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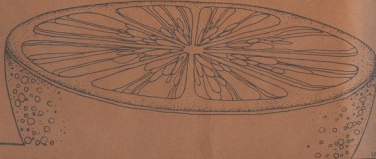
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# Manthan

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निर्मग्यवमतन्त्रिता: (श्रीमद्भागवत 8-6-23)

Churn on diligently



Dear Reader:

Namaste!

Right now the Birth Centenary of Dr. Hedgewar, Founder of the RSS, is being celebrated all over the country. In every State, RSS has undertaken a variety of programmes, including Mass Contact. And in some places Talks have been organised in celebration of the occasion.

'Manthan' is an organisation of writers and thinkers in Bangalore. It has three conveners—Dr. Upendra Shenoy, Shri Chandrashekar Bhandary and Shri H.S. Subramanya. This 'Manthan' had a programme of three talks—December 16-17-18—by the undersigned. Shri M.R. Janardhan, leading lawyer and Law Professor, and a keen student of History and Politics, presided.

The scope of the talks was very wide. Under the generic title 'India and the World', the first talk dealt with the Wakening of Europe—covering the period from the Crusades to the Napoleonic Wars. The second talk dealt with the Nineteenth century, the two World Wars and the crisis of Capitalism and communism. The third talk dealt with the Indian response to the new world situation—and the relevance of Gandhiji and Dr. Hedgewar. In this issue we carry the text of the three talks—with some Questions and Answers.

Brotherly yours,  
'M'

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## From Crusades to the French Revolution

WE meet today in celebration of the Birth Centenary of Dr. Keshav Baliram Hegdegar. Here was a great man who set up a great organisation like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and launched a great movement like Hindu Sangathan. We will not fully understand his role unless we view him in the wider, world perspective.

History, as Napoleon rightly put it, is the philosophy, or wisdom, of nations. His only anxiety on his death-bed was: "May my son study history, for it is the only true philosophy." Yesterday's politics is history today; and the politics of today will become history tomorrow. History, therefore, is crucial for the understanding of the past—and for wisely preparing to meet the future.

Today history is a neglected subject. Very few students take up history in college. The reason is simple: there is no money in it, as there is in Science, Maths or even English Literature. But a proper understanding of history is must for all those active or interested in public affairs. Ignorance of history can be disastrous in a leader. I will just give you two examples. We all know how the Khilafat Movement communalised our politics after 1919. It became "Akhil Aafat" (total catastrophe). And yet it was taken up by Gandhiji because he had little idea of the nature of Muslim rule in India. He knew Muslims only as his Khoja and Bohra clients in South Africa, Muslim communities which are half-Hindu. Likewise, Mr. Jinnah was quite innocent of history. He argued for Partition as if he was arguing another big case in a court of law. He won the case but lost the country. In bifurcating India, he also bifurcated—and trifurcated—the Indian Muslim community. As Sarojini Naidu, who knew him very well, noted at the time, here was a great lawyer who knew nothing of History, Literature or Philosophy!

The immediate context of Dr. Hegdegar's work was foreign rule and Muslim intransigence. But these factors had their own history. We cannot understand and appreciate the RSS unless we understand these factors.

Hinduism has been influential all over Asia. Christianity has been influential all over Europe. But Islam has deeply influenced much of Asia and good bit of Europe and Africa, even though this influencing was done mostly by the sword. Within 10 years of the death of Mohammed in 632, Islam had reached Sindh in India and Spain in Europe in 712. It was a human explosion, which involved much of the world in a cultural

maelstrom. From Delhi to Constantinople to Madrid, you saw not only the minaret of the mosque and the sword of Damascus, but also the 'Tandoor', the 'Bazar' the 'Caravan'. A new forced unity was imposed on this huge area. The force was unfortunate but the new unity had its uses. Men, goods and ideas moved over a vast area. Even a jungle has its law, the Jungle Law. Likewise Islam also had a rough justice, but it was justice, of a kind. Some kind of Pax Islamica prevailed.

There was a time when Islam ruled not only in Egypt, Iran and Turkey but also in India, Russia and China. In 1215, King John of England, of Magna Carta fame, sought the protection of a mere Chieftain of Morocco, in return for himself embracing Islam. And only two hundred years ago, even Napoleon toyed with the idea of embracing Islam along with his Army in Egypt. He was willing to go along with the requirement of circumcision; but the Frenchman in him was put off by the Islamic insistence on abstinence from drink. The Frenchman can give up anything but his glass of wine.

The important thing to note about Islam in India is that we faced the challenge and survived it in good enough shape. The wonder is not that Islam was able to carry fire and sword into India; the wonder, rather, is that we were able to face it as well as we did. Even after 600 years of Muslim rule, the Hindustan Peninsula is predominantly Hindu. As the great Urdu poet Hali put it, Islam, which had crossed the seven seas without any difficulty, came and drowned here in the Ganga.

The other challenge was from the West. We in India perceive the Islamic assault as much more serious than the Western assault. And there are good reasons for that. Islam came with the sword—and trade followed. The West came for trade—and the role of the sword was secondary. A second factor was the timing: Islam came in earlier, rougher times. At *that* time, Christianity was equally rough, if not more so. (Balkans, which swore by Greek Orthodox Church, found the Roman Catholic Church more intolerant than Islamic Turkey and they, therefore, preferred to go with the Turkish Empire and not with the "Christian" Austro-Hungarian Empire.) But the Christian West came to India a few centuries later, when it had been duly tamed by Renaissance and Reformation. And so the western exploitation was sophisticated, where Islamic exploitation was crude. But there is no doubt that the western exploitation has been more thorough. There was greater drain of Indian resources under the British, than by the loot of Mahmud Ghazni or Nadir Shah. And even the cultural challenge has been greater from the West than it was from Islam. It is to the genesis of this western challenge that we will now address ourselves.

The Western factor is more recent than the Islamic Factor but it is also much more important. It has dominated the world for something like three hundred years. And we will have to deal with it at length.

### Dark Ages

Until modern times, the West was the backwater of the world. Western Europe was a rough frontier area of civilization and even Rome was more an extension of the East and the hub of the Mediterranean world, than a centre of the West, that is Northern and Western Europe. The decline and fall of the Roman Empire only plunged all Europe in the Dark Ages (566-1095).

Until the seventeenth century, England and France were not a patch on India, China, Iran or Turkey. It took the Arabs thirteen attacks over a period of 80 years to occupy Sindh, the western-most province of India, in 712; and it took them another four hundred years to enter Delhi. But

## Why we consider Muslim Rule worse than British Rule

it took the Arab sweep across North Africa just one attempt to occupy Spain in the same year, 712—an occupation that ended only in 1492, more than seven hundred years later. And it was only the Pyrennes mountains and the leadership of Charlemagne, King of Franks, that is Germans—ably helped by Jewish financiers—that saved France etc. from being overrun by the Arabs after 800 A.D.

### The Crusades

Although the Church had given some hope, and a semblance of order, to Europe during the Dark Ages, the whole prospect was gloomy. The Christian religious prediction was that the world would come to an end in the year 1000 A.D. This is nothing to be wondered at. In those benighted days, people believed all kind of things. The Islamic religious belief was that sin will so overwhelm the world that, 1400 years after Mohammed, the Koran would take wings and fly away. It was this belief that prompted a coup attempt in Saudi Arabia a few years back, when some fanatics took over the Mecca mosque of Qaaba; and they could be flushed out only with much effort by foreign legionnaires. The Christian World, therefore, lived in apprehension of the approaching doom. It was only when the year 1000 had safely passed that Europe heaved a sigh of relief. It now began to stir—and show signs of a new life. In the year 1085, it launched on the Crusades—that is religious wars, call them Jihad or Dharma-Yuddha—which went on until 1291.

The ostensible object no doubt was the securing of the "true Cross", on which Jesus was believed to have been crucified. But the real object was to capture the warm rich lands of West Asia—Syria, Palestine and Lebanon. The crusaders did not get the Cross (if it ever existed); and they did not get these rich lands. But they did get something more important; they got a rich contact with a superior civilization. Europe was never the same again.

It was on the road to the Sepulchre that they learnt to refine sugar, make glass, produce silk and steel, and manufacture gun-powder. Even the crusaders' health improved because of better diet, better sanitation and better medication in Western Asia than in Western Europe.

Although Islam had started from the deserts of Arabia, it had spread far and wide to India, Persia, Egypt, Turkey, Central Asia, North Africa. In the process it had carried the arts and sciences of all these lands far and wide. The result was a rich cross-fertilization of cultures. It was this wealth of cultures that the Crusaders met with, in and around Palestine. All this experience changed the mind of Europe. They now came to know of, and to appreciate, other lands and other cultures. When Richard the Lion-Hearted, King of England, fell seriously ill during one of the Crusades, the redoubtable leader of Muslims, Saladin the Kurd, sent him his own doctor. Western scholars have pointed out that this not only showed the great magnanimity of the eastern people, it showed the superiority of eastern medicine.

Incidentally, it was the "Christian" attack from the West that roused local nationalism, and persuaded many West Asians, who had till then not embraced Islam, to now do so as a patriotic duty, for greater unity and homogeneity. In a parallel development in India, during aggressive Muslim rule, millions of tribals joined the national mainstream and became regular Hindus. According to Max Weber, the doyen of sociologists, more people during this period joined the Hindu mainstream than went out of it.

#### Renaissance

As darkness began to lift over the mind of Europe, Europeans rediscovered not only the importance of Roman laws and Roman roads but also the greatness of the Roman empire. They became the model for England, France, Spain and Holland, now spreading their wings all over the world. Even more important, a Europe awakening from the long slumber of the Dark Ages, rediscovered Greek and Latin. The thought of Aristotle and Plato, the poetry of Homer and Virgil, the examples of Socrates and Caesar completely transformed the European mind. The result was Renaissance—a cultural rebirth, with its centre in a rejuvenated

Italy. Indeed renaissance Italy was such an emancipated place that it was a common saying in hide-bound London of those days that "an Englishman-Italianate, is a devil incarnate". The interesting thing about this development was that more and more Europeans wanted to be lively devils of that kind.

#### The Reformation

All this time the Church was very much at work. It had led new Christians into the north European wilds, to cut primeval forests and till the land. The Church steeples and spires made men look to heaven—and, incidentally, observe the heavenly bodies and note their regular motions. That gave birth to astronomy. The Church bell, chiming at regular intervals, gave people a sense of time and contributed to the scientific temper. The Church collection of Tithes and other fees from people all over the Christian world gave rise to banking, even international banking. The Church very much adopted the old administrative institutions and practices of the Roman empire for the administration of its own affairs—its parishes, its lands, its finances, its diplomacy and even its Army. It thus carried the light of the Roman imperial tradition into the new countries of Europe. The English administrators in India could always draw on Roman experience in handling comparable Indian situations.

