

RENAISSANCE OF INDIAN CULTURE

By ANANDA GOOMARASWAMY

OUR problem is not so much one of re-birth of an Indian culture as it is one of preserving what remains of it. This culture is valid for the not so much because it is Indian as because it is culture. At the same time its special forms are adapted to the specifically Indian nature and inheritance and they are appropriate to us in the same way that national costume is appropriate to those who have the right to wear it. We put a sorry figure in our foreign or hybrid clothes, and only invite the ridicule of foreign musicians by playing the harmonium.

The younger generation of youngsters that comes to America to study and that will largely shape the course of India's social and educational policies in the immediate future is, for the most part, as ignorant of India's traditions and cultural values as any European might be and sometimes even more so; and just because of this lack of background cannot grasp the American and European problems that confront it. Freedom is the opportunity to act in accordance with one's own nature. But our leaders are already de-natured, quite as much as Lord Macaulay could have wished them to be "a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect." Because they have yet to "discover" India they have not realised that the modern world is no longer an integrated culture but "an organised barbarism and a political pandemonium." They have no more moral courage "to be themselves" without which they can be of little use to themselves or anyone else than had their predecessors on whom a so-called Western education had been more forcibly imposed in missionary colleges or Government-controlled Universities. It will take many a long year yet for Indians to recover their spontaneity. For the present most of our "educated" men are just as much as Americans, dominated by current catchwords of "Equality", "Democracy", "Progress", "Literacy" and so forth. In the past and still to-day Indians have earned and deserved much of the contempt of Europeans whom they have flattered so sincerely by imitation of all their habits and ways of thinking. We too are on our way to become a nation of Sudras, at the same time industrious and ignorant. Notwithstanding that all the precepts of philosophy refer to life we have learnt from the modern world to despise the lover of wisdom and to leap before we look.

On the other side of the Indian picture are great figures and such Indian models as Mahatma Gandhi and Bharat Kumarappa. Both are advocates of forms of human association unfavourable to war and both are significant as much for the rest of the world as for India in this age of violence. Unlike the Utopists of the modern West neither of these men suppose that the life of the world can be cured by planning or economic means alone without a change of heart. Both seeking to restore the forms of social organisation wherein human values shall predominate over those of "success" evaluated only in terms of money. Particularly, Kumarappa has mastered work "Capitalism, Socialism or Villagism?" is a reasoned argument for decentralisation, local self-sufficiency, small-scale manufacture and restoration of a direct personal relation between producers and consumers of the necessities of life; and that involves the whole of our culture, since it is the natural and proper function of the arts to provide for all the needs of the whole man, as a physical and metaphysical person, at one and the same time.

Again, throughout the ages, India has been a land of profound religious convictions and of equally generous religious tolerance. Here at least it is nowhere else it is still possible for men to think of their own faith as the friend and ally of all others in a common cause. It has been said that in the West religion is fast becoming an archaic and impossible refuge. But in India it still

provides for both the hearts and minds of men, and gives them an inalienable dignity; and because of this, the natural connection of religion with sociology and politics has never been broken. There is no such opposition of sacred to profane as is taken for granted in the West; in our experience culture and religion have been indivisible; and that in our inheritance, is what we can least of all afford to abandon.

Indian women at the present day and so far as they have not yet been "brought up to date", are our best conservators of Indian culture. And let us not forget that in a country like India any judgment of standards of culture in terms of statistics of literacy would be ridiculous; literacy in the modern world of magazines and newspapers, is no guarantee of culture whatever; and it is far better not to know how to read than not to know what to read. In the meantime also there is an immediate and desperate need for the establishment of cultural and not merely economic and political contacts with the rest of the world. No doubt the West is very largely to be blamed for its own cultural isolation which amounts to a very real provincialism; but blame is also ours, for our students and other representatives abroad are often engineers or physicists or politicians than men of culture—where they ought to have been both at once, able to contribute something more than their fees to those from whom they come to learn the newest techniques. When the culture that we know and propose to restore was alive, learned men of foreign countries came from far away to study in India. The measure of our culture is not that of our ability to learn new tricks but that of what we have to give.

