found for people, to that extent we might be able to check the tendency to land being divided up into holdings too small for economical cultivation. In this sense, therefore, industrialization may be a means of improving the condition of agriculture and rendering it more profitable.

From an economic point of view, one of the great needs of India is to promote the habit of investment. We have made great progress in this respect in recent years and as far as the more well-to-do sections of the population are concerned, capital can no longer be regarded as shy to any exceptional extent; the habit of investment has become widespread. But among the great mass of the population there is a large need still for stimulating the habit of investment. The

formation of well-organized industries by joint-stock companies under reputed management would afford facilities for people of limited resources to invest in industrial shares. The practice of investment thus stimulated will not merely make available more resources for the financing of industries, but by checking the habit of hoarding increase the funds available for permanent improvements to agriculture. If money were released more widely for investment purposes, it would help to bring down the unduly high rates of interest which prevail in villages.

There are certain elements of mental outlook and character which participation in large mechanized industries is calculated to promote, such as alertness, application, decision, and resourcefulness. Agriculture, to the extent that it depends so largely on the forces of nature, tends to produce a passive outlook and the long periods of seasonal unemployment incidental to it create an attitude of general lethargy. There are undoubtedly valuable traits of character which an agricultural environment helps to produce and much of what is often described as the spiritual heritage of our people is to be traced to the agricultural environment in which we live and work. But in the workaday world in which we are placed, this needs to be supplemented and corrected by habits associated more directly with an industrial environment.

Lastly, the need for an increase in the national income constitutes an important argument for industrialization. Although it is not to be expected that an increase in industrial production will lead

to a proportionate increase in employment, there can be no doubt that industries will add substantially to the total national income and thereby increase the resources available to the state for financing schemes of social and economic improvement.

Not long ago it was a widely accepted belief that countries such as India were under certain permanent climatic disabilities as regards the establishment of large-scale mechanized industries. The advance of science and technology is rapidly enabling such countries to overcome the disabilities imposed by nature. Fifty years ago an industry involving operations at high temperature, such as the sheet iron industry or the tinplate industry, would have been considered impossible in India. But the introduction of suitable cooling arrangements and the construction of factories with high roofs and good ventilation have eliminated this difficulty and have enabled these industries to establish themselves. Similarly artificial humidification has enabled the cotton textile industry to operate efficiently in regions where the existence of a relatively dry climate might otherwise have proved a serious handicap.

The objection has often been raised that if India were in a position to produce the manufactured goods she now imports, the consequent reduction in our import trade would render it difficult to find the foreign exchange necessary to finance our large export trade in agricultural commodities. It has been urged that the growth of industrial development will, therefore, react

adversely upon the marketing of India's staple agricultural products. During the ten years preceding the outbreak of this war, there was a considerable increase in industrial production in India. In cotton manufactures, in steel, in sugar, in matches, in cement, the great bulk of the country's requirements was met by local production, but it could not be said that in consequence of this there was such a decline in the exchange resources available to our customers abroad as to imperil our export trade. The truth is that when an increase takes place in industrial production, new avenues arise for the utilization of imported articles which, provided industrialization proceeds gradually and at a moderate pace, will be sufficient to cover exports. The additional income produced by industrial enterprise must either be saved or be spent. If it is saved, then it induces further investment in industries and further expenditure on products essential to industrial development which cannot be obtained locally. It is significant that while there has been a decline in recent years in the imports of consumable goods into India, there has been at the same time a very large increase in the imports of such articles as machinery and chemicals which are required by industries. If the surplus wealth produced by new industries is spent and not saved, then it often happens that the demand for many articles, especially luxury articles, will increase and these will be imported from other countries, thus helping to maintain the import trade. The argument that because

exports must be paid for by imports, the starting of industries for the production of imported articles will hinder the export trade of the country assumes a certain static character in the demand for commodities and in the composition of foreign trade which has not so far been borne out by the statistics of Indian trade. While this is true under the conditions now prevailing in India, it is likely that if a plan for industrial development is adopted which aims at a rapid and extensive establishment of industries, a different situation may arise. The issues which this will raise will be considered later.

If industrialization is a matter of great importance to the economic progress of India, the question of tariffs as a means of assisting the development of industries requires examination. As far as one can judge at present, it is likely that in the next few years Protection will assume less importance in the economy of the country than it has done in the past. The object of Protection is to help local industries against foreign competition and, therefore, the necessity for maintaining a policy of Protection will depend on how far Indian industries will be exposed to competition from other countries. It is clear that so long as the war lasts, the abnormal demand for articles of all kinds for war purposes, the restriction of imports and the difficulties of shipping and of foreign remittance will largely eliminate foreign competition in manufactured goods. It is also extremely probable that for several years after the termination of hostilities the same conditions will

prevail. How long they will last is a question to which a definite reply is hardly possible at the present stage. There is, however, one aspect of the post-war situation regarding which it is possible to speak with some assurance. The colossal destruction of material assets which the present war has caused will call for a prolonged period of reconstruction on an extensive scale so that the duration as well as the extent of reconstruction required will far exceed what was found necessary after the last war. It is reasonable to anticipate that for a period of approximately five to ten years from now, the demand for consumable as well as capital goods will outstrip supply and existing industries in all countries will be kept more or less fully occupied. The problem during this period will be how to meet a reviving demand from countries which have been starved of goods with the limited supply available rather than to restrict supplies so as to avoid overproduction and uneconomic competition.

During this period of comparative freedom from foreign competition, Indian industries will enjoy a further advantage due to geographical and administrative factors. This advantage arises from the fact that Indian industries have access to a large internal market covering the whole country with no customs barriers between its different parts. The advantage will, of course, be diminished if, in response to sectional demands, the country is partitioned into separate and completely autonomous administrative jurisdictions. Even if such partition takes place, it will be possible,

without infringing autonomous rights, to make provision for customs arrangements between the separate Governments which will maintain the whole of India as a Free Trade area for purposes of internal trade. An additional advantage which Indian industries will have in the next few years is that in consequence of the large increase in the prices of agricultural and industrial commodities due to war conditions, the purchasing capacity of India's internal market will have increased considerably as compared with pre-war years. Conditions, therefore, appear to be particularly favourable to a rapid development of industries in India in the near future.

If the foregoing estimate is correct, the assistance which Indian industries will require from the state will be direct assistance in such essential matters as finance for capital requirements, scientific research, transport, education and public health rather than the kind of indirect assistance which protective tariffs afford. Tariff assistance has its uses under certain conditions, but it serves no purpose and may prove worse than useless if the conditions required for efficient and successful operation of industries are lacking. The chief abuse to which a protective policy is liable is that the immediate relief which it affords is apt to make both the Government and industrialists oblivious to the fundamental factors which determine the growth of virile and healthy industries. From this point of view it is fortunate that in the years which lie immediately ahead, Indian industries, freed from the fear of

uneconomic competition from abroad, will be in a position to direct their attention to the vital question of internal reorganization. In the accomplishment of this task, the state will necessarily have to play a very important part. But the state will not fulfil its part as it ought to unless it learns to think in larger and more constructive terms of its responsibilities and to quicken the pace of its activities. Protection by tariffs is a matter which even the stalest bureaucracy can handle with apparent success. But the internal reconstruction necessary for a vigorous, forward-looking policy of industrial development will call for energy and vision such as only a National Government responsible to the people and sensitive to their aspirations can possess.

The conclusion suggested by the preceding discussion is that in the period immediately following the termination of the war, protective tariffs are not likely to play an important role in our industrial policy. The question still remains what our policy in the long run is to be as regards protective measures which involve restriction of trade. When the disorganization caused by the war has been remedied and the transition to a normal peace economy has been completed, problems of trade competition may arise again not dissimilar to those which arose during the interwar period. If that happens, it is well to remember that the trend of the best thought in progressive countries is definitely opposed to a perpetuation of national barriers to the free movement of trade. The demand for freer inter-

national trade is based on the unanswerable plea that a world economy which is based on an expansionist rather than a contractionist outlook on trade is in the long run the best for all countries. To this plea a free India cannot return a blank negative without damaging her position in the eyes of the rest of the world and without ultimately stultifying herself.