### *But for the Crusades, there would have been no Renaissance, no Reformation*

After the Crusades, there had been increasing European trade with the East through Arab lands. The main distribution point of Europe was Venice whose old gorgeous palaces still reflect the rich glory of those centuries. The Doges or Dukes of Venice were so rich that they used to dine in plates of solid gold. The trade route of this commerce lay through Constantinople, the seat of eastern Christianity. When the Turks captured that great and strategic city in 1453—now renamed Istanbul—and wanted to control this trade, it sent shock waves through Europe and Arabia and India alike. It not only ended the trading prosperity of Venice, it also hurt Arab middle-men in the Indo-European trade. But the new Europe was a very different place from what it had been during the Dark Ages. Under the leadership of the Church, it put together Central Europe as the Austro-Hungarian empire (1438-1918), to check any further Mongol or Turkish penetration of Europe. In 1492, that is within forty years of the fall of Constantinople, Spain, again with the help of the Church, had finally thrown the Arab Moors out of their last Spanish outpost in Granada. And in the same year—1492—Columbus



had set out West to find a new route to India in the east in this round, circular world. In the year 1571, the Mediterranean Christian navies defeated the powerful Turkish navy in the decisive battle of Lepanto near Greece. Not content with that, the Church sent the Portuguese all the way round Africa, to reach India and the Arabian sea, and thus open a second front against Turkey, and turn their flank. The Turks could not meet this challenge in the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea because their lands on this side of the Suez isthmus—Egypt, Arabia etc.—had no forests to yield any timber for ship-building. The Ottoman Turkish empire found itself besieged on two fronts. Its hour had passed. Before long it became the 'Sick Man of Europe'.

The new trade routes and the new lands, made for more trade and more wealth. Knowledge and wealth grew hand in hand. A brave new day had dawned for Europe. The key word of this new age was Liberty—Political, Economic, Intellectual, Spiritual. Men now sought freedom to move out, freedom to think, freedom to improve their lot. This implied a rejection of feudalism, with the farmer tied to the land for good and all relationships fixed and frozen.

Although things were growing better and brighter all the time, they could not keep pace with the expectations and imagination of the people. In this situation an explosion was inevitable. This explosion is known to the world as Reformation, that is the Reform of Christianity.

The Church stood in the way of many men in many ways. The Church expected the people to believe in a set of dogmas to which many of them could no longer give credence. They could believe neither the Holy Trinity nor the virgin birth of Jesus, and certainly not the infallibility of the Pope. And they were not prepared to obey a Church and make it all kind of payments when they did not much believe its dogmas or respect the Church hierarchy.

More. The Church was rich. The monasteries were rich. The Pope lived like a Roman emperor and the bishops and cardinals lived like princes. All their wealth could be seized—and future payments to them avoided—by de-recognising the Roman Catholic Church. It is significant that Wolsey, who advised Henry VIII to confiscate church properties, was the son of a trader, with a modern, mercantile mind. Even before the loot from the Indies, East and West, arrived, this loot of the monasteries provided the new capital of a Europe set on the capitalist path of economic development. The new trading class resented and coveted the wealth of the Church; the local princes resented the political and military overlordship of the Pope. The two combined and protested against the

old churchly arrangement and came to be known as Protestants. That was the genesis of "secularism" in the West: men wanted to free themselves from dogmas which they could no longer believe; traders did not want to share their hard-earned money with an old-fashioned anti-business Church in far-away Rome; and local princes did not fancy the back-seat driving of their states, again from a Rome which had other priorities than the welfare of a given state or its people.

### The English Revolution

Germany went Protestant, but it was too land-locked, and divided into too many states (over a hundred), to avail of the new Protestant ethic for quick economic development. But Holland and England went Protestant and carried their protestantism into politics, industry and commerce. No wonder Holland became the dominant power in the seventeenth century and Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

There were other factors also, particularly in the rise of Britain. Its island geography had spared it a foreign invasion after the eleventh century. It, therefore, did not have to spend much on the army; it could

### *The loot of the monasteries and of India led to the Industrial Revolution*

therefore make all its defence investment in the navy. The navy could not only protect and promote commerce, it could loot other ships—particularly Spanish boats carrying gold and silver from America. It could also protect British interests far and wide, when naval ratings could always double as soldiers on land.

No less important was British contact with fellow-Protestant, and next-shore neighbour, Holland. For a long time, Holland had been a province of Spain, joined to it through the eastern parts of France. The arts and sciences that Arabs brought to Spain, reached Holland and, through that country, to England. It will therefore not be wrong the say that 'Pax Islamica' had a share in the modernisation of Britain.

It was the art of crop rotation and commercial crops, learnt from Muslim-influenced Holland, that triggered the agricultural revolution in Britain. The powerful feudal lords enclosed their agricultural lands and converted them into sheep pastures—for meat and wool. The displaced peasants could go to America, or become the floating labour of London, or drift into the horrible 'Poor Homes', maintained by Church or State. That is how feudalism—binding the tiller to the soil—ended in England, full two hundred years earlier than in France or Germany. The wool

trade became the hall-mark of England. The judges began to wear woollen wigs. The Lord Chancellor of England literally sat on a wool-sack in the House of Lords, to propagate the wool cult. It was this agricultural revolution that provided the early capital that launched the East India Company in the year 1600 AD; and about the same time, Shakespeare's historical plays lionised old English kings, and roused national pride. Since India with its warm weather, had no use for England's wool—and England had nothing else to offer, England looted Spanish treasure ships with great gusto, to get hold of the only item valued in India. In the year 1771 alone, Britain gave India three million ounces of silver in payment of textiles, spices, indigo etcetera.

Vasco da Gama's first trip to India in 1499, earned sixty times as much as it had cost. On an average an East India Company ship earned 200% profit net on a trip to India. Some of the British trips earned as much as twelve hundred percent profit. No wonder when King Charles I wanted to purchase some shares of the East India Company, he was rebuffed. They had no intention of sharing their new wealth and power with the King. The traders of London had become richer—and stronger—than the King of England and all his lords. This economic situation had to be translated into political terms.

Poor King Charles I could not comprehend these new realities. The royal treasury had a grand total of £ 11 when he ascended the throne. Until then the Parliament had sanctioned the various tax revenues to the king for his life; now it insisted on an annual budget. When he demurred, he was promptly beheaded, though he had the great lords, the peasantry and even the universities of Oxford and Cambridge on his side. London was twice as rich as the rest of England, and it had invested heavily in the revolution of 1643-49. No wonder it won. And the victory of the businessman made property sacred. In the words of Macaulay, England had "the most horrible law of debt". If a debtor failed to repay the loan he was not kept in jail, since it costs money to feed him there; he was made a serf—and his labour exploited for the rest of his life.

Nor were the English fighting only for their freedom to make money and translate it into political terms; they were also interested in freedom of thought and expression. As the far-sighted blind bard Milton put it: "Give me the liberty to know, to utter and to argue freely according to conscience." This was the new England.

#### The American Revolution

The American Revolution, or the American War of Independence, was, likewise, in pursuit of Liberty, in the fullest sense of the term. All

the oppressed and depressed and, of course, the adventurous, of England, went to America—for Liberty and Opportunity.

The West European man went to India or America or Indonesia because his home country was not prosperous enough to meet the new expectations roused by the renaissance and the reformation, and by contact with the rich countries of the East. The food position in Europe was difficult. When the first Europeans landed in America, the Red Indians promptly and correctly dubbed them "Pale Faces". Englishmen who came to India would eat so much so fast that their veins would swell and they would begin to sweat profusely. The cold countries had known permanent hunger, unknown to warm climes. As Sir Cecil Rhodes, founder of Rhodesia, pointed out centuries later, he did not leave England for Africa in search of glory or empire; he went there, he said, because "I could no longer stand their eternal cold mutton".

Just because the western cold countries have dominated the world in modern times, the impression has gone round that one reason of our weakness and backwardness is our heat. This is wholly wrong. Warm weather has great advantages. Other things being the same, there are more

### *The American Revolution and the death of the Red Indian*

and better crops in warm lands. It is this greater production that leads to surplus wealth, capital formation and efflorescence of art, science and culture. Amir Khusrô discovered seven hundred years ago that the heat of India was much better than the cold of central Asia.

According to will Durant, author of the massive 'Story of Civilization', Europeans also believed in the aphrodisiac effect of spices; they went to India, he says, "for love". But love, was only a bonus. The basic reason for the European's search for spices in India and Indonesia was the need to delay the putrefaction of the cold mutton—or at least to kill its rotting odour.

In America they got all the liberty and opportunity that they could ask for. There was land and there was meat and there was no Established Church to impose any dogma or exact any dues. In addition the British government gave them all the protection they needed from Red Indians and from rival Frenchmen based on Quebec and Louisiana. However, as soon as their numbers grew, and the Red Indian and French challenge abated, American settlers decided to free themselves of whatever restraints were imposed on them by their mother country, England. And any excuse

—Stamp Duty or whatever—was good enough to do so. The turning point was the 'Boston Tea Party'. Indian tea used to be sold in London, where it was bought by American traders, who then shipped it to America. The British decided to cut out the American middlemen in London and supply Indian tea directly to America. That would have meant cheaper tea for American consumer—and a higher tea price for the East India Company. But the new arrangement short-circuited the American traders' right to make good money. They, therefore, dressed up some Boston toughs as Red Indians, who invaded the Company ships and deposited all the tea in the sea. The all-powerful American Lobby system had been born!

To this day USA is apparently ruled by the Democratic or Republican Party. But the actual governance is by the Lobbies representing different interests.

Americans were whole-heartedly supported by France in their fight for freedom. Queen Marie Antoinette greeted Jefferson as "our dear republican". And when Voltaire and Jefferson embraced each other in the French Academy of Sciences, the scholars present exclaimed with joy: "How beautiful it was to see Solon and Sophocles embrace!" In the fighting that followed, Americans defeated British troops with the massive help of French army, navy—and \$ 240 million in hard cash. The French victory in the naval battle of Chesapeake Bay was decisive for the successful conclusion of the American Revolution. Even Holland, Spain and Russia had helped the American revolutionaries. Incidentally, in the American Civil War also, the northern states were openly backed by Russia, in their bid to prevent the secession of the South. A grateful USA obliged Russia by buying the Alaska "ice box" for a handsome price of \$ 7.2 million. Earlier during the French Revolutionary Wars, when France could not protect its American holdings, USA bought from France Louisiana—comprising about a dozen U.S. states today—for \$ 115 million.

The British looked upon all these goings on as ingratitude and treason. No wonder Samuel Johnson, the doyen of English men of letters in the eighteenth century, burst out: "I am prepared to love all mankind—except the Americans." On the other hand Americans were inspired in their war of Independence by the book 'Commonsense' by another Englishman, Thomas Paine, who told Americans that it was commonsensical for them to make themselves free. It is significant that the American Revolution and Adam Smith's primer on capitalism, 'The Wealth of Nations', came in the same year, 1776. It was the triumph of liberty, Political and Economic.

This freedom from British rule was followed by tremendous progress by Americans in all respects. They started occupying the rest of continental north America and eventually reached the Pacific and over-flowed into the Philippines. But they also had the American counterpart of the British "loot of monasteries". They now occupied all the Crown lands, threw out all pro-British elements—which now moved to Canada—and took over all their lands, houses and other assets. London had to pay a compensation of £ 40 million to these expropriated emigres. At the other end, the Red Indians suddenly found the comparatively protective hand of England gone. The American settlers went back on all earlier treaties with Indians, took away most of their lands and reduced them to dust. The whole genocidal operation has been described as "a century of dishonour". Earlier they had "bought" Manhattan island—now New York—from Indians for \$ 24. The whole thing was a titanic tragedy for mankind.