INDIA AND BRITAIN

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.)

LONDON, Aug. 15. Mr. Godfrey Nicholson, M.P. (Conservative), who visited India in 1934-35 and again last year as a member of the Parliamentary Delegation in a message to India on the Independence Day says:—

As Conservative member of Parliament and as the Vice-President of the Conservative India Committee, it gives me the greatest pleasure to be asked to send fraternal greetings to the people of India on this great and historic occasion. Indian affairs are not matters of Party controversy in Great Britain and I know I am telling the literal truth when I say without exception every man and woman in this country prays that happiness and prosperity may be the lot of India in future. We pray too that links that have so closely knit together the peoples of our two countries in the past may not only remain as strong but will become still stronger and closer as the years pass, now that they are exclusively bonds of affection and common interest; now that no element of compulsion or domination remains.

I am convinced from my own knowledge of India and my own country that although we are divided by many thousands of miles of land and sea, and although there are profound differences of race and creed, there is yet in common between us a similar approach to the great problems of life and politics. In India and in Great Britain, I find the same kindness of heart, the same respect for simple and homely virtues that form the basis of all human happiness and progress and the same belief in the freedom and rights and value of the individual. Providence has decreed that for many generations in the past, our fortunes should be closely linked together. It is my deep conviction that we have a common destiny and that the peoples of India and Great Britain will continue to march together hand in hand to face the heavy problems that confront mankind. It is with this faith in my heart that I send a message of sincerest congratulations and affection to India to-day.

Unknown Warriors of Freedom

By KHABA SUBBA RAO

ON this, India's Day of Independence, it is meet and proper that we recollect with gratitude the contribution to the present state of the countless unknown warriors that laid down their lives in the battle for freedom. This has been unlike any other battle. Struggles for the collective political liberty of a people, have to be fought on the physical plane, since as national consciousness increases, the ruling power is left with nothing else except its over-awing physical resources, for maintaining itself in possession. It may be that the atom bomb, with its potentiality of wholesale death to the exclusion of a maimed or surviving population to rule over, influenced British imperialists more than any physical inconvenience caused to them by the Indian challenge of freedom, to realise that superiority in inflicting destruction had passed on to other hands, and with their brilliant talent for improvisation, to switch on to other methods of preserving their influence and pre-eminence. But the fighters for freedom in India could have foreseen neither the atom bomb nor the swift change that has taken place since its advent, in the British treatment of India. Their fight was not made easy by any calculations of advance or delay, proximate victory or defeat. The forces were so unevenly matched, that by no process of sane calculation could the weaker side ever hope for mastery in any trial of physical strength over the other. Judged by ordinary standards, there was an element of insanity engaged in India's freedom fight. India's unarmed and disarmed people to contend for their freedom with the organised might of what had been till the other day, the mightiest empire on earth.

In national affairs, what is adjudged madness by the commonsense standards of the work-a-day world, is the core of faith, self-dependent and impervious to outside terror, that is at the bottom of the self-immolation of heroes for great causes, is responsible for the miracles of history and is spoken of as capable of moving mountains. Of all the mad people engaged in India's freedom fight, its unknown warriors were the maddest—and the most heroic. They were prompted by hopes of gaining nothing in return for what they gave—and they gave all that men could give for a cause. Perhaps they felt warmed by the glow of a common adventure shared with the greatest and most renowned of the nation's leaders, men like Gandhi and Nehru. Intuitively they must have felt impelled by a sense of personal participation in the work and fortunes of their country and they were sustained in their standards of judgment on human values by no thought of income, position or power or other form of personal benefit and no vanity for self-advertisement.

