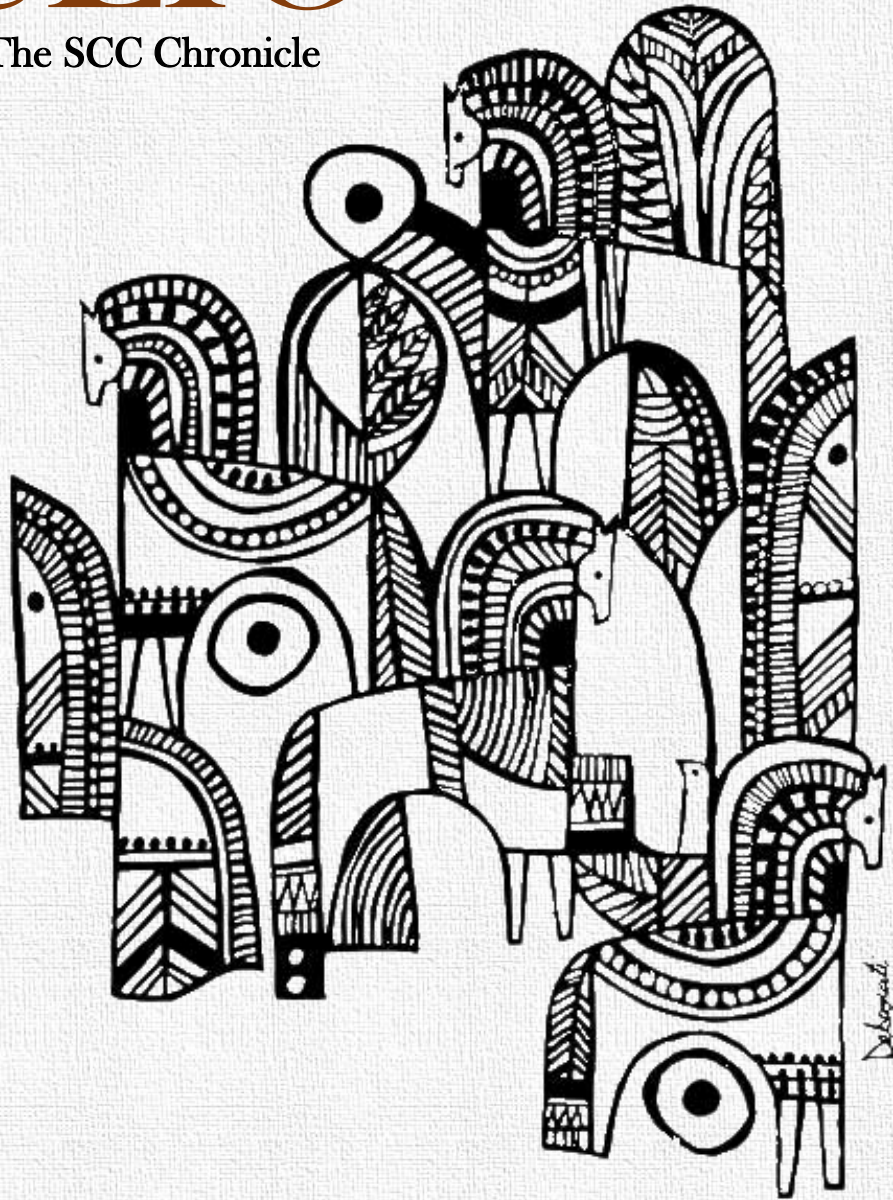


CLIO

The SCC Chronicle



Scottish Church College
E-Magazine of Historical Society
Department of History

CLIO

The SCC Chronicle



Estd.: 1830

Published by
Scottish Church College
Historical Society
Department of History
1 & 3, Urquhart Square, Kolkata - 700006

Editor-in-Chief

Dipto Gangopadhyay

Editorial Board

Surangana Dutta Neil Bhattacharya Rupjit Bannerjee
Kriti Sen Abhisambuddha Mukherjee
Debarati Pan

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Arunodoy Halder Abhisambuddha Mukherjee
Ambareen Farid Dipto Gangopadhyay

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24th November, 2023

MESSAGE FOR 'CLIO: The SCC Chronicle'

It is indeed a privilege to write a message in the first e-magazine 'Clio: The SCC Chronicle' being launched by the Historical Society of the College.

It is heartening to know that this magazine has been rejuvenated after many years with its contemporary look (e-magazine). I am sure the dedicated efforts and important achievements of both the Society and the Department of History will continue to enrich this publication and future ones through their valuable contribution towards preserving the historical moments in the geological scale.

I congratulate students, faculty and non-teaching staff who have been actively involved in the publication of 'Clio: The SCC Chronicle' and wish it a very successful launch.