Now, literally, Dollar was king in America. Boston, a northern state, imported molasses from West Indies, converted it into Rum, sold Rum to buy 'slaves', and sold the slaves to the southern states! "Liberty" had run riot.

### *Without the American Revolution, there would have been no French Revolution*

Americans loved liberty; but they loved their dollars even more. Even the American Civil War, which led to the ending of slavery, and was partly inspired by generous sentiments, was good business for many Americans in the northern states. The industrial north now prevailed over the agricultural south both politically and economically; the northern bourgeoisie had defeated the southern landed aristocracy; it was almost a continuation of the English Civil war, in which the rich traders of London had defeated the king and lords of England. The freed 'slaves' meant a financial loss of \$ 2 billion to the southern landlords. And this slave population now became cheaply available as industrial labour in the north!

Today America is a great memorial to the concept of Liberty. But the cost in terms of the genocide of Indians, the enslavement of millions of Africans—and, of course, the environmental rape of the continent, is more than anybody can calculate.

The American Revolution had made the French Revolution inevitable. The large sums of money given to American revolutionaries, strained the finances of France to breaking point. And French soldiers

who had fought shoulder to shoulder with American soldiers for the Independence of America in 1776, brought back ideas of freedom to France. If Frenchmen could fight for American Independence, why could they not fight for their own Independence, from Church and King? Indeed, why not?

### The French Revolution

Here in France the king ruled with the help of rich landlords and rich princes of the Church. New ideas were sweeping the land, but the old institutions did not adjust to them. Business was growing; foreign trade had trebled in 50 years; trading vessels had increased six times. But businessmen had no political power—and only they paid taxes. On the other hand, the rich lords, temporal and ecclesiastical, paid no taxes, and enjoyed all the power. And, adding insult to injury, they denounced the traders' taking of interest. Paris had 600 cafes, where radicals poured ridicule on the king and his titled allies. The Church was in such bad shape that Paris had more brothels than churches. That was another aspect of western "secularism"—the divorce of religion from society. The traders were joined by the poor—and even by the poor padres—whose wages had not kept even half the pace with prices. The poor in France lived in thatched huts, and many of them could afford only one pair of shoes in their whole life—at the time of their marriage.

It was an impossible situation made explosive by French wits and thinkers. Any inconvenient person could be sent to jail. Even the young Voltaire was sent to Bastille. When out, he wrote:

"I have seen the Bastille and  
a thousand other prisons filled  
with brave citizens, faithful subjects.

"I have seen the people wretched  
under a rigorous servitude.

"I have seen the soldiery perishing  
of hunger, thirst and rage...

"I have seen these evils, and I am  
not yet twenty years old."

Voltaire also found the Church so dogmatic, so intolerant, so cruel—particularly in the Calas case—that he gave the clarion call "Ecrasez l'infame." (Crush the infamy). And to the voice of Voltaire—and of Rousseau and Montesquieu and Diderot—was added that of the Englishman, Thomas Paine. His 'Rights of Man' was a clarion call to Revolution. Fox was so thrilled by the French Revolution that he attended the British Parliament, dressed in the tricolour of the Revolution. And

Wordsworth greeted it thus: "Bliss it was in that dawn to be alive, but, to be young, was very heaven". But England opposed the Revolution not only because of traditional rivalry with France, but because it would have made France too strong in Europe for British commercial interests in Antwerp and on the Rhine.

A happy and libertarian aspect of pre-revolutionary France was the fact that it was very much influenced by cultural reports from India, Iran and China. Voltaire found it ridiculous for Europeans to write "universal histories" without any reference to these great civilizations. Voltaire could see sense in worshipping the Sun, but none in Christianity. "There is one sun, there is one god; let us have one religion; then all mankind will be brethren." But he could see no sense in worshipping "Monsieur Son (Jesus) and Madame his mother (Mary)."

The French Revolution cost two million lives; but it gave a great big kick to history. It produced Napoleon, which fact alone, said Nietzsche, was its adequate "justification". Royal and feudal and Church

### *Voltaire proposed replacement of Christianity by a Sun Religion*

lands were taken over by the people. It was Terror, but a very "Profitable Terror." The new freedom and the new capital launched France on a century of unprecedented expansion and achievement. A healthy Anglo-French competition raised Europe to new heights. Incidentally, the French Revolutionary war was also made it possible for South American States to end Spanish colonialism. It is a different matter that many of them escaped Spain only to fall in the US net.

The key word of the French Revolution—as of the British and American Revolutions before it—was Liberty—Liberty to live, think and work as one liked. An irresistible force had come into play against an immovable object like the mediaeval world; and force had prevailed. The modern world had been born. The old world stood for custom, for caste, for continuity. The new world stood for class, for contract, for change. It was a wholly new ball game, the like of which the world had not seen before. And since it started in the West, the West had a great advantage playing it. It was a tremendous achievement for Europe and for the world. Europe had a century of comparative peace and incomparable prosperity—the great nineteenth century, in which both, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Hedgewar were born.

However all this was a very mixed blessing for the world. But of that anon.



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### India & The World-II

## **World Wars, Revolutions & the Crisis of Capitalism and Communism**

THE winds of change and the tides of freedom which started with the Crusades, the Renaissance and the Reformation, and which gathered strength with the British, American and French Revolutions, attained still greater heights in the hundred years 1815-1914. Pax Britannica established an empire over which the sun never set. The French empire was not far behind. Holland and Belgium also had lucrative empires. Much splintered Italy and Germany became united, free and powerful states. The Railway system produced the giant powerful states of USA and Russia. Science and technology grew as fast as industry and commerce. Men thought big—in terms of a Trans-Siberian Railway, Berlin-Baghdad Railway and Cape-to-Cairo Railway. People moved freely from country to country without so much as the need for a passport or a visa. These practices started only after World War I. The last remnants of serfdom were swept away. Catholics got the right to vote and even a Jew like Disraeli could become Prime Minister of England. It was the greatest age of Europe.

### **A Century of Peace**

Even this century of record Peace and Progress had its turbulence. The under-privileged of Europe rose in revolt in 1848; and the people's anger could be diverted only by massive migration to USA. The Crimean war of 1853-56 between Russia and England broke out over the fate of Christians of Slav race in the Turkish Empire. And the poor performance of Britishers in that encounter, encouraged some Indian princes and many Indian soldiers to rise in revolt in 1857—alas, two years too late. In 1871 there was the brief Franco-Prussian War, which sowed the seeds of World War I. At the turn of the century there was the Boer war between England and the old Dutch settlers in South Africa, over the control of that territory. Although the British won, they got a bloody nose, which did not exactly add to their reputation. In 1905 we had the Russo-Japanese War, in which the Japanese inflicted a surprise defeat on a big European power. This development gave hopes of freedom to India and several other countries in Asia and Africa. And in 1912 we had the Turkish war with its Greek, Bulgarian and Armenian Christian subjects. In 1912, the Bulgarian army was only 25 miles from Constantinople, a fact that so depressed Maulana Mohammed Ali that he even thought of suicide. And Acharya Kripalani's brother Nanak, who had converted to Islam, actually died fighting for Turkey. But all these were strictly limited contests which did not interfere with the march of science and commerce.

However, all this progress in the West was achieved through exploitation of the East and exploitation even of the local poor. All these developments had consequences for the whole world.

### Murderous Exploitation

The West had thrived on the loot of monasteries and trade with the East. But beginning with the so-called "battle" of Plassey in 1757 in which only twenty persons died, England quickly acquired physical and political control of India. As Brooks Adams points out in his 'The Law of Civilization and Decay': "It is not too much to say that the destiny of Europe hinged upon the conquest of Bengal. Possibly since the world began, no investment has ever yielded the profit reaped from the Indian plunder." One Englishman made £12,00,000 from the Nawab of Karnatak alone. And Clive who returned to London a regular "Nabob", said he was "amazed at his own moderation" in looting the country. In the four decades after Plassey, the public debt of England—which represented the private savings of its people—rose more than twenty-fold, from £74 million to £1861 million. It appeared as though wealth in Bengal—which then also included Assam, Bihar and Orissa—evaporated as clouds, which then rained gold in England. The tons of gold and silver that India had earned in trade with East India Company over a period of 150 years, now quickly flowed back to England as loot. It was the wealth of India that financed the technological and industrial revolution in England.

The conquest of India made every Englishman walk like a lord, as the great Goethe noted. But it brought rack and ruin to India. The cheekiness of Englishmen was to be seen to be believed. When John Malcolm, a lad of 12, applied for a job in the East India Company, he was asked by a Director, "My little man, what would you do if you went to meet Hyder Ali?" And the little man replied "Do? Why Sir, I would out with my sword and cut off his head."

Until 1736, the import of Indian textiles was banned in England. But as soon as Britain tightened its grip on India, it used the Indian loot to develop its own textile industry, and then used its political power to dump British textiles on India. Since our spinners and weavers continued to compete with the mechanised British textile industry, the hands of our expert artisans were literally, physically cut. The Indian society and economy were pulverised. Even under the Mughals, India was a great industrial power. But, under the British, in the words of Lord Bentinck: "The misery hardly finds a parallel in the history of commerce. The bones of the cotton-weavers are bleaching the plains of India." It was left to Marquess of Salisbury a century later to say in 1875: "As India

must be bled, the bleeding should be done judiciously". However, even forty years after Independence the bleeding, local and foreign, continues.

British power in India was used to penetrate China and to make Opium Wars on it. Even some Indian businessmen, acting as juniors to Britons, became millionaires in the opium trade.

Nor was this exploitation confined to the economy. Whole societies were turned upside down. India, they said, was all-right but Indians were all wrong. And so they sang in missionary schools that, in India, "Every prospect pleases, and man alone is vile." Nearer their home, in Ireland, the people were not only not allowed to run their own schools, practise their own religion and study their own language, Irish children were asked to sing: "I am a happy English child"! When China exploded into Boxer Revolt over opium trade and religious conversions, the Kaiser of Germany said that the Chinese must be punished so severely that, for the next "thousand years", they are not able to look straight in the white man's eyes.

### *"The bones of cotton-weavers are bleaching the plains of India" —Lord Bentinck*

Things could be tough even for the poorer people of Europe. The several Factory Reports of the nineteenth century are quite a compendium of the horrors of factory life. Factory life was so tortuous that unhappy workers smashed up machinery and came to be known as Luddites, after their leader, Charles Dickens' "David Copperfield" is a very candid account of the miserable existence of an average English child in the mid-nineteenth century. Even little girls were sent into chimneys to clear the soot—since the boys' external genitalia made it difficult for them to crawl up the chimneys on iron rods. The Industrial Revolution, which centralised the capitalist world in London, literally bathed the world from the Mississippi to the Ganga and the Yangtze, in blood.

Until 1832, England had a whole lot of rotten boroughs and pocket boroughs and only 1.6 lac voters. It was only the threat of businessmen to withdraw their gold deposits from the Bank of England, that persuaded the Lords to extend the franchise in 1832—and again in 1867. But meanwhile the industrial revolution had divided the British, in the words of Disraeli, into two Nations—the nation of the poor and the nation of the rich. It was this general polarisation of classes that led to the European revolts of 1848 and the Paris Commune of 1871—in the words of Oscar Wilde, "Those Christs that die upon the barricades". This discontent could have over-turned Europe, but for the massive migration of the

poor and the discontented to USA, where they could safely let off their steam. The discovery of gold in California particularly encouraged this trans-atlantic migration.