A plan for an international trade agreement after the war which would not involve too violent a break with the existing system was recently proposed by the Chairman of the Lancashire Cotton Board in an address to the American Chamber of Commerce in London. The following is a brief summary of his proposals:

> The plan is based on a universal system of agreements, each arranged in two parts. Part I would comprise all goods not subject to 'disturbing influences'. For this group of goods, there should be no quotas, prohibitions or discrimination, and no licences, except in so far as these may be temporarily necessary for reasons of exchange; and no country would be allowed to levy import duty higher than 25 per cent *ad valorem*. Part II, on the other hand, would include commodities subject to disturbing influences, such as the transition from war to peace, structural changes in production caused by the war, competition arising from different standards of living, the trade cycle, and the impact upon industry and trade of scientific progress and air transport. Such goods would be given special treatment by means of volume control, price control, buffer stocks, lend-lease exchanges, or exceptional tariff rates. No commodity would be eligible for Part II unless it could be shown that trade in it was clearly and substantially influenced by one of the five special factors, and that it formed an important percentage either of the trade

between two negotiating countries, or of the total economic activity of one of them. Third-party countries may have to be informed beforehand of commodities for which special treatment was claimed, and, if some international economic council were formed, it should be informed of all Part II agreements which, moreover, might be subject to a time limit. If special treatment can no longer be justified for particular goods, these should be transferred to Part I; similarly, there should be provision for transferring goods from Part I to the group of commodities eligible for special treatment. Part II should not become a refuge of inefficiency.

From India's point of view this plan appears to provide a hopeful line of approach to the difficult question of international agreement in trade matters. Subject to suitable adjustments in matters of detail, India's interests will be sufficiently safeguarded under such an arrangement if, *first*, the disabilities to which industrially backward countries are subject by reason of the earlier start which other countries have obtained are included among the 'disturbing influences' which would justify special treatment of certain commodities; and, *secondly*, it is laid down that the agreement will not prejudice the right of each country to decide ultimately for itself what action it will take in regard to commodities which in its opinion are of special importance in the national economy, judged not merely by the volume of trade in these commodities but also by their intrinsic character.

The principal class of industries in regard to which India's right to make her own tariff arrangements should be unhampered is what are

generally referred to as key industries. These comprise industries which are essential for defence purposes and also industries the products of which are indispensable to other industries. India in recent years has made substantial progress in the development of industries producing consumable goods, but she still lacks even the minimum equipment of key industries required for a country of her area, population and potential resources. No trade agreement which is likely to limit her freedom to develop essential industries can be accepted by her at the present stage of her economic development. Unless India is allowed to retain complete freedom of action as regards these industries, she cannot afford to participate in any scheme of international trade agreement. It is necessary to call attention to this fact since in the discussions which are now taking place in Allied countries regarding resumption of trade after the war, too little attention appears to be paid to the position of countries whose economy still remains predominantly agricultural but whose future welfare is bound up with a large measure of industrialization. Among advanced industrial countries the present position of industrially backward countries is apt to be regarded as a permanent feature of world economy. Unless, therefore, public opinion is organized and practical measures are taken in time, there is a danger that the case of countries like India will go by default and their ability to redeem the situation be seriously crippled.

In considering the place of India in post-war

international trade, some reference should be made to the international currency schemes which are now under discussion in the United Kingdom and in the United States of America. There are important differences of detail between the schemes propounded in the two countries. But the main object is the same, namely, to remove the difficulties in discharging international monetary obligations which were so marked a feature of the inter-war period. These difficulties arose chiefly from two circumstances. One was that gold, which was the medium by which in the last resort international payments used to be made, became inaccessible to most countries because of the huge reserves accumulated in other countries, principally the U.S.A. The other was the desperate efforts made by several countries during the period of the great depression to retain and extend their share of foreign trade through the temporary advantages resulting from the depreciation of national currencies. The solution proposed in both the British and the American schemes is the creation of an international institution in which a sufficient measure of control and financial resources is vested by the participating countries for facilitating remittances and for preventing frequent and excessive variations in exchange rates.

While both the schemes are primarily concerned with the monetary mechanism required for the purpose, it is essential to the successful working of any arrangement for stabilizing exchange rates and liquidating trade obligations that it should

take into account the need for securing as far as possible a proper balance of exports and imports over a period. Now that gold is no longer available freely as a medium of international exchange, a scheme for removing monetary obstacles to international trade cannot work in the long run unless at reasonable intervals the goods and services exported by a country can be paid for by the goods and services imported by her. Hence it follows that the question of an international monetary mechanism inevitably brings into issue the trade policy, particularly with reference to tariffs, pursued by the countries participating in it. Whether the question is held over for the time being or not, ultimately there is no escape from the fact that the monetary issue and the tariff issue are bound together and cannot be separated logically. Whatever may be the fate of the particular schemes now under discussion, all experience in recent years points to the conclusion that some arrangement on these lines must be devised unless trade and consequently production throughout the world are to be progressively curtailed. For this reason it is important for India to determine beforehand what her attitude is to be towards a policy of Protection consistently with her obligations as a member of the comity of nations. This problem, as pointed out before, is not likely to assume an acute form in India in the years immediately following the termination of the war. But when the pressure exerted by reconstruction and relief measures upon the world's available supplies of goods ceases, a period of severe

competition in trade may again arise and a policy of restricting imports as a means of safeguarding industries may become again a live issue. It is necessary, therefore, for India's leaders to make up their minds as to the limits within which protective measures may be employed in the country so as to secure, on the one hand, that India's vital interests do not suffer damage and, on the other hand, that India's action does not needlessly contribute to the dislocation of world trade.

On the assumption that India will at an early date attain complete freedom in shaping her economic policy and that conditions will continue to be favourable to industrial development as they happen to be at present, it may be taken for granted that a big drive towards industrialization will be launched in the country in the very near future. It is not possible at this stage to determine precisely what the effect of a plan for extensive industrialization in India will be on her foreign trade. Some general considerations, however, may be indicated. From the point of view of organizing new industries in the country, the great lack at present is capital goods such as plant and machinery and technical skill and experience. For these India will be dependent for a considerable period to come upon foreign countries. In other words, if she is to achieve her object of bringing about a substantial change in the present balance between agriculture and industry, she must be prepared for a large-scale importation of the capital goods and technical services necessary for establishing new industries. To some extent

these imports will be paid for by the sterling balances which she has accumulated during the war. But if the industrial planning proposed is to be on a scale sufficient to make a real change in the economic structure of the country, the cost of the capital goods and services required will be far in excess of the credits held by her abroad at present and also of any additions which may be made to them during the rest of the war. India over a long period has had a favourable balance in respect of her trade in commodities which has been largely utilized for the payment of interest on her borrowings abroad. A substantial part of these obligations has now been transferred to India and it is likely, therefore, assuming pre-war trade figures, that she would have a larger balance in her favour after the war. Even this will be absorbed, and more than absorbed, by the payments due from her in respect of capital goods and services. Any large scheme of industrial planning, therefore, which India may adopt will perhaps for a period of a whole generation place her in the position of a net importing country. During this period it will be necessary for her to restrict imports of such consumable goods as may be produced in sufficient quantities within the country so as to conserve her exchange resources as far as possible for the purchase of plant and machinery from abroad.

If, therefore, India chooses to enter into a trade agreement of the kind referred to earlier in this discussion, the position will be that while the execution of an industrial plan is in progress, it is

consumable goods which will mainly fall within the category of articles requiring special tariff treatment. This, however, will be a temporary phase. On the other hand, when the execution of the plan has been completed, the position will be reversed and capital goods will replace consumable goods in the schedule of commodities eligible for special treatment. In any scheme of industrial planning for India, the primary consideration should be to establish those key industries which are indispensable to further industrial development and without which no real progress can be achieved. When these industries have been started, protective measures for their maintenance against foreign competition will be a matter of the utmost national importance and provision for such measures should form a vital part of any trade agreement which India may adopt. The principal industries producing consumable goods are now fairly well established in the country and, barring abnormal conditions, a policy of high tariffs or similar restrictive measures will be hardly necessary for their protection. The necessity for the inclusion of such goods in the initial years of industrial planning within the category of articles calling for special tariff treatment does not arise from protective considerations but rather from the need for conserving foreign exchange for financing the purchase of capital goods.