These unknown warriors of freedom did not think of defeat or of their own lives and safety. They were aware of war of hope for the future. They had confidence in that future and were excited and interested about it. They died that the world they knew and had lived in may be made better for those who survived and came after. What have we, the living, to say to these dead—whom we owe so much attainment of the present freedom? Something more is due to them than spasmodic exhibitions of emotion exhausting itself in getting exhibited. It is being unfaithful to the grand purpose of the unknown warriors of freedom who laid with their lives the foundations of the State inherited by India's present leaders on Independence Day, to seek, as some of the vulgar profane of patriotism have been seeking to do in our midst, to split those foundations by opposing class against class and developing cleavage perpetually—for if the cleavage is forced into deep roots, there will be no remedy left except a dictatorship of force and loss of freedom for all. "If you wish to preserve a free democracy," wrote Sayers, "you must base it not on classes and categories, for this will lead you to the totalitarian State, where no one may act or think except as the member of a category.... but upon the individual Tom, Dick and Harry—upon you and me." A timely warning this, fit for the conscience of every true votary of freedom, to serve as stimulus for the soul's discipline on Independence Day.

OUTLOOK FOR NEW DOMINIONS

Mutual Tolerance Necessary

By T. R. VENKATARAMA SASTRI

AUGUST 15 starts a new epoch in our Country's history. It is the Independence Day which we shall celebrate every year as the Day of our Liberation. But every one's mind, every one's literally, has a lingering thought of regret. In different ways we echo it to silence that regret.

You tell yourself that the regret is vain, that great men, be it Mr. Jinnah or Gandhiji or the other high-placed Congress leaders, are your fate and what they have agreed to becomes binding on you willingly. The great scripture of your land keeps on whispering: "Despicable is faint-heartedness. Shake it off and gird up to the task now facing you." But even while you reflect thus persists the regret that generations of ardent patriots laboured for Liberation of One Undivided India and—is all this to end thus in defeat and a divided India. But is for ever true that it is no use recalling to mind past incidents and saying to yourself: Had our great leaders done this and this and this and not done that and that, we should not have been in this predicament to-day. The unification of India and its ultimate unity and ideas still pursuing us. However pessimistic one feels about the achievement of this unity, one must work all one can with intelligence and discrimination and with steady strenuous effort.

NATIONALISM AND RELIGION

Tolerance and mutual goodwill and collaboration in the many common tasks both internal and external will be needed. In the matter of succour to Indonesia both have acted in agreement. In the matter of South Africa, I doubt not that they will act together. If the declarations now made in regard to the unity of minorities in India and Pakistan are carried out faithfully, it will be a great step to the future that we envisage. Apart from the oft-repeated statement that the test of a well-governed State is in the treatment given to the minorities, we have here two divisions of a country with the minority groups of one being the majority community in the other. It is one of the errors noticed in the politics of the "middle east" that nationalism is not ethnic but religious and the same error is repeated in the Indian Nationalism. People of diverse creeds and castes who before the political awakening in the country co-operated in the execution of their many common tasks in villages and towns for their common benefit are being exhorted to-day to treat each other as adversaries. Fortunately the co-operation has not wholly disappeared because the unity of minorities in India and life demand is not overruled by the slogans that the political teach the people. Fortunately even the political do not always follow their own slogans in life.

Here is Mr. Ghazanfarali Khan saying that a State according to the ideals of Islam will be established in Pakistan. "I wished to put him the question, 'In what respects does your Pakistan State differ from a modern State?' He said: 'From a state it is in explicit terms without any mutual reservation.' Before I could put that question down on paper came the declaration of our Mahasabha friends that the Indian State should be a Hindu State. Both may be taken to mean by a Hindu State and Muslim State and in what respects they would differ from a modern State, and what it would mean to the Hindus at any rate were not thinking of going back on the established equal laws and the system of administration now in vogue. Neither the one declaration nor the other can make for peace or promote the union of the two parts ever again. While I am sure that in India the cry is futile and will never prevail, I am not so sure of Pakistan. It is after this charge definitely made that Pakistan intends to set up a medieval government that this declaration is made by so important a personage of Pakistan as Mr. Ghazanfarali Khan.