Now the right and liberty to make money became the sole motive force of the world. Rothschild ("Red Shield") the Jewish banking house, became the biggest arbiter of Europe. As even poet Byron observed :

"Who hold the balance of the world ?.....  
"Jew Rothschild, and his fellow-Christian Baring.

"Every loan is not a merely speculative hit,  
"But seats a nation or upsets a throne."

### Money, War and Empire

Moltke, German statesman, put it very succinctly : "Now-a-days, the Bourse (money market) has assumed such influence that it has the power to call armies into the field merely to protect its interests .... Today the question 'Is a nation strong enough to make war ?' is of less importance than that, 'is a government powerful enough to prevent war ?' And as Marshal Foch of France put it : "Who was responsible for the Boer War ? Certainly not the Queen of England, but the merchants of the City (London)". The biggest single cause of World War I was the German need to borrow money on the Paris Bourse—for its rapid industrial development—and the French refusal, in view of the humiliating defeat of France at the hands of Germany, in 1871.

The Western powers' competition for money, for markets, for raw materials, led to acute rivalry. And in this explosive situation the various submerged nationalities' urge for freedom provided the fiery trigger. The Slavs, the Croats, the Czechs and the Slovaks wanted to break out from the Austro-Hungarian Empire and become free. The Poles had neither forgotten nor forgiven the partitioning of their territories among Russia, Prussia and Austro-Hungary. They wanted to unite in freedom. And the Arabs and Christians likewise wanted to break away from the Turkish Empire and become free. It was in this situation that the shooting of the Archduke of Austria by a Croatian nationalist-terrorist, led to World War I.

But even during this bloody war, economic interests were uppermost. Germany used to get over 60% of its iron ore from the neighbouring Briey basin of France. Without this ore, it could not have prosecuted the war. It, therefore, quickly occupied Briey. But France refused to bombard Briey because it was owned by Comite des Forges, headed by

arms-maker Schneider! When Gen. Sarraill of France proposed to bomb it, he was transferred out! French Premiers Tardieu and Poincaré had been PR-men of Comite due Forges. And Albert, brother of French War Premier George Clemenceau, was Attorney-General for Schneider.

The two sides never attacked each other's HQ because that would have promptly put an end to the war, to war profits—and to their business rivalries! As Hillaire Belloc rightly noted, war would have been over in 15 months, and not lasted 51 months, if the blockade had been honestly enforced. After the war, U.K. paid 123,000,000 shillings royalty to Krupp of Germany, for Krupp fuses used by it during the war. Here was honesty among thieves. In UK, the War Minister was routinely named by the privately-owned Vickers arms industry. And when a British Premier like Campbell-Bannerman refused to be hustled by the war industry, he was promptly clubbed with "the old women of both sexes". Alfred Nobel, grand-father of the Bofors gun, said : "I am a citizen of the world. My country is where I work, and I work everywhere." Churchill was ecstatic about war. "It brings discoveries, sanitation, glory," he told Siegfried

### *World War I produced 21,000 new millionaires in the USA*

Sassoon in 1917. He could have added Money to this list but I guess he thought discretion the better part of such valourous talk. The ace arms dealer of those decades was Basil Zaharoff—even as it is Khashoggi today. This Zaharoff bought papers—and used his Trust money to appoint Marshal Foch and Marshal Haig as Professors of English at Oxford and Sorbonne, respectively, like they were so many bags of potatoes!

Of course USA was the biggest beneficiary of arms trade during World War I. USA did not have too many millionaires in 1914. But the four war years produced as many as 21,000 new American millionaires. And many companies declared dividends of two hundred percent! Nobody had bothered about US President Washington and Lincoln, both of whom had urged nationalisation of all war industries, so that nobody profited by war.

Even the conclusion of the war was mercenary. The defeated powers were burdened with reparations by the billion dollar and, as coincidence would have it, the last instalment of these penal fines was to be paid in the current year, 1988 !

The old colonial rivalries also continued, the victorious powers fighting over the distribution of German colonies and Arab lands, particularly oil-bearing lands.

World War I led to the liquidation of the defeated empires of Germany, Austro-Hungary and Turkey. But it also led to the expansion of the victorious empires of UK, France, Italy and Japan. However, this expansion was also marked by a certain internal weakening of these empires. The unimpressive fighting performance of three of these four imperial powers lowered their prestige in the colonial countries. In India the sarcastic joke at the time was: "*Qadam German ka badhta hai, Fateh Angrez ki hoti hai.*" (While the Germans are advancing, the British claim that they are winning.) Also Indian soldiers returning home after the war, carried and broadcast the ideas of freedom and struggle. That was the genesis of the Punjab discontent culminating in Martial Law and the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. Throughout the inter-war period, the national liberation movements grew all over the world, with India very much in the vanguard. The imperialist war had also marked the decline and fall of imperialism. Oswald Spengler came out with his perceptive study, "The Decline of the West".

#### Russian Revolution

World War I also had another, even bigger, consequence. The rivalries of the powers for colonies and markets, and the mounting conflict of classes, the rich and the poor, brought Marxism to the fore. Karl Marx had spoken of the coming crisis of capitalism, leading to the class struggle, and the victory of the toiling masses. The communist manifesto said that "Man is born free but is everywhere found in chains." It closed with the clarion call: "Workers of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!" When Russia collapsed midway during the war, that prostrate country was captivated by communist slogans and taken over by the starving soldiers and workers under a communist leadership. The deposition of the Czar, the confiscation of church and other large land-holdings, and the nationalisation of industries set up with local and foreign investments, scared the imperial powers into leading armed forays into Russia. But these actions also delighted the colonial peoples. The popular Indian slogan, 'Inquilab, Zindabad' is only a translation of the Communist slogan, 'Long Live the Revolution!' However, these same people did not appreciate the other part of the Russian revolution—attacks on church and utter disregard for human life, civil liberties and traditional values.

The new Russian regime signed a quick peace, made secret agreements public—including the Anglo-French commitment to hand over Turkish Constantinople to Russia—to the acute embarrassment of the western powers. It gave limited but equal rights to all minority nationalities like Turks, Mongols, Uzbeks, Kazhaks, Armenians, Azeris. They even signed friendship treaties with neighbouring countries like Iran and

Afghanistan and gave them financial aid. This enlightened self-interest still shows in Russia building a Bhilai Steel Plant in India and an Aswan Dam in Egypt. It was a chaotic but brave new experiment.

All this put the West very much on the defensive. For Communist Russia not only espoused the cause of oppressed nationalities all over the world, it sided with the poor of the rich countries also, and thus forced the pace of economic reform and labour welfare in capitalist countries. In the words of Arnold Toynbee, Marxism was "a western criticism of the west's failure to live up to her own Christian principles in the economic and social life of this professed Christian society. With this western spiritual weapon in her hands, Russia could carry her war with the West into the enemy's country on the spiritual plane." This was a serious ideological challenge.

But the whole thing soon went hay-wire. While the propaganda continued, it ceased to convert or to convince. Stalin forcibly collectivised the farms to secure an agricultural surplus for the state, with which to

### Russian Revolution : Promise, Performance and Prospect

buy industrial plant abroad and instal it in Russia. This was partly dictated by the need to strengthen Russian defence industry, but partly also by the Marxist contempt for village yokels, and the blind belief in the primacy of the machine and the superiority of big industry. The result was the starvation and liquidation of millions of reluctant peasants. From a big exporter of food-stuffs before the Revolution, Russia now has become a net importer of foodgrains. As many as 98 members out of its Central Committee of 139, were arrested and shot. In the words of Khrushchov it was mass terror against cadres. Russia is yet to recover from those tragic follies of the Thirties.

The comparative success of the Russian economy with respect to full employment, during the disastrous depression of 1929-39 in the West, sent up the stock of Russia. Lord Keynes did come up with his excellent 'General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money,' to plead that when the market declines, the state must step in with public works to provide employment and boost the economy. But fact is that the fiscally conservative industrial countries did not much follow his advice—with the partial exception of Roosevelt's New Deal. Unemployment in the West abated only with arms manufacture for World War II! All this made Communism almost fashionable, leading to the formation of United Fronts in France and elsewhere. And when Russia successfully



withstood the fierce German assault, bloody but unbowed, its stock skyrocketed.

Quick Russian rehabilitation of its war-devastated economy, its acquiring a nuclear arsenal and its putting a Sputnik in orbit, also earned it the respect of the world. But meanwhile the ground was slipping from under its feet. Lenin had defined Communism as "Soviets Plus Electricity". But the Soviets, that is Russian-style Panchayats, never got started. And, in spite of communist preference of factory workers over farm labour, according to a recent survey, 61% even of the former felt alienated and powerless in their own locality and work-place. The new communist bureaucracy became, in the memorable expression of Yugoslav thinker Djilas, the "New Class". In the words of Mao Tse-tung, "the contradiction between the Soviet people and this privileged stratum is now the principal contradiction inside the Soviet Union and it is an irreconcilable and irreversible class contradiction." The fact that Labour is better off in capitalist than in communist countries, has ruled out communism as a viable alternative. The increasing bourgeoisisation of the proletariat has knocked the bottom off communist thinking. In the words of John Strachey, one-time Marxist ideologue, in communist Russia, "The means has been terrible, but the result commonplace."

### Chinese Revolution

But Meanwhile China had also gone communist. The Japanese war had weakened Chinese government to breaking point. Inflation had reduced currency value to less than the paper on which it was printed. People were charged six different taxes for slaughtering a pig. Some provinces had collected taxes from peasants for sixty years in advance. But the four gang families of Ching, Soong, Kung and Chen had cornered almost all gold in China. The cheap conversion of Chiang Kai-shek, Generalissimo of China, to Christianity, to marry a girl of the Christianised Soong family, had only further lowered government reputation. In this situation, the defeat of Japan, and the victory of Communist Russia next-door, enabled the Communists to come up on top in China in 1949.

But the course of Communist China has been bumpy all through. It met the American challenge in Korea successfully; but it announced the "Let a hundred flowers bloom" movement, only to liquidate thousands who took Mao Tse-tung literally, and dared to speak freely. It helped Vietnam meet the American challenge successfully; but its Great Leap Forward campaign only led to the closing of universities, serious disturbance of the economy and liquidation of at least ten million and probably as many as thirty million. As a cruel joke, it appointed the editor of 'People's Daily' as sweeper—in the same office!

Indeed China casually mentions the killing of millions—in 1949-50 and again during the Great Leap—as though it had only cleaned up so many mosquitoes. A strange dichotomy rules the Chinese psyche: it can be as civil as Confucius and as unreasonable and terrible as Chenghiz Khan, whom it has canonised, to the intense disgust of Russia. It allowed a border dispute with India to provoke it into penetrating a hundred miles into Indian territory. It allowed a similar dispute with Viet Nam to carry sword and fire deep into the territory of its erstwhile ally. It fell out with Russia when the latter refused to help it with nuclear arms. It dismissed nuclear America as "paper tiger", only to be reminded by Khrushchov that it is a tiger that bites. Mao said he didn't care for a Third World War because even a nuclear holocaust will leave enough Chinese alive (evidently to rule the world). Obviously China still views itself as some kind of a centre of the world—"Chung Kuo", middle kingdom—and its leader of the day, as some kind of a son of Heaven, Tien Tzu. This might be good for its confidence and self-assurance, but the Big Brother vanity behind it cannot be good either for itself or for the world.