With warm regards,

Dr. Madhumanjari Mandal

Principal



24.11.2023

From the Vice Principal's Desk

The Historical Society of Scottish Churches College (renamed Scottish Church College in 1929), born in 1915 under the guidance of Prof. Kalidas Nag, one of the greats of the college in the twentieth century, tried to create a dialogue on political, social and cultural issues in the context of historical studies and to place some signposts along the path. The contemporary numbers of the *Scottish Churches College Magazine* give us an idea of the relevance and importance of the Society's achievements. I feel happy and proud to see the high pitch of energy and enthusiasm among our students in launching an e-magazine, *Clio: the SCC Chronicle*, under the Historical Society that was recently revived by them. A digital magazine is essentially interactive and calls upon the attention of online readers in such a way as to strike up a conversation with them. A perfect blend of digital technology and original content can make an online magazine a popular and effective platform for readers of varied interests and orientation. Thus, in a digital age, creativity can express itself through appealing ways to the academic world. Nothing could be better than the fact that our history students did think big to revive an academic society more than a century after its inception and also bring out an online magazine of their own. This is in keeping with the recent trends throughout the globe in the backdrop of a 2-year-old Covid-19 pandemic. Let there be more experiments in a quest for the avant-garde. I strongly believe this magazine will create an independent space outside the purview of print capitalism.

Supratim Das

Dr. Supratim Das
President, the Historical Society
&
Vice-Principal,
Scottish Church College

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email scottish.cal@gmail.com

IQAC Coordinator

Ph. 033 2350 3862, Ext
email: iqac@scottishchurch.ac.in

It is heartwarming to know that the Historical Society of the department of history is launching "*Clio: The Scottish Church College Chronicle*". The department over years have conducted various initiatives which are noteworthy towards enriching the students in their way of experiential learning and better appreciation of the subject. This magazine will surely act as one of such platforms for the students to exchange and share their views on various aspects of historical importance. I would appreciate the initiatives of the faculty members towards motivating the students.

My best wishes on the launch of the magazine.

Samrat Bhattacharjee
Samrat Bhattacharjee

IQAC Coordinator

Dated: 24.11.2023



It is with great pleasure that I congratulate my dear students for the successful launch of the first issue of the E-magazine *Clio: The SCC Chronicle* of the Historical Society and the Department of History. Ever since the Historical Society was revived in 2022, we have been thinking of having a publication to act as a platform for our students to showcase their research ideas, thoughts and other co-curricular talents. Thus, the idea of the E-magazine was born with much enthusiasm from among the students. It is indeed a proud moment to finally see the idea taking a concrete shape.

I hope the exercise of conceptualising and then putting together the e-Magazine was a great learning process for all the Editorial Board. I thank them for their dedication and hard work in making all of this possible. I also thank all the contributors for their active participation.

I wish that this venture continues on a successful journey through the coming years and become an integral part of the Society as well as the Department.

Shrimoyee Guha Thakurta

Dr. Shrimoyee Guha Thakurta
Vice President, Historical Society
&
Head, Department of History
Scottish Church College
Date: 25.11.2023

EDITORIAL

It is a matter of great pleasure for me to present Scottish Church College's Historical Society's own magazine; *Clio: The SCC Chronicle*. This Inaugural issue contains six sections broadly, which may alter or expand in future. Essays by the President of the Historical Society and our Alumni along with those of students from The Department of History have been included in this issue. An Interview of Krishna Bose, which was taken by our Alumnus back in 2017 also got successfully included in this Issue, although for the sake of space and precision we presented it in an abridged form. Two sections, Reminiscences and Tributes has been written by the members of our editorial board. The General Secretary's report, prepared by the current chairholder Mainak Bhattacharya, is an important highlight of the magazine, taking in account of all the events our Society has witnessed since it's revival in 2021. The concluding sections on travel and photography complement each other beautifully.

As per the decision, every year an issue of *Clio* would be released centering on the birth date of a figure whose contributions has immensely influenced the study of History. For the inaugural issue, we decided to center it around Nirad C. Chaudhuri's birthday on 23rd November, an essay by our Society's President, Dr. Supratim Das, on Nirad C Chaudhuri's college days has proved to be a precious addition for the magazine in this respect.

The cover and the calligraphic work inside the magazine have all been drawn by Debarati Pan. The Editor-in-Chief has received exemplary amount of help in the making of the magazine's layout from Abhisambuddha Mukherjee, Arunodoy Halder and Ambareen Farid. Essential suggestions regarding the technical aspects in the magazine has been given by our society's Vice-president Dr. Shrimoyee Guha Thakurta, we're grateful to her.

I wish for the success of our magazine, hoping it serves as a platform where students can express their brilliance and creativity in the upcoming years.

Dipto Gangopadhyay
Editor-in-Chief
Historical Society

Report of General Secretary

Greetings to all the readers of the first issue of *Clio*, the History Department's Magazine. I feel grateful to be part of the Department at a time when the pinnacle of its achievements is making a comeback, which aims to showcase the diverse and fascinating research that our faculty and students are conducting in the field of History. In this issue, essays, photographs and other contributions cover a wide spectrum of topics. The Magazine in subsequent issues would also contain glimpses of events such as seminars, conferences, workshops, etc. that our department plays an active role in. It is hoped that the annual publication becomes a steppingstone for interested students towards developing their academic rigour and an outlet for expressing their creativity.