Three possible stages, then, may be distinguished in the development of Indian trade policy after the war. *First*, during the years immediately

following the termination of hostilities, it will not be necessary to adopt a policy involving other than a moderate restriction of imports as regards consumable as well as capital goods. *Secondly*, while a large-scale industrial plan is under way, its successful prosecution will call for a policy of high tariffs or similar restrictive measures for consumable goods and a policy of low tariffs and generally of free trade in capital goods. *Thirdly*, when the more essential industries envisaged in the plan have been established, the weight of restrictive measures will be shifted from consumable to capital goods. Since restriction in the case of capital goods, if enforced by means of high import duties, will lay a heavy burden on all industries, other measures of protection will have to be devised for the assistance of Indian industries producing such goods.

The argument of this pamphlet may be summed up as follows. India needs, and without delay, to take a big forward step in industrial development. The present is in many ways a favourable time for initiating it. It requires, however, as an essential prerequisite the formation of a truly representative government in the country. With the assistance which the state can provide under a National Government, the present ill-balanced economy can be rectified within a measurable period of time. Although during this period India will be preoccupied with the measures needed for her own economic salvation, she cannot forget that she has also duties to other nations. Indeed, her own interests require that she should

develop an international outlook in economic matters. She must, therefore, be prepared in spite of self-regarding preoccupations to respond to any reasonable appeal which may be made to her for economic co-operation with other countries. It is within the bounds of practicability to devise a scheme for international agreement in trade matters in which India may participate without detriment to her own interests. The time has come for India's leaders to set themselves to explore the lines along which India's interests and her obligations to the world can be successfully reconciled in the economic sphere.

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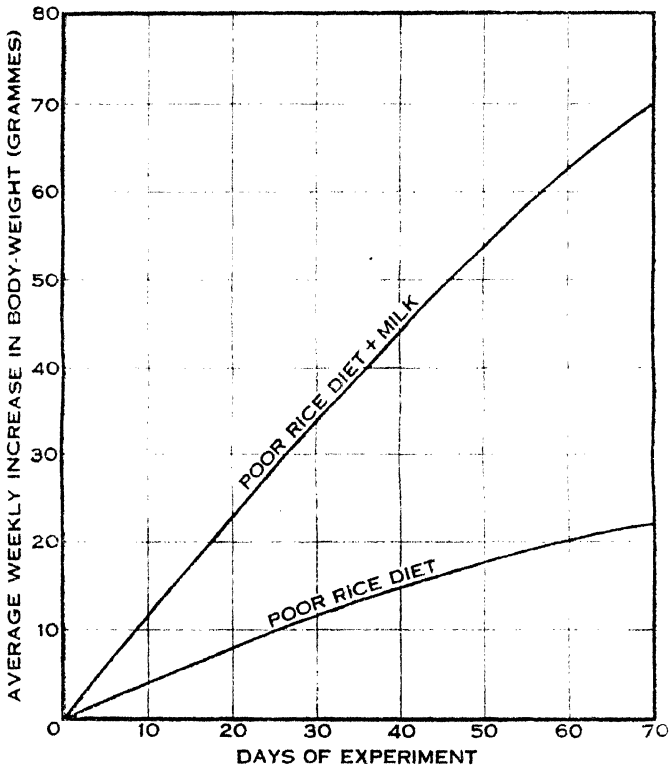
NUTRITION

BY

W. R. AYKROYD

OXFORD PAMPHLETS ON INDIAN AFFAIRS





Graph showing the growth of rats fed on a poor rice diet and on the same diet supplemented by milk. The poor rice diet given to the rats closely resembled that consumed by poor rice-eaters in India and the amount of milk added was equivalent to about 8 ounces daily in terms of human intake.

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THE importance of the problem of nutrition in India is generally recognized. In this pamphlet the author considers India's food production and Indian diets and points out the defect of the latter. The economic aspects of nutrition and the population problem are briefly discussed. Emphasis is laid on the relation between nutrition and public health and evidence is adduced to show that malnutrition is an important factor underlying the dismal public health situation. Finally the developments and changes in agricultural production which are needed to make the food supply more satisfactory from the nutritional standpoint are considered.

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NUTRITION

INTRODUCTION

AN attempt has been made in this pamphlet to survey briefly the problem of nutrition in India as a whole. It is the task of the nutrition research worker to study the nature of human diets, the composition of foods, the diseases to which faulty feeding gives rise, and many other questions. Much research on such subjects has been carried out in India and has shown that the diet of the mass of the population is deficient in quality and often in quantity, and that much ill-health and disease in India are attributable to malnutrition. But it is one thing to define a problem, another to solve it. As soon as the research worker turns from the absorbing study of nutrition in the field, the hospital and the laboratory, to consider how the data he has collected can be used to good effect—i.e. to improve the diet of the people—he finds himself involved in a series of wider problems. Food production, agriculture and animal husbandry, the growth of population, the economic condition of the people, education—all these have a direct bearing on nutrition, and any survey of nutrition which ignored them would be superficial and indeed without value.

This pamphlet, is not specifically concerned with the critical food situation which has arisen during the last two and a half years and has focused general attention on India's problem of nutrition; it deals mainly with the situation as it exists in normal times. In Bengal, famine occurred in 1943 on a scale unknown since the nineteenth century, and in other parts of the country there has been serious food scarcity. The emergency, precipitated by failure of imports and numerous other factors, has shown that India, with her huge and growing population, is normally in a precarious position as regards her food supplies, which have never been sufficient in the sense that the popula-

tion was abundantly and satisfactorily fed. It is largely an outcome of the situation in normal times, and study of the latter helps in the understanding of how it has arisen.

In the present circumstances the goal of *raising* standards of nutrition may seem remote and almost unattainable. But danger and catastrophe should stimulate vigorous counter-attack, directed not only against hunger and famine but against the lesser degrees of malnutrition as they exist at the best of times. Among the many formidable tasks which will face future Governments in India there is none of greater importance, and perhaps none of greater difficulty, than that of improving the national diet.

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Many hundreds of books have been written about nutrition and thousands of scientific papers on the subject are published annually. The professional nutrition worker often finds it difficult to keep in touch with all the research that is being carried out and all the advances that are being made, and the ordinary educated man or woman certainly cannot be expected to do so. A very brief and over-simplified account of certain aspects of the subject may, at this stage of the pamphlet, be of assistance to the reader.

Food is burnt or oxidized in the body as a source of heat and energy. The heat unit commonly employed in the science of dietetics is the large calorie—the amount of heat required to raise the temperature of one kilogram of water through one degree centigrade. The food which we eat contains various constituents which supply energy, or are necessary for the growth and repair of body tissue and for the bewildering vital processes which take place in every organ and living cell. The energy-yielding constituents are proteins, fats, and carbohydrates. Protein, in addition to being used as a source of energy, is needed for growth, repair and vital functioning. The body also

needs vitamins and certain mineral elements which, being present in foods in very small amounts, do not supply energy but play an essential role in basic vital processes. Water can also be regarded as a dietary essential; without it, life cannot exist at all.

Common foods differ in their content of these various constituents and hence in nutritive value. Cereal grains contain protein and carbohydrate, and are a fairly concentrated source of energy, but they are deficient in certain vitamins and mineral salts. Meat and pulses are characterized by a high content of protein, the protein of the former being of more value to the body than that of the latter. Leafy vegetables and fruits do not supply many calories, but they contain certain vitamins and mineral salts. Root vegetables and tubers, on the other hand, contain a good deal of starch (carbohydrate) and hence supply more calories. Sugar is pure carbohydrate, without protein or vitamins, and hence a defective food. Milk, nature's food for the young mammal, is a good source of protein, vitamins and mineral salts. It is a valuable supplement to diets based on cereals because it is rich in many of the constituents in which cereals are deficient.