Today China has long ended the inflation and corruption of yesterday. But until recently its annual growth rate was only 3%—the same as

## *China oscillates between Confucius and Chenghiz Khan*

in India—though the distribution of wealth is much fairer in that country. I find it difficult to accept recent Chinese reports of 10% and more growth rate. China believes in "patriotic statistics." During my visit to China I was told by two economists in Canton that, for production purposes, they count their population as 80 crores but, for consumption purposes, they put it at 100 crores! A few years back they claimed that China grows more sweet potatoes than even England, when U.K. does not grow any sweet potatoes! Such is the quality of Chinese statistics.

### Why Marxism has Failed

Communism came to Russia—and to China—only in the wake of a disastrous war and complete collapse of authority. (And communism has come to Eastern Europe through a communist army of occupation. Kerala has voted communist but it is only a province of India, not a sovereign state.) Communism is the medicine of a critical condition; it is never the food of functioning, orderly societies. Although it holds the promise of a new social, economic and world order, the performance falls far short of expectation. On the credit side, there is comparative equality of opportunity, and there is food, education and medicare for all. There

Communists never thought in terms of developing an alternative technology, certainly not an alternative value system. And now they are increasingly going in for privatisation, market economy and economic incentives. America, rather than any Marxist dream, has become the model, even for the communist world. The Marxist dream, if it ever was there, is now dead as dodo. The tragedy is that USA can be no model for the world of tomorrow. Countries which look up to America, are mistaking its electric lights for the proverbial "star in the east". They are all in for an agonising disappointment.

#### Why America cannot be the Model

Although the whole world is looking to the USA with admiration and envy—even as it did to Babylon in its day—it is no kind of model for the world. The wealth and success of USA are not the result only of science, technology and the enterprising spirit. USA is what it is because they stole a whole rich continent from the Red Indians; they have plundered the land for quick satisfaction; and they have used their power to loot other lands, particularly South America and the oil countries. It is not a situation that can last long—certainly not one that can be replicated elsewhere. We don't have to mistake its blazing lights for the new star of hope and redemption. The American society is hollow to the core. Its coins proclaim "In God We Trust". But its one and only god is the now no-longer almighty Dollar. As President Coolidge was candid enough to say: "The business of America is business". President Wilson put it even more bluntly: "The masters of the government of the USA are the combined capitalists and manufacturers of the USA." No wonder 'Engine' Charlie, boss of General Motors, when he became Defence Secretary of Eisenhower, said: "What is good for General Motors, is good for USA".

Forests have been cut, soil eroded and impoverished, rivers and even whole harbours polluted, in a bid to make quick money. The various fertilizers are restoring only one-ninth of the nitrogen extracted from the soil. The tragedy of waste is truly appalling. In the words of Stuart Chase, it has been "the rape of a continent". And so you have the phenomena of the 'Silent Spring', the 'Dust Bowl' and now 'Acid Rain' and the 'hole in the sky', thanks to the depletion of ozone layer protecting the earth from ultra-violet rays of the sun. In the words of Edward Hyams, author of 'Soil and Civilization', the American is "a wasting disease of soils."

As many as three recent American Presidents—Johnson, Reagan and Bush, have suffered skin cancer. Such is the pollution of American life. And when Kennedy was murdered, a thoughtful American pointed out that "violence is as American as apple-pie."

The Big Business houses of America—the Du Ponts, the Morgans, the Rockefellers—big Law firms, the big Advertising and Public Relations firms and of course the big churchmen, constitute the real government of America. Moaned President Roosevelt: "Among us today a concentration of power without equal in history is growing." And President Eisenhower warned: "We must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence by the military-industrial complex." Even the Pope invests in U.S. arms industry; it is so profitable! This is America.

Even so-called "Aid" is only exploitation in a new form. In the words of H.N. Brailsford: "The old imperialism levied tribute; the new imperialism lends money at interest"—and calls it "aid". As a result almost all developing countries find themselves in a "debt trap" which could grow into a "death trap". And when these under-developed countries show some independence, U.S. business interests—including Coca Cola and Pepsi Cola—quickly go to work, through their CIA. Writes 'Fortune', a leading U.S. economic magazine: "The U.S. has had a hand in making and unmaking several governments since World War II. CIA has played the hottest role in the Cold War". It does things that U.S. senators in the know say "would chill the marrow of man to hear about."

### *The blazing lights of USA are no kind of "a Star in the East"*

Although USA is an open society, it is not a liberal society. Anybody who is not WASP—White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant—will find it very difficult to get elected as President of USA. The Press, the Radio and the TV are in the private hands of big business. The biggest charge of Bush, member of Yale's "Skull and Bones" (!) club, against Dukakis was that he was the "card-carrying member of the American Civil Liberties Union", as though it was high treason to be a liberal. And Dukakis did not have the guts to say that, well yes, he was a liberal—and not, like Bush, an illiberal. Like all other American products, U.S. Presidents are also products of advertising, that is Public Relations. No wonder with the exception of Wilson and Roosevelt for brief periods, U.S. leaders have never inspired much confidence in other countries.

Indeed, even Big Brains are at a definite discount in USA. Believe it or not but certain U.S. business firms now give prospective employees I.Q. tests in order "to eliminate people above a certain level." In an article titled 'It's Smart to be Stupid', *Collier's Magazine* writes that businessmen "shy away from those with Phi Beta Kappa Keys". Writes Reston, doyen of American columnists: "The tragedy of official Washington is that it professes belief, but does not believe. It is engaged in an ideological war,

without being able to define its ideology. It condemns the materialism of an atheistic enemy, but glorifies its own materialism."

America is changing faster than is good for its health—physical, mental and moral—says Allwyn Toffler, author of 'Future Shock'. People change jobs, houses, friends—even spouses—at a dizzying pace. Man is a bio-system, which can operate only within certain limits; he cracks up under this continuing and bewildering shock of change. There is a jungle of choices—with 8 types of petrol and 200 kinds of soap and detergent—which taxes your nervous system to breaking point. A single dog bark makes our hair stand on edge, our eyes dilate, our ears perk up, our pulse beat faster. Have we understood the impact of all the sound, the fury and the change that go on all around us, specially in a fast country like the USA? The whole thing breaks down the defences of body and mind. No wonder the film song "Stop the world—I want to get off" became a big hit in London and New York.

All through history, family has been the Great Shock Absorber of human strains. And today the American family is fast dying—even as, for them, God is already dead. This is the totality of the situation that has prompted Prof. Paul Kennedy of Yale University to write his best selling "The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers".

A society like this can impress the immature and the upstart. But it can be no kind of model for the survival of mankind and the sublimation of humanity. Five thousand year old civilisations like those of India and China cannot afford to be swept off their feet by a Shiny juvenile effort like that of USA, which had no yesterday and may have no tomorrow. Although USA is toying with the idea 'What Japan can teach the world', Japan itself knows that it has nothing much basic to teach. "With the gods dead, and materialism supreme, Japanese are adrift on an uncharted sea, without a moral compass. We need the philosophy, vision and courage of Samurai. We will soon discover that earning a trillion-dollar GNP was child's play compared with creating a value system for post-industrial Japan"—writes Nachiro Amaya, a former Vice-Minister of International Trade, Japan.

Writing recently in 'Tokyo Shimbun', he said: "A hungry man naturally wants to fill his belly first. But the satiated person who calls for more, is a glutton or piggish, or both. It is time Japanese drew up a spiritual menu.

"Values are very hard to agree on. When religion was a vibrant force in people's lives, there were clearly defined rules. Today religious creeds have lost that compelling power."

He adds, "Affluence has eroded our sense of purpose and direction. As a nation we Japanese no longer have to work hard to get ahead. We are already there. The question becomes, where do we go now, and why?"

"Japan has become an economic super power, but what our contribution to the world will be—our goals, values commitment—is still unclear."

We can find our feet and save our soul not by looking to USA or Japan but only by nourishing our roots and heeding our race experience. Apart from the sanctity of the individual, and the sanctity and security of the family, we have to nurse the local society or nation, for its

### *Prof. Paul Kennedy on "the Rise and fall of the Great Powers"*

ancestral humus, and the world society or all mankind. The new nationalism has got to be cultural, and not commercial, to take care of the local culture. All these national cultures would be a bouquet, or 'guldasta', of the flowering and fruiting of diverse societies. And the new humanism has to evolve and up-date old philosophies that will make men live in peace and in cooperation, with other men and with Nature—and strive to grow into Super Man.

While different societies will no doubt throw up prophets of this new nationalism and this new humanism, we in India have produced a Dr. Hedgewar and a Mahatma Gandhi, whose contribution in these two respective spheres deserves our deepest consideration.

### **Religion is formed by Custom..**

Our thoughts, our manners, our religion, all  
Are formed by custom, and the powerful bent  
Of early years. Born on the banks of Ganges  
Zaire had worshiped pagan deities;  
At Paris I had been a Christian; here  
I am a happy Mussulman. We know  
But what we learn; the instructing parent's hand  
Graves in our feeble those characters  
Which time retouches, and examples fix  
So deeply in the mind, that nought but God  
Can e'er efface.

—Voltaire

The measure of a man.....

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## Dr. Hedgewar and Mahatma Gandhi : The Indian Striving for Liberty with Security

SINCE our first modern war of Independence in 1857, we have produced a brilliant galaxy of patriots. There were great revolutionaries and great statesmen, great reformers and great spiritualists. But there were some who were nationalists pure and simple. They sought no name and no fame, but they spared themselves no effort and no sacrifice in the service of the country. They worked in almost quiet obscurity. A model representative of this noble breed was Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, founder of the RSS, whose centenary we celebrate this year.

### Dr. Hedgewar

People who take a superficial view of things may see him as a "communal and reactionary Hindu". But anybody who knows anything about him and his thought and work, would bow his head in reverence to his sacred memory. Here was a born patriot who was expelled from school for shouting 'Vande Mataram'. He completed his education in national—non-governmental—institutions and courted arrest in 1921 and again in 1930. During his revolutionary days he had many Muslim colleagues. He had a great friend in Maulvi Liaquat Hussain of Calcutta, who doffed the Fez cap and took up the Bhagwa Dhwaaja as the national flag of India. Later, in Nagpur, he had a valued revolutionary colleague in Shaminullah Khan. But the Muslim aggressiveness after the Khilafat movement, resulting in large-scale violence in Kohat, Malabar and elsewhere, persuaded him of the need for Hindu Sangathan for the protection and promotion of our country, our people and our culture. For he knew in his bones, what Dr. Annie Besant put in her words; "Make no mistake, without Hinduism India has no future. Hinduism is the soil into which India's roots are struck, and torn out of that, she will inevitably wither, as a tree torn from its place." But there was nothing anti-Muslim about Dr. Hedgewar's Hinduism. On one occasion when there was Hindu-Muslim tension in Nagpur, somebody suggested an RSS route-march through Muslim areas on Fridays. Dr. Hedgewar promptly rejected the proposal as provocative and negative. He said Hindu Sangathan was a positive and constructive character-building and nation-building movement, and not a negative and destructive one. As a nationalist he would have heartily welcomed a lasting solution of the Muslim problem on amicable and honourable terms. For let us not forget that Hindu-Muslim relations at people's level have not always been dark and dismal. While we cannot forget the mayhem of "Muslim" invaders and sundry tyrants, we don't have to forget that Muslim India also produced a Kabir and a Ras Khan, an Akbar and a Dara. The Mughal kings took only Gangajal; they gave



the daily Jharoka Darshan (Balcony) and they practised Tulya Daan on their birthday every year. While they celebrated Id and the Navroz (Iranian New Year's Day) they celebrated Basant and Holi, Dussehra and Divali with great eclat. This too is our history and our heritage on which we can and, indeed, must build.