Many times have I myself and many others said that India cannot be divided without harm to the divided parts and I am not going again to refer to the many aspects that demand a Federation of all parts of India so as to reconcile the States' autonomy with the need for a central agency to co-ordinate their activities for their common benefit. U.S.A., Canada, and Australia to mention a few only, all these bigger than India, set us an example. One has only to examine their constitutions to see how much it has been considered necessary to entrust to the Federal Agency for the benefit of the component States. New States are desirous of joining them. That marks off our unwisdom and short-sightedness from the far-sighted wisdom of those lands.

STATES' ATTITUDE

As if this division has not done enough to injure our lasting interests, we have States struggling to all they can to inflict further harm on the country in pursuit of their short-sighted desire to retain uncontrolled authority in their own hands over their own State affairs.

I should suggest to the State authorities that it would be wise to set up Popular Governments with one reservation that if the Ruler thought that a grave mistake is being committed he should be entitled to withhold assent and refer the matter back for reconsideration and if the legislature persists, the Ruler can dissolve and convoke a new legislature for a final decision of the question. Such a step will assure the people that the Ruler is not out for autocratic rule and people will be more readily heed his advice and accept his guidance. It may never become necessary to use the power.

Such a step will give an opportunity for the good people in the community to come forward and take the helm of affairs. Resistance and the agitation that follow upon it must in many cases bring up only the disorderly elements in society and place them in power when the authorities have finally to yield to popular clamour.

If our Rulers are prepared to take wise steps in internal administration they will find no difficulty in assenting to the invitation to join the Indian Union. Fear always precipitates what it apprehends. If the Ruler sheds the fear that he will lose power and influence he may be able to retain both. Autocracy's day is coming to an end. There is no need to apprehend trouble from the Centre. They have seen the need to drop their threats and assume more conciliatory attitude. Where there is trouble they will be of help in the case of Rampur now shows. That is the element of paramountcy that is still required by the Rulers. With that naturally goes the duty to see that the aid is not invoked in aid of autocratic suppression of the people.

"The more we advance in true knowledge the better we shall understand that we need not be at war with those whose religion we may not follow,"—Mahatma Gandhi

FREEDOM HAS ITS RESPONSIBILITIES

By ALLADI KRISHNASWAMI AIYAR

IF the 15th August 1947 is the date when India passes from foreign tutelage to independence, it has also to be realised that freedom carries with it its own responsibilities to the Government concerned and the people. No longer will it be possible for the statesmen and administrators engaged in the governance of this country to plead foreign rule and the shackles imposed by it as a reason for the poverty and distress in the country. The consequences flowing from inflation, the food situation, in the country and in the world at large, the fall in the industrial output due to various causes, the clash between capital and labour, the difficulty experienced in the import of capital goods and the dollar exchange, have all raised problems of great and increasing complexity which will tax the entire resources of the new Government. At the same time, the average citizen will have to realise that it will not be possible for the National Government to bring in a new heaven and earth overnight. Every citizen must feel it as his bounden duty to help the new administration with well-instructed and informed criticism as it is the duty of the Government to seek enlightenment from every quarter.