A well-balanced and adequate diet must be sufficient in quantity—i.e. yield enough calories—and must supply the various constituents of food in adequate amounts. Much is known about the part played in the body by the various constituents, and the ill-effects which result from insufficient intake (e.g. vitamin deficiency). 'Optimum' dietary standards stating human requirements of calories and constituents have been drawn up by the Technical Commission on Nutrition of the League of Nations, the National Research Council of America and other authoritative organizations. Such standards can readily be translated into terms of common foods and provide a yard-stick for assessing the adequacy of any kind of diet. The so-called 'optimum' type of diet is rich in first-class proteins and in all

the essential vitamins and mineral salts. In terms of actual foods, this means a high intake of milk and milk products, meat, fish, vegetables and fruit and a relatively low intake of cereals.

The United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture (1943) attempted to sum up the bearing of the modern science of nutrition on human affairs in the following four sentences:

1. The kind of diet which man requires for health has been established.

2. Investigations in many parts of the world have shown that the diets consumed by the greater part of mankind are nutritionally unsatisfactory.

3. Diets which do not conform with the principles of satisfactory nutrition lead to impaired physical development, ill-health, and untimely death.

4. Through diet a new level of health can be attained, enabling mankind to develop inherited capacities to the fullest extent.

FOOD PRODUCTION

The next question to be considered is how far the food supply of the country meets the needs of the population. If we can calculate the production of various foods, we can divide the figures obtained by the number of consumers and arrive at estimates of intake on a *per capita* basis. These can then be compared with standards of adequate nutrition generally accepted by nutrition workers. This approach is attractive in its simplicity and has been followed by various writers. Actually, existing food production statistics, while providing useful information about the nature of the national diet, are scarcely accurate enough to justify it. In making use of them it is necessary to understand their limitations.

Statistics of the area under the various crops and of total yields are published annually by Provincial Governments, and tabulated by the Central Government. A summary will be found

in *The Indian Year Book.* Rows of figures are always imposing and invite manipulation by the mathematically-minded. But in some provinces—e.g. Bengal, Bihar, Assam and Orissa—even the area under the different food crops is not accurately known. None of the Indian States, which comprise some 47 per cent of the total land area of India, publish any production figures and statistics of the areas under food crops are available for only 56 per cent of Indian State territory. Outturn in British India is calculated from area by a formula drawn up many years ago which includes a factor—'standard return'—probably needing revision. Ultimately all food production statistics are based on information supplied by village officials unlikely to aim at scientific accuracy. Caution is therefore necessary in using such statistics for any but the roughest estimates. They can give an indication of the general *trend* of food production, but when they are used in careful calculations of *per capita* intake, to ascertain, for example, whether food supply is keeping pace with population growth, misleading results are likely to be obtained. One of the difficulties of the present food situation is the uncertainty about the accuracy of production statistics in 'surplus' and 'deficit' areas. Accurate statistics are the life-blood of government; in their absence all planning for the future is handicapped. Improvement in methods of collecting food production data is of essential importance to India.

With these facts in mind, we can proceed to consider available statistics for what they are worth. The table on p. 8 shows the principal crops of British India in a typical pre-war year, 1937-8.

In the years previous to the war some 80% of total crops were food and fodder crops. The proportion of these to other crops varied from year to year, but only within small limits. Recently, as a result of food shortage, some of the land normally under cash crops has been turned over to food production.

Cereals. The most important food crops in India are the

Crops	Area, in Million Acres
Food grains (including pulses)	186·8
Fibres (mainly cotton and jute)	18·9
Oil-seeds	17·0
Fodder crops	10·4
Fruits and vegetables (including root crops)	3·8
Sugar	3·8
Drugs and narcotics (tea, coffee, opium, tobacco, etc.) ...	2·0
Condiments and spices	1·4
Miscellaneous	2·5
Total ...	246·6

cereal grains, and of these rice, wheat and the various millets are the most extensively cultivated. Quantitatively speaking, *rice* is the foremost crop; in British India the area under rice slightly exceeds that under all other cereals put together. The annual yield fluctuates around 28 million tons. Rice is extensively cultivated in eastern and southern India. *Wheat* comes next in order of importance, being the staple crop in most parts of northern and north-western India. The annual yield is about 10 million tons. The *millets* are grown in most provinces and constitute a very important food crop. The total production is approximately 17·5 million tons. The principal millets grown are great millet (*Sorghum vulgare*), spiked millet (*Pennisetum typhoideum*) and common millet (*Eleusine coracana*). *Barley* is a crop of some importance in certain parts of northern India, particularly in the United Provinces. The annual production is about 2 million tons. The production of *maize*, a crop cultivated mainly in the north, is about 1·5 million tons. *Tapioca*, which is a root and not a cereal, is eaten as a food staple only in the south-west corner of India. The annual yield before the war was estimated as about 1·5 million tons. Within the last two years its production has been considerably extended.

Pulses. Pulses are grown throughout India and form part of

all Indian diets. They are of value as supplements to diets largely composed of cereals in that they contain various constituents in which cereals are deficient; besides this, they are essential to agriculture since the moderate fertility of the soil could not be maintained without the cultivation of leguminous crops in rotation. The annual yield of pulses may be very roughly estimated as 7-9 million tons.

Nuts and oil-seeds. These are cultivated both as cash crops and for food. They include groundnut, coconut, mustard, sesamum, rape-seed, etc. Except in certain parts of northern India where milk fat (ghee) is reasonably abundant, vegetable oils are the main source of fat in the diet of the majority of the population. Linseed is usually grown principally for export, though linseed oil is consumed as food in certain areas. During the years just previous to the war, 39%, 40% and 60% respectively of the groundnut, castor and linseed crops was exported.

Milk and dairy produce. The total annual production of milk is estimated as about 22 million tons, or 23,000 million litres. Allowing 15% for the needs of calves, this would give a daily *per capita* intake of all milk products, in terms of liquid milk, of about 5 ounces. Consumption varies greatly in different parts of India, being higher in the northern provinces than in the rest of the country. For example, in the Punjab, milk production has been estimated as 19·7 ounces *per capita* daily, and in Madras as 3·6 ounces. In many parts of India milk and milk products are consumed by the poorer classes in negligible amounts or not at all. It is said that 44% of the milk supply is obtained from cows, 50% from buffaloes and 3% from goats. The large goat population is in fact little used as a source of milk. The milk of Indian cows contains 25% to 50% more fat than that of European cows, while buffaloes' milk contains more than twice as much. The higher fat content of milk produced in India compensates to some small extent

for the low yields per milking animal. About 27% of the total milk supply is consumed as fluid milk. Some 60% of the total outturn is used for the manufacture of ghee, the 'buttermilk' which remains after the partial removal of the fat being usually consumed by the producer.

Meat. The livestock population in India is large, there being nearly one domestic animal per head of population. Meat nevertheless forms a very small part of total food supply, and the amount eaten by the greater part of the population is almost negligible. The consumption of poultry is of no quantitative importance. Wild game does not provide any appreciable addition to the meat supply.

Fish. Indian coastal waters are teeming with fish which represent a large potential source of food supply. Unfortunately it is a source which remains largely untapped, for the application of modern scientific and industrial technique to the fishing industry has as yet scarcely begun. The industry has, however, shown some expansion within recent years. Annual production is estimated at about 6,60,000 tons. The bulk of this is sea fish. In certain parts of the country, e.g. in the delta areas of Bengal, fresh-water fish is a food of considerable importance.

Eggs. The annual production of eggs is estimated as some 2,700 million. This production is small in relation to the population. Eggs are consumed in negligible quantities by the poorer classes in villages and towns. Systematic poultry-farming is confined to a few centres. The eggs laid by ordinary village hens are small in size in comparison with a good Danish or English egg.

Sugar. The production of sugar, refined and unrefined, is estimated as 5·3 million tons, which amounts to approximately 1·3 ounces *per capita* daily. The refining of sugar has become an important industry, employing some 1,00,000 workers. Great attention has been given within recent years to the

problem of increasing the production of sugar and improving methods of utilization and manufacture. In over 80% of the area under sugar the old canes have been replaced by varieties which give higher yields and are more resistant to disease. India now produces more sugar than any other country in the world.