In the communal circumstances, aided and abetted by imperialists, culminating in the demand for partition, Hindus may have responded to the Muslim tit with a tat of their own. In the words of Arnold Toynbee, 200-300 years earlier also, "The Hindu victims of an aggressive Iranic-Muslim militarism retorted by turning militant themselves. This was the Sikhs' and the Marathas' retort to the Mughals." But there was no question about the sheer quality of this Hindu Nationalism.

### Cultural Nationalism

A people's love of their country and their culture is basic to their life, growth and fulfilment. Even healthy economic development is possible only on the old foundations of a country's institutions and values, and not in isolation from, or in opposition to, them. Why, even Communist Russia had to invoke 'Holy Russia' and 'Mother Russia' in its life-and-death struggle against Hitler. The Japanese are so rooted in Japanese soil that they did not settle down in Korea, Manchuria and Taiwan even during their imperial hey-day. The Chinese of course look upon their country as Chung-kuo, the centre of the world. And they are all welcome to this patriotism of theirs. The very term patriotism is derived from the word 'Pater', father, meaning "back to the state of our forefathers." All men of education and culture are conservative, committed to conserving the best in their past. This is particularly true of India where the identification of culture with the country is complete. And that culture is not only ancient, it is alive, well, universal and poised for a great leap forward. William Pochhamer, German representative in India from 1924 to 1957, notes in his 'India's Road to Nationhood' that the power of Hinduism to unite its adherents has proved stronger than that of Christianity. "The Hindus' conception of God stems from their surroundings. Gods that have assumed human form or men that have been deified, like Rama and Krishna, are honoured as heroes and also as Gods. To the Hindus they are both heroes as well as Gods, and anyone who does not want to recognize Krishna as a God, has nevertheless, to acknowledge him as a mythological hero. The Hindu who is searching for the birth-place of his religion does not, like the East Asian Buddhist, have to make a pilgrimage to the Ganges, or like a Christian, have to look to a distant country outside Europe, the conquest of which appeared to his ancestors as a sacred task. The Hindu finds his holy places in his

own country. This identity of religion with the nation has given Hinduism tremendous strength, toughness and length of life. It is these things that have enabled Hinduism to resist the onslaught of foreign religions, from ancient Vedic times down to the present day, and to keep a deep religiousness alive, as well as to revive it from time to time. Culture without religion is inconceivable, at least in India."

### Natural Religion

And this religious culture is not only ancient and profound, it is unique in that, as Sanatan Dharma, Eternal Verity, it has in it, the seed of a world religious culture. It is not the jingoism of "my country, right or wrong", but of Bharat as Bharat Mata, nay, as Jagat Janani. It is, in the words of Rev. John Henley Barrows (Dudleian Lectures, Harvard, 1898) a "Natural Religion". And a Natural Religion, said Goethe, "really needs no faith", that is blind faith; "only unnatural religions do." It is this Hinduism, enriched by the insights of other cultures, in the words of Sri Aurobindo, "The Greater Hinduism", which has in it the seed, and the promise, of a new-old world religion.

### *"Culture without Religion is inconceivable, at least in India"—Pochhamer*

Max Muller, who was a missionary, and would have liked India to go Christian, nevertheless, was moved to write the book, 'What India Can Teach Us'. Here he said: "Whatever sphere of the human mind you may select for your special study, whether it be language, or religion, or mythology, or philosophy, whether it be laws or customs, primitive art or primitive science, everywhere you have to go to India, whether you like it or not, because some of the most valuable and most instructive materials in the history of man are treasured up in India and in India only." "The greatest discovery of the nineteenth century", said Max Muller is "the finding that the Sanskrit, Greek, Latin and old Norse Word for God is Father." This not only establishes their common origin and their common perception but also their common direction and destiny.

As French philosophical historian, Ameury d'Riencourt points out in his 'Soul of India': "the Hindu does not think in terms of time, but of eternity. Where other philosophies inform, Indian philosophy transforms. No other culture has understood so much man's unconscious, his dreams, his symbolism." In the words of E. M. Forster of 'Passage

to India' fame: "Hinduism comes closer than either Islam or Christianity, to expressing and comprehending the monumental confusions of life." Yoga solves the problem of the reintegration of a personality haunted by centrifugal tendencies. Hence its appeal to the best minds abroad.

Psychologist Jung wrote decades ago that the influence of Indian thought on the West should not be underestimated, and that it would continue to grow. "So far, indeed, there is little of it to be seen in Europe on the intellectual surface. These manifestations make us think of tiny, scattered islands in the ocean of mankind; in reality they are like the peaks of submarine mountain ranges of considerable size."

"Social life in the West", again writes Riencourt, "is like a peal of laughter, but underneath it is a wail. It ends in a sob. Here (in India) it is sad and gloomy on the surface, but underneath are carelessness and merriment." All good things, said philosopher Schopenhauer, could be traced to "the holy banks of the Ganges".

#### Pantheism : Wave of the Future

Another perceptive thinker, Count Hermann Keyserling, contemplated at the Ellora Caves, and jotted down in his great "Travel Diary of a Philosopher": "All indigenous religions have an absolute advantage over imported ones, because they correspond with the national character, and to this extent they represent a medium in which the best and most ideal elements can be expressed intelligently". Rites, he said, are superior to dogma. He justified the belief in the virtue of repetition of 'Om' in these words: "There is a point in repeating audibly the truth which we wish to take possession of us. It induces lasting changes in the psycho-physical equilibrium. By repetition, one ultimately influences that portion of the subconscious mind from which everything profound and enduring emanates." Kalidas had described the Himalayas as "the laughter of Shiva". And now Keyserling said: "the Himalayas are not a mountain group like any other; it seems as if the moon had burst and suddenly planted itself upon the green earth, so cosmically great, so unearthly, so out of all relation with the manifestations of this planet do they appear." He was so pulled by the Bhagwa that he said that if he stayed in these parts long enough, "I fancy I too would experience the longing to wear the yellow toga."

Lauding the pantheistic religion of India, Arnold Toynbee says: "The Judaic religions have concentrated the element of divinity in the universe into a unique, omnipotent, creator god outside the universe, and

this restriction of divinity has deprived nature—including human nature—of its sanctity. By contrast, in India and Eastern Asia, before the impact of the modern West, the whole universe and everything in it, including non-human nature and man himself, was divine and, therefore, possessed, in human eyes, a sanctity and dignity that have restrained man's impulse to indulge his greed by doing violence to non-human nature.

"The Indian and East Asian attitude is pantheism, in contrast to Judaic monotheism. In the pantheistic view, divinity is immanent in the universe and is transfused through out the universe. In the monotheistic view, divinity is withdrawn from the universe and is made external to it; that is to say, divinity is made transcendent.

"At the western end of the Old World and in the Americas, the original local cultures—the Middle American, Peruvian, Sumerian, Greco-Roman, and Egyptian, and also the Canaanite culture—that was the Israelites' culture before they became monotheists—were of the same species as the cultures of India and Eastern Asia before the modern Western impact. In all pre-Judaic cultures, everywhere, religion has been

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pantheistic, not monotheistic. The present adherents of the Judaic monotheistic religions and of the post-Christian substitutes for the Judaic religion of Christianity are, all of them, ex-pantheists. This historical fact suggests that there might be some hope of their reverting to the pantheistic attitude, now that they have become aware of the badness of the consequences of the monotheistic lack of respect for nature."

The Pantheistic Hindu also believes in one God—"Eko Brahma, dutyo naasti" and "Ekam Sad, Vipra bahuda vadanti". But this creator is not something apart and aloof from the creation. He sees intimations of the divine in every man, animal and plant, in every grain of sand and in every drop of water. This at once unites all creation as the play or Leela of the Lord, and invests the whole world with divinity. It makes for peace and goodwill at all levels and in all spheres. It rules out the exploitation of nature, and the pollution of the earth, to the lasting detriment of man himself and, indeed, of all life.

#### Sanatan Dharma

Such is the amplitude and quality of Indian or Hindu nationalism, advocated by Dr. Hegdewar and other exponents of the Indian Renais-

sance. Those who see communalism or politics in it, do little justice to this rich reality or even to themselves. As Sri Aurobindo said : "The Hindu Nation was born with Sanatan Dharma, with it, it moves, and with it, it grows." And as Swami Vivekananda put it : "I am proud to call myself a Hindu. If at present the word Hindu means anything bad, never mind; by our actions let us be ready to show that this is the highest word that any language can invent. Let them talk of India's regeneration as they like, but let me tell you that there is no regeneration for India until you be spiritual."

Indeed this Hindu thought is not only inherent in, and integral to, India, it is relevant for the whole world. It is the wave of tomorrow. As the French savant Paul Martin-Dubost in his memorable Introduction to Jean-Louis Nou's memorable book 'Hindu Temples', says : "After two thousand years, India is on the agenda. India belongs to everybody...The melody of the Indian Soul is something which never ceases to move us. India is the Soul on fire!" The "epoch of conflicts" in which, he says, we are living, "is nevertheless hastening to reach a universal consciousness in which all material and spiritual values, all the experiences of the great saints of all disciplines, all religions and all countries would be accessible to all, without distinction."

#### Gandhi Greets Hedgewar

While so-called secularists in their ignorance carry on a vacuous propaganda against Religion (O God, forgive them for they know not what they talk), it is this cultural and spiritual appeal of India to which all insightful men are responding—whether Gandhians or RSS Swayam-sevaks, Asians, Europeans or Americans. It was a great day when Gandhiji greeted Dr. Hedgewar on Jamnalal Bajaj's farm on Dec. 29, 1934 with the words : "Well, Dr. Hedgewar, I thought I was the only organiser in India; but there is another, and that is Dr. Hedgewar." Gandhiji also said : "From all points of view you are doing excellent work. It is not against national interest to organise Hindus without hating others."

Gandhiji repeatedly declared himself a "staunch Sanatani Hindu". He said : "Today our eyes are dirty, thoughts dirtier, and bodies dirtiest of all, because we are denying Hinduism." He added : "Hinduism is a relentless pursuit after truth and if today it has become moribund, inactive, irresponsible to growth, it is because we are fatigued; and as soon as that fatigue is over, Hinduism will burst forth upon the world with a brilliance perhaps unknown before."

He went so far as to say : "I do not mind if the Congress is manned by Hindus alone."

On another occasion he said : "There is in Hinduism room enough for Jesus, as there is for Mohammed, Zoroaster and Moses." And he invited Muslim Indians back to their ancestral faith : "The majority of the Muslims of India are converts to that faith from Hinduism through force of circumstances. They are still Hindu in many essential ways, and in a free, prosperous, progressive India, they would find it the most natural thing in the world to revert to their ancient faith and ways of life."