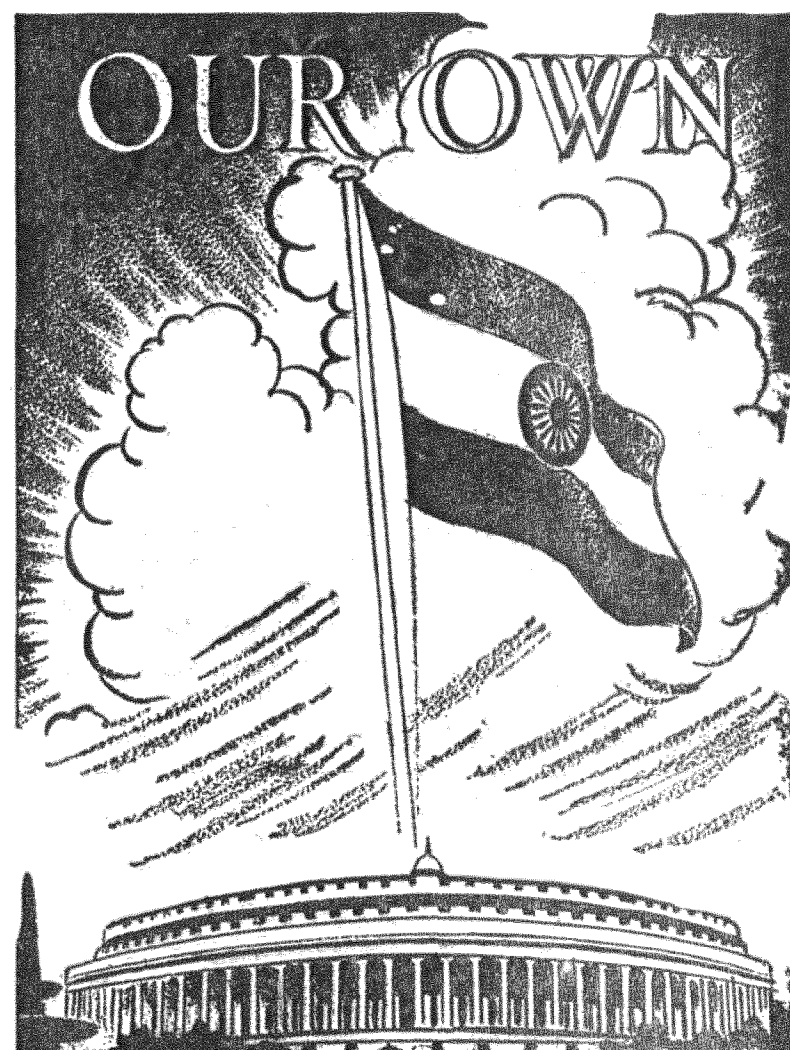
The next few years will be eventful years in the history of our country. Some of the older generation might not be able to realise the magnitude of the changes that are coming on and there may be a tendency to still think in terms of the past and of a by-gone age. The lawyer, the judge, the Government servant, the commercial man and the average citizen will have to tune themselves to new conditions and learn to think and speak in a different language and terms. Questions which assumed considerable importance under a foreign administration would naturally lose their importance in the new dispensation. The police force, the civil service and the military arms of Government which the people were prone to regard with distrust and suspicion as instruments of foreign rule, will have to turn themselves into efficient instruments of national service and the citizen must be trained to regard them as such.

The medium of knowledge and communication of ideas may undergo a radical change in the course of the next generation. The popular Governments will have to think in big terms and shed narrow prejudices. While every impetus will have to be given to indigenous culture the country will have to realise that it cannot afford to neglect the new currents of world thought or the advance of scientific knowledge if India is to keep pace with the rest of the world and deserve a place of honour and distinction in the comity of nations. The best intellects in the country irrespective of caste, creed or class will have to be harnessed to the service of the nation and of the State. May this great country of ours gain fresh vitality and strength with the ushering in of freedom.

Dr. SHARIR'S MESSAGE

Dr. Sharir, the Indonesian leader, has sent the following special message to THE HINDU on the occasion of the Independence Day:

"In these moments of great need Indonesia has found in India a real friend. We never been so close to each other at heart before in history."



Today India comes into her inheritance.