Fruits and vegetables. In no country can the trend of production of fruits and vegetables be easily estimated statistically. It is not possible to obtain figures of production in small domestic gardens and allotments. The recorded area under vegetables in India is 3 million acres, and production has been variously estimated as 9-15 million tons. Among the most commonly consumed vegetables are *brinjal* or egg-plant and the various gourds. In north India in the cold weather and in hill districts, 'European' vegetables — cabbage, cauliflower, etc. — grow and thrive. Potatoes occupy nearly half a million acres, the main crop being raised in the north in the winter. Production is estimated at 2 million tons. Indigenous leafy vegetables are also grown throughout the country. The area under fruits of all kinds is recorded as 1·8 million acres; of this 60% is devoted to mangoes, 21% to plantains and nearly 5% to citrus fruits (oranges, etc.). Mangoes, a fruit of high nutritive value, are in season for a few months only, during which a glut tends to occur. Other fruits of some importance are guavas, pineapples and jack fruit.

Imports and exports of food in normal times were small in relation to indigenous food production. In 1937-8 exports of rice and wheat were about 1% and 3% of total outturn respectively. In some years exports of wheat were less than half those of 1937–8. Exports of other cereal grains were quantitatively negligible.

The only important import of food was Burma rice, supplemented to a small extent by rice from Thailand and Indo-China, amounting to some 4–5% of the total rice supply. In

Madras the percentage of imports to total supplies was higher, probably from 10–15%. Travancore, and certain urban areas such as Bombay city, were also to a considerable extent dependent on Burma rice. In quantity, imports of rice in pre-war years ranged from 1 to 2 million tons. Imports of other food grains were negligible. In normal times there was a small import of expensive products such as tinned and cold storage foods, but the use of these was confined to a small section of the population and they were of no quantitative significance. One or two imported food products, such as dried milk and cod-liver oil, were of importance from the standpoint of nutrition because of their valuable nutritive qualities, but negligible as a quantitative addition to the total food supplies of the country.

A deficit of a few per cent in total food supplies does not appear to be a very serious deficit. There are several reasons why the failure of imports has played an important part in producing the present situation. First, when nutritional standards are low there is no margin of safety to allow for even a small reduction in supply. The gap between supply and requirements was further widened by an increase in the latter. Certain sections of the population, e.g. men in the army and war services and connected with heavy war production generally, are consuming more food than before the war. The needs of troops from abroad and prisoners of war must also be met. Some 5,00,000 refugees have entered the country from Burma and elsewhere. Total all-India food-energy requirements have thus increased as a result of the war. Secondly, Burma rice was largely consumed by the poorer classes and its relatively low and steady price helped to peg the price of home-grown rice down to a reasonable level. Thirdly, certain localities were largely dependent on Burma rice and the shortage which occurred in such localities had wide repercussions elsewhere.

Agricultural and import statistics indicate in a general way

the nature of the Indian diet. They show that the main food of the country is cereal grains and that other foods are produced in relatively small amounts. They show that the *per capita* production of milk is small. Even a rough scrutiny of the food supply justifies the deduction that the national diet is defective in *quality* and does not conform to standards generally accepted by nutrition workers. As regards quantitative sufficiency, the statistical data, as has been suggested earlier, are not sufficiently accurate to justify an assessment.

DIET SURVEYS AND THEIR RESULTS

Further information about Indian diets and their defects has been obtained by diet surveys. In a diet survey a sample of the population is selected and the quantity of all foods consumed by each family over a given period is weighed by trained investigators who make daily house to house visits. Surveys usually last for 10 to 20 days and cover 15 to 30 families. Since 1936 some 100 surveys, covering about 1,500 families and 5,000 to 6,000 individuals, have been carried out. They have been made in both urban and rural areas in widely separated parts of the country, from Kashmir in the north to Travancore in the south. There are, however, considerable areas in which dietary habits have not yet been studied by this method. Surveys have sometimes been repeated in the same area at different seasons.

The data obtained in surveys are analysed in various ways. Intake per consumption unit or adult man value of the principal groups of foods is calculated; the latter include ceralse, pulses, leafy vegetables, 'other' vegetables, fruit, milk and milk products, meat, fish and eggs, and condiments, each group having distinctive nutritive properties. A further step is towork out intake of calories, protein, fat, carbohydrate and of certain vitamins and mineral salts. To do this, it is necessary to know the composition of the individual foods of which the diets are

composed.[1] Investigation of the composition of foods is the first step in studying practical problems of human nutrition.

There are some 400 million people in India and, it is said, 7,00,000 villages, so that the dietary habits of only a very small sample of the population have been studied. Further, the sample is not a random one, either as regards the location of the surveys or the individual families investigated in any particular place. Theoretically, in order to obtain a true picture of Indian diets villages and urban areas for survey should be picked out by random selection, the same process applied in the selection of individual families, and a much larger sample of the population studied. For a number of reasons such a procedure is impossible in practice; to give but one of these, an army of field surveyors would be needed. Field dietary surveys are laborious and exacting work.

In spite, however, of sampling difficulties and the smallness of the sample, the surveys have provided much valuable knowledge about diet in India. Actually more information about dietary habits is available in India than in most countries of the world, apart from northern Europe and America and some of the British Dominions.

Quantity in the Indian Diet

Some of the groups included in the surveys were grossly underfed. For example, the average daily calorie intake per consumption unit or adult man value of a group of poor villagers in south India was 1,700 and that of poor families in a Madras suburb 1,800. A reasonable estimate of the number of calories required by a man engaged in easygoing agricultural or manual

[1] Most common Indian foods have already been analysed and the results will be found in Health Bulletin No. 23, *The Nutritive Value of Indian Foods and the Planning of Satisfactory Diets* (3rd ed., 1941) prepared in the Nutrition Research Laboratories, Coonoor, and published by the Manager of Publications, Delhi.

work is 2,500–2,600. In 1937 the Nutrition Research Laboratories investigated a cross-section of a village in south India when conditions in the district were relatively normal. In some 50% of families, calorie intake per consumption unit was below 2,300. Very similar observations have been made among other village groups elsewhere in India, and also in Ceylon.

Can we venture any tentative estimate of the proportion of the population which is underfed in normal times? The author's estimate is 30%. Admittedly, this estimate cannot be regarded as statistically valid; the data necessary for a statistically valid estimate are not available. But it is based on the study of diet survey records and also on general experience of the condition of the people and agrees with that made by nutrition workers for Ceylon. The degree of under-nutrition is naturally not uniform, either in time or place. There are good areas which enjoy abundant rainfall or efficient irrigation; there are bad areas, with recurrent drought and no irrigation, in which the population lives permanently on the verge of famine. There are areas in which the economic condition of sections of the population fluctuates in accordance with the price of, and world demand for, some cash crop. Major industries supporting thousands of workers have their periods of boom and slump. But, by and large, there is no doubt that a high percentage of the population does not get *enough* to eat, and this is a fundamental fact which all concerned with the task of improving the diet of the Indian people must realize. 'Enough food' takes precedence over 'the right kind of food'.

Quality in the Indian Diet

Rice diets. The diet of the poor rice-eater is very much the same all over India. In addition to his staple cereal he consumes only small quantities of pulses, vegetables and meat. Intake of pulses is from 0·5 to 1·5 ounces daily; of non-leafy vegetables, 2 to 6 ounces; of vegetable oil, less than 1 ounce. Consump-

tion of meat, fish and eggs does not often exceed 1·5 ounces and as a rule less than this amount is taken. Leafy vegetables are eaten in small quantities, while the consumption of milk is negligible. Fruit is a rare ingredient in the diet. It is to be remarked that there is some disagreement between the calculated production of fruit *per capita*, based on agricultural statistics, and the actual intake of fruit observed in diet surveys. The same can be said about milk.

Millet diets. These are in general similar to rice diets except that millet replaces rice as the main ingredient. In many districts the diet contains a mixture of cereals including one or other of the millets.

Wheat diets. Generally speaking, milk production is higher in the wheat-eating parts of India than elsewhere, and milk and milk products are more prominent in the diet. Intake of pulses also tends to be greater. In their content of foods other than these, wheat diets resemble rice and millet diets. An adequate intake of milk is by no means universal in wheat-eating areas.

Tapioca diets. Tapioca (manioc) is grown mainly in south-western India. In normal times, the diet of the poorer classes in many parts of Travancore is based on both rice and tapioca; it is only rarely that tapioca is the sole basic energy-yielding food. In general, diets containing tapioca are similar to rice diets in their content of such foods as milk, vegetables, meat, etc. Tapioca diets are of interest from the nutritional standpoint because of their deficiency in protein.