French philosophical historian, Amaury de Riencourt writes : "Like every old civilization still represented on this globe, India has been, and is increasingly, insipid of appearances, returning to its original sources." He added : "It is from the depths of that old civilization that India is most likely to draw the strength needed to adapt itself to the modern world."

He goes on : "Indian masses will only give their heartfelt allegiance to that party and ideology that appears to be a true emanation, more or less modernised no doubt, of some aspect or other of timeless Hinduism." It was "Gandhism yesterday" and it can only be "redoubtable RSS" to-

*Gandhiji to Dr. Hedgewar! 'From all points of view, you are doing excellent work'.*

morrow. Such is the essential equation between Dr. Hedgewar and Mahatma Gandhi, whatever may have been their differing perceptions about some problems of the day. All men of understanding and vision must see this inwardness of the situation and rebuild India of the dreams of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Hedgewar on the rock of our culture, with goodwill towards all and malice towards none.

While endless wars have been fought with invaders and between Hindu and Muslim princes—at times in the name of 'Deen' and 'Dharma'—at the people's level, Hindu and Muslim masses have generally lived in peace and amity. Hindu-Muslim "riots" are a phenomenon of the British period. The Wahabi movement of Saudi Arabia no doubt brought fundamentalism and fanaticism. Another factor was Walilullah's cry for all Muslim Indians to unite as Muslims, after the decline of Mughal empire, to maintain a separate identity in a sea of Hindu humanity. This no doubt roused communal feelings and consolidated communal ranks. (Earlier, the Persian, Turkish and Mughal sections kept strictly aloof as "Ashraf", superior from local Muslims, who were called 'Arzal' that is mean.)

This Muslim coming together, and the many games the British played, no doubt resulted in Partition and unhappiness. But the unities of geogra-

phy, of history, of race, of language, of culture, will no doubt prevail in the long run. Already the 'Jiye Sindh' movement aims at the break up of Pakistan and confederation with India. A few years back, the Pakistan Punjab Students Union gathered to consider what was their 'National Day'. And they came to the conclusion that it was Vaisakhi (April 13). And if you want to hear chaste Sanskritised Bengali, you switch on Dhaka, not Calcutta. These are the bases on which we have to build a unity of hearts in the Hindustan peninsula.

Dr. Hegdewar's emphasis on Hindu Sanskriti and Hindu Sangathan is an emphasis on the roots of Indian life that, basically, are common to all Indians. A sense of security is basic to all life. And India will never feel secure unless its cultural roots are assured of strength and security.

The secularists who talk of a new mechanical mingling of Hindu and Muslim, do not know what they are talking about. Hindu culture today is quite different from what it was a thousand years ago. Islam and Christianity have acted on it—and reacted to it. These influences have been internalised. They have been adapted, adopted and made an integral part of Hindu or Indian life. The Hindu culture of today is already a composite product. It is equally the treasures of all Indians, whether Hindu or Muslim. An awareness of this fact could dispel Muslim Indian apprehensions, and make them equal partners with the Hindu in securing and strengthening the roots of Indian life and culture.

While Dr. Hegdewar and Gandhiji both gave the mantra of cultural nationalism—as distinguished from a commercial or political nationalism—which is valid for all societies, Gandhiji, in addition, also gave basic guidelines for a happier humanity in the times to come.

Mahatma Gandhi! What he thought and felt, said and did, was so native to the Indian ethos that we took it as the natural thing to do. Indeed Gandhi could have been born only in India, and only India could have accepted Gandhi. For the rest of the world he was a strange and novel phenomenon. As Einstein put it, generations yet unborn will wonder that a man like him ever walked this earth.

For Gandhi, there was no difference between ends and means: the 'means' themselves are the end-result of something; and the 'ends' would be the means for something else again. All actions, whether called ends or means, are a chain, links in an unending cycle, a continuum. That being so, Satya and Ahimsa are as much 'means' as 'ends'. Love, he said, is stronger than hate; that is why man has survived and grown even through struggle and war. Man is vastly more important than the machine: to the

extent that machine reduces the labour of man, it is welcome; but when machine displaces, dehumanises and unemploys man, it must be rejected as evil. For, as experts like Arthur W. Lewis have conclusively shown, optimum economic development is quite possible with just unlimited supplies of labour. All the great ancient civilizations were built by man, and by man alone, and not by machines.

Man must have the freedom to produce wealth: but he must use this wealth in the public interest. Wealth beyond one's personal needs is a trust; if it is not held in trust for the public good, then it is so much theft, illegitimate and immoral.

Food must be taken for its nutritive value and not for its taste; we must so train our tastes that only healthy foods taste good in our mouth. As far as possible one should take nuts, fruits and vegetables, where possible uncooked. Ground-nut are the "poor man's almonds". If neem leaves are good for you, you may make a paste of them—and take them

*"Generations yet unborn will wonder that a man like Gandhi ever walked this earth"*

—Einstein

with relish, like any pudding. And smoking and drinking must be abjured, apart from other reasons, for their adverse effects on health.

Health must be maintained only through healthy food and healthy habits, and not through medication. As and when we fall ill, we should resort to nature cure, and not take drugs. There is no exercise—and no relaxation—like long brisk walks.

Man must use his hands—whether in plying the charkha or grinding the chakki—for his physical and mental health. We must earn our bread by the sweat of our brow: sweating is good for health and only bread so earned tastes sweet.

Man must rise early and retire to bed early. He must pray morning and evening. He should fast from time to time. And he may observe silence once a week or so.

Sex is natural to man; but so is Brahmacharya. Excessive sexual activity is found only among mice and men. Even in marriage, Yoga is more important than Bhoga. In 1940 Gandhiji picked on Vinoba as the first man to offer Individual Satyagraha because, he said, he was a true Brahmachari. It was a new approach to public affairs, resented by Nehru and Azad, but the country understood and appreciated it.



Education should not be bookish ; it should be based in the learning of some craft. He called it Nai Talim or 'New Education'.

Cow protection, he said, was more important than even Swaraj ; because the health and well-being of the people directly depended on the cow and its progeny. Also the cow, he said, was man's link to the mute animal world.

The poor are our God, Daridra Narayan. Therefore Harijans must be helped to come up. And the long-suppressed womanhood of India should be helped to come into their own. He said he would like to see a Harijan woman installed as the first President of India. The fact that we are yet to have a Harijan or a woman—much less a Harijan woman—in the Rashtrapati Bhavan, is a measure of our failure to realise the many dreams of the Mahatma.

The whole approach of Gandhi is natural, holistic, holy. It is wholly in tune with the living science of Nature, with the music of the spheres. It is consistent with Dharma—with the *Rtu* of the ancient Rishi and the *Tao* of China. The Western man is destroying nature and thus eroding the very basis of civilization—nay, of life itself; for nations last only as long as their top soil. Gandhiji told us to get back to the science of life and the rhythm of nature. For Nature is the greatest scientist and technician there ever was. Indeed it is the alchemist, *par excellence*, of all time.

Plants breathe without gills or lungs, digest without a stomach, move without a muscle and get excited without a nervous system. They have no tongue, but they speak love through their fragrance and flowers. The creeper on the ground moves precisely—and consciously—in the direction of a wall or a pole, which it can climb and entwine. Obviously it 'knows' and 'sees' what it is doing. Rock music makes plants lean away from it. But soft and sweet music like that of Beethoven or Ravi Shankar makes them lean towards it, by a full 35%. Good music makes a cow yield more milk. I am sure Krishna played the flute for cows no less than for Gopis. But today the West, and West-influenced societies, are at war with Nature.

The green leaf is a world of wonder; it makes starch out of thin air. Through photosynthesis, plants convert solar energy into bio-mass. But today insecticides are retarding photosynthesis; and pesticides are killing 10,000 persons and sickening 4,00,000 more, every year through chemical poisoning.

These chemicals are also destroying earth-worms, which produce the top-soil. In one year, one earth worm handles ten tons of dry earth and converts it into top-soil. Bacteria gives nitrogen and ammonia to the soil. Even good old Aristotle knew this and described earth worms as the "intestines of the soil".

Likewise, through these same chemicals we are destroying snakes, rodents and other inhabitants of the underground. All these creatures, living and moving underground, churn the earth, aerate it and so make it more fertile. Our insecticides, pesticides and chemical fertilizers are destroying this intricate cycle of life and destroying the very soil on which all life depends.

Indians have always worshipped the trees. American Indians—and even the great German Chancellor Bismarck—used to embrace trees; they had no doubt it gave them strength ! But today we are cutting trees like mad. Any healthy area should have not less than 33% tree cover; we had it only 22% when Independence came. Today it is down to 11% ! By this criminal tree-cutting—in imitation of a western life-style—we are

### *"The stability of a state depends on the stability of its ecology"—Kautilya*

causing both, drought and floods—drought because, fewer trees means less rain, and floods because when it does rain, there are no trees to slow the flow of water and give it time to sink into the soil. For this reason it also means erosion of our soil and silting of our tanks, harbours and river beds. We do not realise what Kautilya in his *Arthashastra* pointed out more than 2000 years ago, namely that "the stability of a state of society depends on the stability of the country's ecology." We have an old Chipko tradition of clinging to the trees to save them from being cut. When in 1740, the then Maharaja of Jodhpur ordered the cutting of Khejadi desert trees for burning lime for his new palace, Amrita Devi hugged the trees and would not let them be cut. The King's men killed 363 persons to get the necessary number of trees. When the Maharaja heard the report, he was horrified. From that day he forbade any tree cutting in the area, forbade also the hunting of any animals in the area, and excused the local villagers from all taxes. Today we need revive this tradition of Chipko all over the country to save our life-giving forest-cover.

Today, we take white sugar, white flour and white salt. Gandhiji had told us these are poor foods, bordering on the poisonous. For

example white flour has had its enzymes, vitamins and minerals taken away from it. So-called "enriched bread" is actually very much impoverished bread. It is so poor indeed in nutritive value that even bacteria doesn't eat it!

White sugar is gur minus molasses, that is minus vitamins and minerals. White salt can cause goitre, heart trouble and blood pressure. It is natural sea salt from which 28 valuable chemicals—including iodine—have been extracted for commercial use.

At the time of the Napoleonic wars, southern Scotland and northern England produced sturdy warriors. But by the time of the Boer War, hundred years later, these same people were found unfit for the army—thanks to the spread of white sugar, white salt and white flour. In the words of Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird, authors of 'The Secret Life of Plants':

"From a commercial point of view the roller mill had three advantages over the grinding stones. By separating the husk and germ from the flour, the miller had two products for sale instead of one. The husk and germ were sold as 'offal', or animal fodder. Removal of the germ made it possible to keep the flour in good condition for a much longer time, which increased the miller's profit. When the roller mill was introduced, it became possible to adulterate wheat with 6% of added water. For this, the germ had to be removed and sold separately, or the flour would not keep."

The Gandhian approach is based on the laws of nature, reflected in the wisdom of the ages, and now confirmed by science. It is socially integrative and nature-protective, as against the western cartesian system that is socially disintegrative and nature-destructive. Should the world follow the American way, before long there will be an irreversible degradation of nature, poisoning of air, water and soil—and of course a suicidal conflict of classes and countries, and the collapse of civilization.