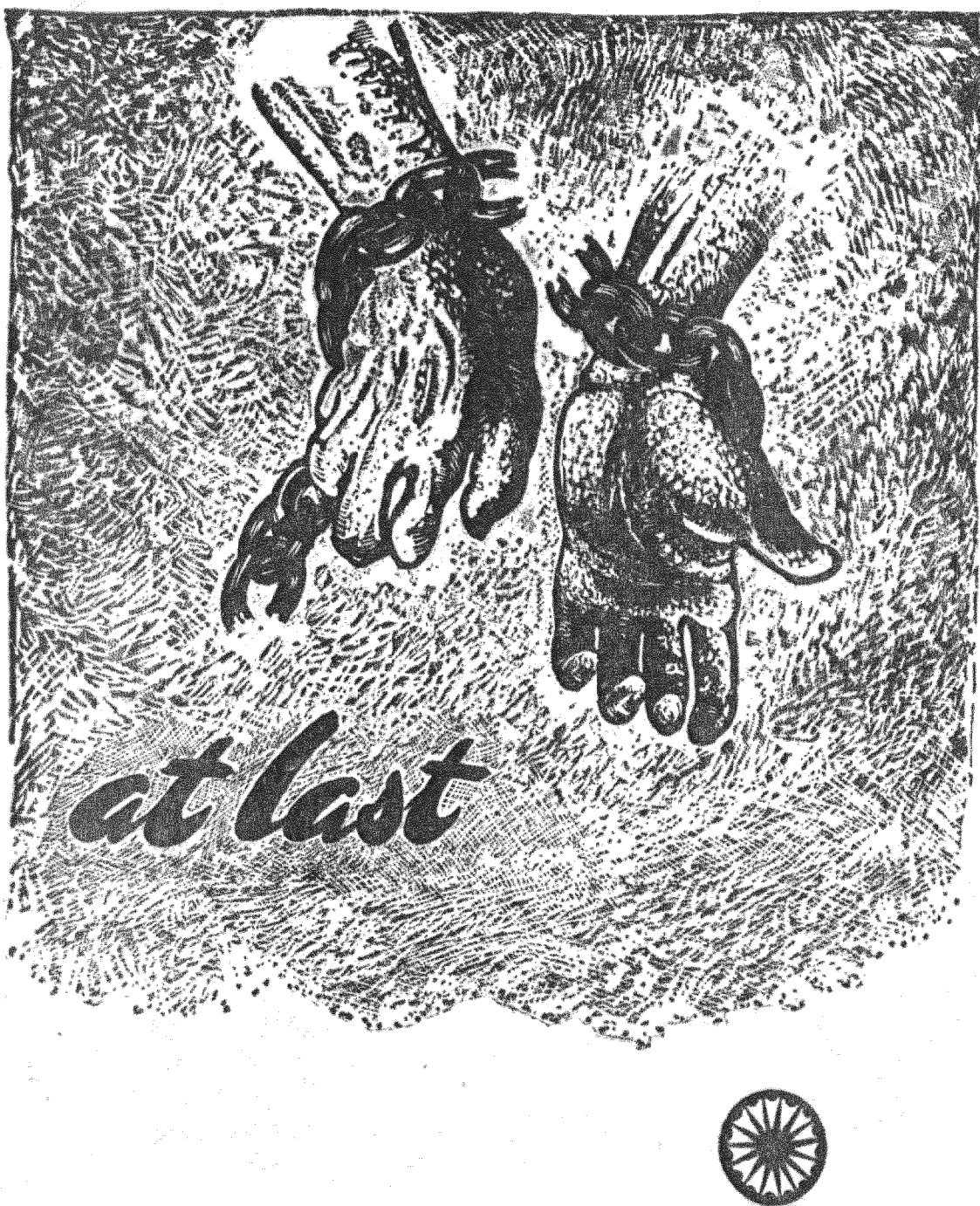
The 15th of August marks the achievement of independence by one of the great nations of the world.

How the history of this land shall be written, how the history books of the future speak of us, is the concern of every patriot celebrating today his country's freedom.

It is, however, especially the responsibility of large industrial and commercial organizations, upon which depend so much India's future prosperity and prestige.

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15th August '47

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