Middle-class diets. Middle-class diets differ from those of the poorer classes chiefly in containing more vegetables, fruit and milk products. Non-vegetarian middle-class diets include relatively large quantities of fish, meat and eggs. The most important difference between the diets of the well-to-do and the poor throughout India is probably the greater amount of milk products included in the former.

Defects of Indian Diets in Terms of Food-constituents

Intake of total protein is usually sufficient when cereals form the bulk of the diet and calorie yield is adequate. Intake of fat, whether in the form of vegetable or animal fat, is almost invariably low. Rice diets are usually deficient in calcium and this is true to a smaller extent of diets based on other cereals (except *ragi*[1]). Insufficiency of vitamin A and carotene (pro-vitamin A), and of various factors in the vitamin B_2 complex, is characteristic of most Indian diets. Intake of vitamin C is low, owing to the relatively low intake of fruits and vegetables. Deficiency of vitamin D is of importance in certain areas and under certain conditions. Only diets based on raw machine-milled rice are seriously deficient in vitamin B_1. Beriberi is a serious public health problem only in one considerable area in north-eastern Madras in which this kind of rice forms the staple food of the population. Wheat and the various millets, as usually consumed in India, are not machine-milled and retain the greater part of the outer layers of the grain. Villagers in most rice-eating areas consume home-pounded rice. Machine-milled *parboiled* rice is a staple food in a large part of south India. This kind of rice retains vitamin B_1 after milling and has in many respects the nutritive properties of a whole cereal.

A 'well-balanced' diet recommended by the Nutrition Research Laboratories, Coonoor, contains the following amounts of non-cereal foods per adult man daily: milk, 8 oz.; pulses, 3 oz.; non-leafy vegetables, 6 oz.; green leafy vegetables, 2–4 oz.; fruit, 2 oz.; fats and oil, 2 oz. Indian diets rarely conform to this pattern.

THE ECONOMICS OF DIET

A good well-balanced diet costs more than a poor diet. Foods of high nutritive value, the 'protective' foods as they

[1] Common millet (*Eleusine coracana*)

are sometimes called, are in general more expensive than energy-yielding foods such as cereals. The cost of a 'well-balanced' diet which provides calories, protein, vitamins and other food constituents in satisfactory amounts can easily be calculated. In pre-war days the cost of such a diet was between Rs. 4 and Rs. 6 per adult per month, or between Rs. 16 and Rs. 24 for a family containing the equivalent of four adult males. The cost of an 'ill-balanced' diet, sufficient in quantity but defective in quality, was about Rs. 10 monthly for a family of the same size. Comparison of these figures with actual pre-war income-levels in India indicates the gulf between possible and desirable expenditure on food on the part of a large section of the population. At the time of writing both price- and wage-levels are abnormal, but the former have risen more than the latter.

Some interesting studies of the relation between income and diet have been made in various parts of India, mainly in industrial areas. In low-income groups the percentage of total income spent on food is high, usually between 50% and 70%, so that even a small increase in the price of food may influence consumption. Percentage expenditure on food falls as income rises. There is normally a rise in the consumption of non-cereal foods—e.g. milk, vegetables and fruit—with increasing income and a corresponding decrease in the percentage of total calories obtained from cereals. This means that, in India as in other countries, increase in income leads to an *improvement of diet in the right direction*. It follows that an increase in the material prosperity of the country—a rise in the national *per capita* income—will *per se* tend to improve standards of nutrition and with these the health of the population. Not that those who can readily afford to purchase a good diet invariably do so. Prejudice and ignorance may operate in the opposite direction. It has been observed, for example, that among ignorant and primitive groups, e.g. aboriginal tribes, an increase

in prosperity may scarcely influence the consumption of the more valuable 'protective' foods. Middle-class families may consume smaller quantities of leafy vegetables, which are a cheap and nutritious article of diet, than poor families. But the general tendency is there, indicating the close interdependence between food consumption levels and economic conditions.

THE POPULATION PROBLEM

'The land is overstocked with people.' Nitikin, a Russian merchant who travelled in India between 1470 and 1474, is said to have made this observation, the first of many in a similar strain. It has been estimated that at the death of Akbar (1605), more than a century later, the population of India was 100 million, or about one-quarter of the present figure. Nitikin's pronouncement must therefore be regarded as premature.

Much has been written about population in India and all writers are in agreement on one point—that the population is increasing with some rapidity. But as regards the future direction of population growth, and the relation of population to social, economic and public health problems, there are numerous different opinions and no final conclusions. The subject is a difficult and controversial one, but it cannot be ignored by anyone concerned with public health in India and least of all by the nutrition worker. During the last 30 years, from 1911 to 1941, the population increased from 318 to 389 millions and India now contains within her borders almost one-fifth of the human race. In comparison with most countries, India exhibits a high rate of population increase. In the last 20 years there has been a fall in the death-rate, which in the decades 1901–10 and 1911-20 was recorded at 34 per mille, while in 1939 the recorded figure was 22 per mille. Since 1920 the infantile mortality rate has fallen from 195 to 160. These changes are no doubt due to developments in certain fields of public health. The recorded birth-rate, on the other hand, has not appreciably

altered since 1921, remaining steadily at about 34 per mille. The excess of births over deaths has therefore increased and there is no prospect of immediate slackening in population growth.

The area under food crops in British India can be roughly estimated as 230 million acres (including current fallows). If the population is taken as 300 millions, about 0·86 acre of cultivated land is available *per capita*. It is obviously of the greatest importance for us to know the trend of the ratio $\frac{\text{cultivated area}}{\text{number of population}}$ from decade to decade. The population is increasing rapidly so that a stationary ratio would indicate a substantial increase in the area of land under cultivation while a decreasing ratio would not necessarily indicate that less land was under cultivation than formerly. Unfortunately it is difficult to discover from the published statistics what exactly is happening. The available evidence suggests that the area of land under cultivation is not increasing proportionately to population growth, so that the ratio is *decreasing*.

In the returns for British India, land not under cultivation was classified in 1937-8 as follows: cultivable waste other than fallow, 92 million acres; not available for cultivation (desert, etc.), 92 million acres; forest, 68 million acres. According to the Royal Commission on Agriculture (1926), 'a large proportion of cultivable land other than fallow could in no conceivable circumstances be brought under tillage'. It consists for the most part of land too poor to give economic returns to ignorant ryots without capital or scientific resources. The possibility, however, remains that more waste land could be brought under cultivation by irrigation schemes or the application of scientific methods of land reclamation and soil improvement.

More land is needed to produce a well-balanced diet than an ill-balanced diet of similar calorie value. To produce 1,000 calories in the form of milk requires from twice to four times

as much land as to produce 1,000 calories in the form of wheat or rice. Similarly, fruit, vegetables, eggs and particularly meat give a lower calorie return per unit area than cereals or tubers. American workers have calculated that 1·2 acres of land *per capita* are needed to produce what they call an 'emergency restricted diet' and 3·1 acres to produce a 'liberal diet'. Agricultural conditions in U.S.A. and India are so different that a direct comparison of these estimates with the 0·86 acre available in British India would scarcely be justified. Clearly, however, the existing relation between population and cultivated land makes it necessary that the bulk of the national diet should be composed of foods giving a high calorie return per unit of land. Any large increase in the production of foods not falling into this category, such as meat or milk, obviously presents great difficulties.

Sir John Megaw, late Director-General, Indian Medical Service, made the following statement in 1933:

'There is every reason to believe that the maximum increase which can be hoped for in the production of necessaries of life will not keep pace with the growth of the population, so that there is a prospect of steady deterioration in the state of nutrition of the people.'