What we call the "high standard of living", is only one side of the coin, whose other side is a severe strain on limited natural resources. A rich life-style makes infinitely more demands on these resources. A meat-eater, for example, needs thrice as much land to produce his diet, as a vegetarian. At the same time non-vegetarian diet destroys 160 different immunities from disease that the vegetarian enjoys. With his "high standard" of living, an American makes ten times as much demand on natural resources as an Indian.

What is even more serious, during the last three centuries, the white population which makes much higher demands on limited natural resources, has increased seven-fold, as against the coloured populations which have grown only four-fold. Any World Population Policy will have to take remedial note of both these aspects of the population problem.

The American economy of waste produces more and more goods—and makes them obsolete as soon as possible—to create ever new demand. All this is getting beyond the earth's limits of toleration. And meanwhile so much garbage is collecting that USA is bribing poor countries to accept it for dumping there! It is a \$ 56 million business conducted by 143 companies. A fleet of garbage ships is now sweeping the seas. The situation is so serious in Boston harbour, Massachusetts—where Dukakis is Governor—that it became a live issue in the recent U.S. Presidential election. Adam Hochschild writes in the New York Times (Dec. 10, 1987): "From ruins like the Parthenon and the Colosseum we know a lot about the Greeks and the Romans. To figure us out, will future archaeologists

### *A "high standard of living" means a severe burden on the Mother Earth*

have to make do with plastic webbing and plastic sandals? For we have created a culture—the first in history—where refuse lasts and the monuments disintegrate." Werner Fornos, President of the Population Institute, USA, has warned against "the environmental rapists of the industrialised world" who lose us "more than 25 billion tons of topsoil from the world's crop-lands every year". He has pointed out that 97% of the world's water is the unusable sea water, another 2% is frozen at the two poles. "We survive on the remaining 1%, yet we waste and pollute water daily". He urged "Reversing our failure as custodians of the Planet."

Instead of heeding these warnings we in India are also merrily converting our rivers into sewers. It is not enough to have a Ganga Cleaning Authority, for capitalising on a sacred sentiment, to convert it into some votes. We must take all steps necessary to keep all our rivers clean.

A rich country maintains its "high standard" not only by hard work and good technology but by a whole complex exploitative system of bases and client states, tariffs and patents, quotas and concessions, supported by clever propaganda, hefty commissions and superior arms. Man will have to learn to live in simplicity and comparative equality, among individuals

and among societies, if there is to be both, Liberty and Security, for All—in Perpetuity.

One can only hope that the Will to Live will be strong enough to persuade man to take all the steps necessary to live his life in harmony with Nature on a permanent basis.

Lewis Mumford, an outstanding American thinker, says that there are things that look dominant today but any far-sighted man can see that they are on the way out. On the other hand, he says, that certain other things are barely visible on the horizon today but any seer can see that they are destined to dominate the morrow. I have no doubt that the Cartesian Western civilization is on the way out, and a holistic civilization—call it Gandhian, or by any other name—is on the way in. I consider this inevitable because mankind has the will to live: It is going to Choose Life—and not death. And the holistic way is the only abiding way of life.

### Tilak, Nivedita, Guruji

Lokmanya Tilak said: "Preach Sanatan Dharma all over the world just as Christians are preaching Christianity in India today. For modern science is gradually vindicating our ancient wisdom and establishing its superiority. Let us recreate a Nation, consolidate an Age, and Aryanise the World. If we do not find men coming forward today, let us hope they will do so in the next generation."

Sister Nivedita, American disciple of Vivekananda, pleaded for "aggressive Hinduism" and said: "If only Hindus collectively pray daily for ten minutes, morning and evening, they will become an invincible society."

Said Shri Guruji: "The daily Shakhya of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangha is the realisation of the passionate dream of that dedicated soul."

## Some Questions Answered

At the end of each day's talk, questions were invited. Here are some of them—with the Speaker's responses. —Ed.

- Q. You have referred to Islam spreading far and wide and carrying arts and sciences from one country to several other countries. Did Islam make any contribution on its own?
- A. From the Muslim point of view, Islam in itself was a great religion which gave a higher religious satisfaction to many people. But from a secular view also, Islam united all Arabs. The unity of religion also made for a Common Market. No longer were convoys held up at all city gates, to pay tax for the local deity etc. Koran is full of trading terms.
- Q. Why did Christians in the Middle Ages believe that the world would come to an end in the year 1000 AD?
- A. Over the ages, man has always felt insecure and unsure in the face of floods, famines, earthquakes, the great oceans, the many wild animals. The long nights held many terrors for man. Man was always afraid that the whole thing might come to an end—at least so far as he was concerned. Man was also afraid that the many "sins" that many men were committing, would bring the wrath of God on mankind. As recently as 1934, Gandhiji attributed the Bihar earthquake to man's sins; and many men would believe him! That is how Christians came to believe the priestly prophecy that the world would come to an end in the year 1000 AD.
- The Prophet of Islam had prophesied that the world would become so sinful that, in the year 1400 Hijri, Koran would take wings and fly out and away. That prophesy encouraged some dissenters to stage a coup against the King of Arabia in the Mecca mosque in the early 80's, coinciding with the year 1400 of the Muslim era.
- Q. If rational men in the West think that Christianity is no good, and 'God is dead', why do they still contribute to Church funds?
- A. Because not all men and women in the West think so. And because Church donations are tax-deductible. Also, even 'rational' westerners would like to use the Church to influence other countries, including India.

- Q. Will you please clarify how the Church can help imperialism in the absence of colonialism ?
- A. The West looks upon the Church as an instrument of its influence. Other arms are the Army and foreign Business Houses. All these are different ways of influencing other countries. Dulles, US Secretary of State, used to attend World Church conclaves. They expect local Christians to be more favourably inclined towards the "Christian" West than other locals like Hindus and Muslims.

The missionary hand in North-East India is well-known. All this means trouble for our Army, expenditure for our Exchequer and a general atmosphere of defiance and insurrection.

- Q. In spite of false allegations levelled against the RSS, Sangha continues to grow. Why ?
- A. Because the allegations are false ? By and large people known that RSS is a good organisation and Sangha Swayamsevakas are good patriotic men. And so the Sangha grows.
- Q. Would you please suggest some readings on the historical ground covered in your talks ?
- A. Certainly. But life is short and art is long. I would, however, recommend to you, first and foremost, the Will Durant volumes, 'Story of Civilization'. Then there is Arnold Toynbee and Daisaku Ikeda's 'Dialogue', "Choose Life". It is a great book.

I would also commend to you Herman Keyserling's 'Travel Diary of a Philosopher' (2 Vols.), Ameury de Riencourt's 'The Soul of India', Wilhelm Von Pochhammer's 'India's Road to Nationhood'. And, last but important 'The Secret Life of Plants' by Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird. The list can be endless. But I need not burden you with any more.

Thank you, thank you very much, for bearing with me for three long talks on a serious subject like 'India and the World'.

WITH

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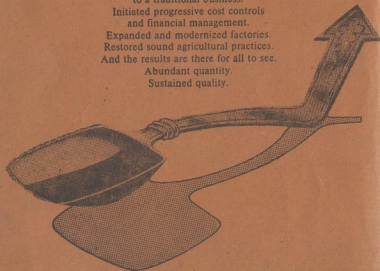
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# Manthan

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**A Long Chat**

**with**

**Some Bright**

**Young Men of**

**Aligarh Muslim**

**University**

**Journal of Deendayal Research Institute**

are no private fortunes, and crime rate is low. But on the debit side particularly in Russia, there are shortages, alcoholism, inefficiency, corruption, nepotism, loss of civil liberties and economic and general stagnation.

The causes of this situation in the Communist world are both, national and ideological. For example, China has been imperial for so long that imperialism has become part of its national character. And so it not only insists on occupying Tibet against the wishes of Tibetans, it views Tibet as the "palm" of the hand which can claim the "five fingers" of Sikkim, Bhutan, Arunachal, Burma and Ladakh! It has a similar attitude to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia—and to inner and outer Mongolia.

Likewise Russia was ruled by Tartar Khans for so long, that the Tartar concept of all land—and all authority—belonging to the Khan, has become part not only of Czarist but also of Russian communist thinking. Stalin and, before him, Catherine, Peter the Great and Ivan the Terrible have all been cast in the mould of the terrible Tartar Khans.

It is on the plant of this totalitarian nationalism that Marxism has been grafted. While the humanist elements of Marx have been eclipsed by the Tartar elements of authoritarianism, the totalitarian elements of traditional Russia have only been reinforced by the Marxist concept of "dictatorship of the proletariat". So, in the place of the promised "withering away of the State" we have an over-centralised super-state, with the all-powerful bureaucracy become the over-privileged 'New Class.'

The reason for this miscarriage of communism lies in Marxism itself. Marx caught the nineteenth century contagion of the Cartesian reductionist philosophy which places man apart from, and above, Nature. Such a philosophy is inevitably nature-destroying and society-disintegrating. Also this dry as dust philosophy has no element of compassion. Tulsi put it very amply but simply when he said: "Daya Dharma Ka Mool Hai" (compassion is the essence of religion). But there is no milk of human kindness either in communism or in capitalism.

Also Marx did not realise that without a concept of transcendence and immanence, represented by God, man would become utterly materialist. With no transcendent power to bow to, man would bow to the next superior man for favours. This alone can explain the flattery and servility rampant in Russia.

The problem with Marxism is that it is not really an independent ideology; it is only a reaction—and a riposte—to capitalism. Even while

it violently disagrees with capitalism on "free enterprise" and "market economy", it accepts the capitalist assumptions of the sovereignty of economics and the primacy of the machine. As Engels candidly admitted later in his life: "Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that the younger people lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it." In the words of Toynbee, Marxism is only a "western heresy"—even as protestantism protested against Roman Catholicism, but remained "Christian" all-right. Russian Communism, therefore, is as obsessed with industrialism and consumerism—and, therefore, plagued by pollution—as American capitalism. What you have, therefore, is not a fundamental choice but only the lesser—or greater?—of two evils. The old dream has become a new nightmare.

Communist China has no doubt learnt from the Russian experiment. It did not make the mistake of neglecting the farmer and idolising the factory worker. The Chinese culture also has had a certain softening influence on Marxism. But it would be simplistic to see another Gandhi in

### *Communism has the fatal flaw of lack of compassion, 'Daya'*

Mao. Both were rooted in their respective land, people and culture; both valued manual labour. But there the comparison about ends. Gandhism has a strong idealistic content, with absolute insistence on Truth and Non-violence. Mao, on the other hand, is a nation-builder in a hurry: he has no time for any absolutes (indeed the Chinese language has no words for abstractions like 'Truth' and 'Non-Violence'); he would like to remould society and rebuild economy without too much regard for human life. He is very much like the ancient Chinese king, Shih Huang-ti who built the Great Wall but who also burnt all the books, and made scholars toil on the Great Wall. Gandhi had a timeless message for the world; Mao had a message only for the China of his day. Already even his China has passed Mao by. It idolises his stuffed "mummy" but, for the rest, it has no use for Mao-ism.

Today Communism is a part-corrective on capitalism—in respect of social justice; but it is no alternative to capitalism. Already both Russia and China are gravitating to the American model of consumerism—complete with its destruction of Nature and disintegration of society. In the words of Sakharov, Russia's top scientist-intellectual: "The development of modern society in both the Soviet Union and the United States, is now following the same course of increasing complexity of structure and of industrial management, giving rise, in both countries, to managerial groups that are similar in social character."