If this view is accepted, efforts to improve the diet of the Indian people are futile. Not only this, but it can be urged, with a show of logic, that such efforts will help to precipitate the crisis of over-population. Public health schemes for the improvement of nutrition give special attention to certain classes in the population—infants, children and women in the child-bearing period—these being the age-groups in which the effects of malnutrition are most severe. The reduction of mortality in these groups would tend to hasten the growth of population; for example, according to the Census Commissioner, a reduction by half in maternal mortality would add six millions to the population in a decade. The same dilemma, if

dilemma it is, faces all public workers in India. Carr-Saunders, in his work *World Population*, describes the situation in India as a 'tragic picture'. 'There is little occasion', he remarks, 'to emphasize the urgent need for better public health services', but such development may tend 'merely to increase malnutrition and the danger of starvation'.

Let us see what can be said on the other side. First, there is no convincing evidence that the national diet deteriorated during the century up to the outbreak of the Japanese War (the present food situation, due to a variety of causes, including failure of imports, is another matter). The death-rate fell during this period, while increasing shortage of food would tend to raise it. Secondly, it is by no means impossible that a slow but steady revolution in agricultural methods, leading to increased yields, has been proceeding beneath the surface, enabling food supply to keep pace with, or outstrip, population growth. In certain provinces at least, the agriculturist is learning to take advantage of better-yielding varieties of crops which are the result of agricultural research; for example, the greater part of the wheat-producing area in the Punjab is now under 'improved' strains of wheat. An increase in the yield per acre of primary crops has the same effect as bringing new land under cultivation.

Thirdly, the growth of industry is a factor of importance. Highly industrialized countries can maintain good dietary standards, in spite of a dense population, by importing a large proportion of their food supply, which is paid for by the export of manufactured goods or raw materials. Between 1891 and 1931 the proportion of the population living in urban areas did not greatly increase, but in the decade 1931-41, the urban population (i.e. the inhabitants of cities with a population of 1,00,000 or more) increased by 81%. The present war has given a great impetus to industrial development. We are not concerned here with the desirability or otherwise of rapid

industrialization, which elsewhere in the world has too often been attended by grave social evils. The probability that industrialization will take place in India with increasing momentum has, however, an important bearing on the population problem.

Lastly, there is the experience of other countries in the matter of population growth. More than a century ago Malthus predicted that the rapid growth of population in England would lead to disaster, since agricultural production could not keep pace with it. England is now faced with a rapid fall in population before the end of the century, and the same is true of other Western countries. The birth-rate first declined in the prosperous classes; later the same process became evident in the lower-income groups—it spread downwards, as it were, into the population. There is evidence that in India the first stage has been reached: the well-to-do are having fewer children. We need not speculate on the causes of this commencing decline in fertility; presumably, as in the West, it is due to the use of contraceptive methods. The well-to-do classes are, it is true, only a tiny fraction of the population and the practice of family limitation amongst them can have little immediate effect on population growth. The significant fact is that the first faint beginnings of the process, which in its fully developed stages strongly influences the curve of population growth, are discernible in India.

The Malthusian thesis was that whereas population increases by geometrical progression, food production can increase only by arithmetical progression. This has been completely falsified by events. On the one hand, the growth of population in Western countries has slackened; on the other, the application of scientific methods to agriculture has enormously increased food production. With these facts in mind, the author cannot share the extreme pessimism of certain writers who have surveyed the population problem in India through Malthusian spectacles. It would, however, be folly to minimize the impor-

tance of the rapid growth of the population and the increased demand for food which it involves.

THE EFFECTS OF MALNUTRITION

India is an unhealthy country with high infant, maternal and general mortality rates and a low expectation of life. The causes of ill-health, disease and death are numerous, including contaminated water supplies, lack of sanitation, bad housing, mosquitoes and flies which carry disease, and malnutrition. It is impossible to estimate accurately what proportion of disease in India has its roots in malnutrition, but there is plenty of evidence that it is one of the most important factors underlying the dismal public health situation.

All those with experience of infant welfare work know that much sickness and mortality among infants are due to the faulty and insufficient feeding of mother and child. In any ill-fed population group, whether human or animal, the newly-born and the very young suffer most severely from the ill-effects of malnutrition. To give an example: in the beriberi area (the Northern Circars districts of Madras) a high mortality in breast-fed infants in the third and fourth months of life, due to vitamin B_1 deficiency, has been recorded; the deficient maternal diet (in this case a diet of raw milled rice) leads to lack of a necessary vitamin in breast-milk. Apart from specific vitamin deficiency, the milk of ill-fed mothers tends to be generally deficient in quantity and quality, so that it cannot meet the requirements of the growing infant.

Mortality in India remains high throughout early childhood. Half the mortality recorded in any given year occurs in children under 10 years, the corresponding figure for England being only 12%. The pre-school child, i.e. the child aged 1 to 5, perhaps suffers more severely from malnutrition than any other section of the population, and the mortality in this group is exceptionally high. When breast-feeding has ceased, children

of the poorer classes cannot be supplied with cow's milk as a substitute and are often fed on an ill-balanced diet consisting of rice or another cereal, and a few vegetables. Their development is impaired and resistance to such diseases as bronchopneumonia and dysentery—among the most important causes of death in this group—is reduced.

The female death-rate during the reproductive period (15 to 45) is higher than the male, and the excess is largely due to mortality from child-bearing. Estimates of maternal mortality in various parts of India vary from 16 to 24 per 1,000 live births, a very high rate. The anæmias of pregnancy, unquestionably associated with malnutrition, are an important cause of maternal deaths, while co-existent anæmia probably plays a part in the death-rate from puerperal sepsis, the principal recorded cause of maternal mortality.

Diet and Disease

A number of well-known vitamin and mineral deficiency diseases are found in India. These are diseases which are directly due to insufficiency of some necessary constituent in the diet and which can be prevented or cured by the addition to the diet of the missing constituent. In the Northern Circars beriberi in adults is a common disease, leading to much suffering and disability but not often to death. Beriberi in infants, as has already been pointed out, is the cause of many infant deaths in this area. Keratomalacia, due to deficiency of vitamin A, is the commonest cause of permanent blindness in south India; it is also prevalent in other parts of the country. Nutritional œdema is commonly seen, particularly among children. Osteomalacia and rickets (vitamin D deficiency) present a formidable public health problem in certain parts of northern India. One of the commonest of deficiency states is a syndrome including stomatitis, dermatitis in the genital regions and sometimes superficial keratitis, which is associated with lack of the B_2

group of vitamins, and in particular with riboflavin deficiency. Various kinds of anæmia, associated with blood-destroying diseases such as malaria and hookworm and also with malnutrition, are highly prevalent in certain areas and groups. Goitre is another nutritional disease, due to deficiency of iodine in soil and water. It is prevalent in certain Himalayan and sub-Himalayan areas and is a public-health problem of very large dimensions. Severe scurvy is uncommon, except in famine times. Further clinical research will unquestionably reveal other deficiency diseases, at present unrecognized, and clarify the association between diet and such conditions as stone in the bladder, peptic ulcer, various forms of hepatic cirrhosis, tropical ulcer, eclampsia, diabetes and various other diseases.

The diseases mentioned will not mean much to the non-medical reader. If more space were available, a description of each could be given and the reader would learn how beriberi leads to paralysis and heart failure, how in keratomalacia the cornea of the eye is destroyed, how osteomalacia sometimes leads to gross bony deformities and an extreme degree of painful crippling, and so on. In spite, however, of its medical terminology, the preceding paragraph should not fail to give the impression that food deficiency diseases are a problem of public health importance. They must be eliminated by appropriate measures.

In times of food scarcity and famine there is invariably an increase in the incidence of numerous familiar diseases which take their toll in normal times. Even in localized outbreaks of famine, in which deaths from starvation are prevented by the application of the Famine Code, a rise in the death-rate invariably occurs, particularly among children and old people. In view of what is known about the deficiencies of Indian diets, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the incidence of diseases which become more prevalent in times of food scarcity is influenced by diet in normal times. To consider in detail the relation between malnutrition and such diseases as tuberculosis,

leprosy, malaria, pneumonia and dysentery, would take too long, and indeed the subject has been insufficiently investigated. It is sufficient to say that the body's resistance to many kinds of disease, and its power of recovery after illness, are impaired by faulty and insufficient diet.

The association between diet and disease is of great importance in the sphere of preventive and curative medicine. But malnutrition leads to other evils, which, on a broad view, are perhaps more important. The examination of schoolchildren in India has revealed a high incidence of general malnutrition which has an adverse effect on health and development. In adults also malnutrition impairs general health and vitality and reduces capacity for work.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF NUTRITION

It is often said that until the basic causes of malnutrition—poverty, ignorance, population pressure and so on—are eliminated, nothing of practical value can be done. There is some truth in this view, in the sense that improvement in nutrition and improvement in the general standard of living are interdependent. But to say that all progress in the field of nutrition is at present impossible is quite unjustifiable; much can be accomplished even in the existing economic circumstances if the best use is made of available resources. Further, plans for the future must be laid. The attack on malnutrition is an essential part of the broader campaign to ameliorate conditions of life in India.

An immediate necessity is the spread of knowledge. 'Education in nutrition is not simply a matter of urging the consumer to follow particular dietary practices. It is necessary to spread knowledge of nutrition throughout the whole community so that it may influence governmental action and all who are in a position to influence the consumer in his choice of food.' The quotation is from the Report of the United Nations

Conference on Food and Agriculture. Administrators, doctors and public health workers of all grades, school-teachers, workers in food, agricultural and development departments—all these and many others must learn about nutrition and its importance and make good use of their knowledge.

All children should be taught simple facts about food and diet as part of health education. The education of girls, who will later be concerned with the preparation of food and feeding their families, is particularly important. The backwardness of education in general is an obstacle to such developments. Here again we come up against the interdependence of progress in different spheres of community life.

The United Nations Food Conference laid stress on improving the nutrition of certain groups in the population which are specially vulnerable to the ill-effects of faulty and insufficient diet. 'Vulnerable groups' include pregnant and nursing mothers, infants, pre-school and schoolchildren and adolescents, e.g. students. In some countries the 'vulnerable groups' have received careful and special attention. The development of maternity and child welfare work, with more emphasis on the nutritional side, the organization of school-feeding schemes, the improvement of diet in boarding schools and hostels—all these are measures which concern the 'vulnerable groups'. Much of value can be accomplished along such lines and all too little has already been done. Take, for example, school-feeding schemes. Here and there in India we find such schemes in operation, but they are often on a small scale and on a temporary basis, and likely to be terminated in any period of financial stringency. No public money spent will give better returns in the long run than money spent on improving the nutrition of growing children and building stronger and healthier citizens.

To develop nutrition on the public health side specialized workers in health departments are needed. In a few provinces and States such workers are employed but the practice is not

yet general. Nutrition work is an essential part of public health activity and any organizations concerned with public health which do not include nutrition work in their programmes are neglecting their manifest duty. It is to be observed that the modern public health movement is not concerned solely with the prevention of disease. It has the broader aim of creating an environment in which each individual can develop his inherited potentialities as fully as possible—the creation, in fact, of a healthy and vigorous population. In the struggle towards this objective, the improvement of nutrition is of primary importance.

NUTRITION AND AGRICULTURE

One of the basic recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Food and Agriculture concerned the relation between nutrition and agriculture. Agricultural policy must be planned to correct the deficiencies in the diet of the population. The first step, if food production statistics are available, is to estimate the average consumption of the various foods, preferably on a *per capita* basis. The rough data about food intake so obtained should be checked by family diet surveys, and the state of nutrition of the population should be investigated by medical and public health workers. These methods will show the nature of the diet and its deficiencies. Next, an *objective* to be aimed at in improving the diet must be established. A well-balanced diet, satisfactory in quantity and quality, can be drawn up in terms of foods in common use, again on a *per capita* basis. The difference between the amounts of foods needed for the well-balanced diet, and those actually available, is then calculated. Finally, the *per capita* figures must be translated into terms of gross food production, indicating the changes in food supply necessary to provide the population as a whole with a well-balanced diet.

This method of approach can be adopted in India. In spite

of the inaccuracy of food production statistics, tentative conclusions can be drawn as to the *direction* which agricultural policy should follow. Provided the supplementary non-cereal foods needed for a well-balanced diet can be produced, the existing production of cereals will cover requirements. Cereal production is, however, sufficient only on this assumption and since it is more feasible to increase the outturn of cereals than that of many other foods, agricultural policy should aim at an increased production of cereals. In the absence of other considerable changes in the national diet, an increase of the order of 15–20% may be necessary to cover calorie requirements. In the case of pulses, recorded production is not far below that necessary for a well-balanced diet; the gross production figure divided by the population does not, however, give a figure which conforms with observations made in diet surveys; further, there are considerable differences in the level of consumption in different parts of India. In rice-eating areas in which pulses are most needed to supplement the staple cereal, intake tends to be smaller than in wheat-eating areas. We can tentatively include in our agricultural programme a 15–25% increase in pulse production, with special emphasis on larger supplies in certain areas.

The total quantity of sugar produced in India is equivalent to a *per capita* intake of about 1·3 oz. daily. This is considerably less than *per capita* intake in England and the U.S.A. in peace time. Nutrition workers do not, however, favour a high consumption of sugar, which is a defective food containing only carbohydrate and no protein or vitamins. On the other hand it does, in spite of its nutritional defects, supply calories and calories are needed. Taking a balanced view, we may conclude that a further increase in sugar supplies for internal consumption of, say, 10–20% is desirable, but that in formulating agricultural policy the greater value of other foods must be borne in mind.

Existing *per capita* intake of vegetables is probably about

3 oz. daily. Here we can unhesitatingly call for a 100% increase, with special emphasis on green leafy vegetables. With regard to fruit, it is difficult to estimate existing production, but 'grow more fruit' can also be included in our programme. Intake of vegetable fat is low—of the order of 0·6 oz. *per capita*—and that of animal fat negligible in many parts of the country. A 200% increase in the production of vegetable fats and oils would be needed to raise the level of fat intake to levels often recommended by nutrition workers.

The most vital need of India, in the nutritional field, is an increased production of milk and milk products. Milk is perhaps the most valuable of all foods and even a 100% increase in supply would scarcely satisfy the nutrition expert. In spite of the formidable difficulties, development of the dairy industry must be one of the major objectives of agricultural policy.

India is by tradition and necessity not a meat-eating country and meat need not be given a prominent position in the production programme. Nevertheless, some increase in the production may be aimed at. On the other hand a large increase in the supply of fish—let us say 100% as an immediate objective—is both feasible and highly desirable. Eggs are valuable but rather wasteful food, since in the conversion of food grains to eggs via the hen the loss of calories is of the order of 93%. The large-scale development of poultry-farming in India scarcely seems a feasible proposition.

It is along such lines that the problem of adjusting agricultural production to nutritional requirements should be approached. But the formulation on paper of 5, 10 or 50 year plans for agriculture is one thing; to give practical effect to such plans is another. The development of agriculture is interlocked with financial and economic considerations, policy with regard to imports and exports, and a whole host of other questions. The nutrition worker can do no more than state what

he considers the food requirements of the population to be, and leave to others the infinitely more formidable task of devising ways and means by which these requirements can be fulfilled.

CONCLUSION

In approaching the problem of nutrition in India, facile optimism and hopeless pessimism must alike be avoided. On the one hand, it is no use thinking that an easy and immediate solution can be found to a problem which has its roots in the existing social and economic structure of the country. Only untiring effort over a long period of years in many spheres of activity will produce results. On the agricultural side, it must be remembered that there are some 50 million cultivated holdings in India and that, while the problem of increasing agricultural production is astronomic in its magnitude it has also, so to speak, to be tackled on a microscopic scale in respect of individual small farmers. On the other hand, when a task has to be performed, there is little to be gained by over-emphasizing its difficulties. India is not the only country in the world with a serious problem of nutrition. The United Nations Food Conference reported that 'taking the world as a whole, the picture is one of world-wide under-consumption, leading to malnutrition and its attendant evils'. It did not, however, adopt an attitude of defeatism. Its attitude is illustrated in the following passage from a speech made by President Roosevelt to the delegates after the meeting:

'You have examined the needs of all countries for food and other agricultural products, both as they will exist in the short-run period of recovery from the devastation of war, and as they will exist over the longer run, when our efforts can be fully devoted to expanding the production of food so that it will be adequate for health the world over. You have surveyed with courage and with realism the magnitude of these problems and have reached unanimous agreement that they can, and must—and will—be solved.'

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