As part of the address, it is my duty to provide a glimpse of the varied roles Society has taken up in ensuring that the Department remains active in the extracurricular sphere.

- On the 4th of April, 2022, the Society made its much-awaited return with announcements being made for the post-holders in the Executive Board and the Standing Committee under the guidance of the faculty in presence of the entire Department.
- On the 21st of April, 2022, the Students' Seminar was organised by the Society with a very impressive turnout, as 27 papers were presented by 34 students on a wide spectrum of topics falling within the greater ambit of the discipline.
- On the 28th of April, 2022, the Society was officially reinstated in the presence of many esteemed dignitaries of the College. The wall-magazine was inaugurated by our Principal, Dr. Madhmanjari Mandal, our Vice-Principal and Society President Dr. Supratim Das, IQAC Coordinator, Dr. Samrat Bhattacharjee, Senatus Secretary, Dr. Bidisa Sinha and Vice-President of the Society and Head of the Department, Dr. Shrimoyee Guha Thakurta with its original name, '*Oitihāsiki*' (Historical).
- The same day, a documentary on the Liberation War was screened in the college seminar hall, brought to life by student members of the Society (Sudishna Chhyal, Shubham Raha, Arnab Saha, Amartya Saha, Aritra Bhattacharjee, Debanjali Mitra, and Saptarsha Seal).
- On the 26th of April, 2023, the 2022-23 edition of the wall-magazine was inaugurated by our Principal along with our esteemed faculty members. The edition focused on the celebration of 75 years of Indian independence through the lens of satire and cartoon.
- The same day, the Annual Students' Seminar on the theme 'History: Facts, Myth or Truth?' was held in the College Seminar Hall. As many as 75 students (Semesters II, IV and VI) of the Department were in attendance, with 18 papers being presented. This was followed by a captivating Q&A session. Certificates were awarded to all the presenters.

Gibbon, one of the greatest historians to ever exist, says: "History is indeed little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind." While this may sound pessimistic, it duly reinforces the importance of the discipline as what it should primarily be for every human being - a teacher, a guiding light which helps us to strive for a better, brighter future.

Mainak Bhattacharya
General Secretary,
Historical Society.

NEW DELHI, Feb. 26.—During the 25th February the remnants of the enemy party which had raided the avi Road were finally driven from the main crest of the aya Ridge, says to-day's Allied war communique issued from the Headquarters, South-East Asia Command.

The Naakyedauk Pass remained opened and traffic was unimpeded throughout the day. By evening all our casualties had been evacuated from that area. Our columns advancing from the north against the area of the main enemy resistance a little further east gained some ground yesterday. Fighting in this sector is still severe.



positions captured and enemy our troops on the south of the 24th February were several times during the night all these assaults were repulsed, the enemy suffering some casualties.

Further to the south, on the main crest of the ridge, the enemy continued to attack in the area north of the town of the Battidang Monongdaw. All these attempts to make gains were thrown back.

Kalapawan Valley to the east of Naakyedauk Pass our tanks were used against the Japanese attempt to withdraw to the south. A company of the enemy, who succeeded in reaching a village a few miles further south, suffered casualties at the hands of our troops engaged in mopping up operations.

In the north Kaladan Valley West our troops entered Kyaukaw on the 24th February after crossing the river in the face of opposition.

In the north-west of the town of the Battidang Monongdaw, our troops, who were engaged in an attack, show some signs of resistance generally.

In the Chin Hills the enemy is building up their main force in the area of the town of the Battidang Monongdaw, where our offensive operations are being conducted with artillery and mortar support.

In the Atwin Yomas the enemy is showing activity and is endeavouring to close in on some of our positions.

A recently captured Japanese plane is being examined by our troops.

(Continued on Page 2)



GERMANS? LONDON, Feb. 26.—Russian forces are speeding up their drive on the great German base of Pskov, from which one of General Rokossovsky's columns is now less than 25 miles away. The Germans are powerless to do more than slow down the Soviet armoured columns backed by fast moving artillery units.

Four Russian armies are now linked up in a vast formation to liberate White Russia and clear the approaches to the Baltic states and Northern and Southern Finland. The German army is now being driven up the assault on Finland.

NEW DELHI, Feb. 26.—The Government's super-annuated personnel are to be reduced to 40 on another cut in the Muslim League Party of the Government.

A division on the Ministry of the measure deemed necessary resulted in a vote for the President, casting the vote for the motion was rejected.

When the Guillotine was applied at 5 P.M. and the first demand on the Railway Board was taken up by Mr. Gajipani asked the Transport Minister whether Government still intend to increase the passenger fares by 10 per cent. He wanted a reply on it would depend on the attitude of the Opposition parties to the demand.

Sir Edward Benthall: I do not know what you are alluding to, an appeal upon to give an answer. (Several voices from the Opposition: We will give the answer.)

Sir Vankarbhawan made a reference to the Transport Member to give a straight reply.

Mr. Lalchand Navral: Takes on in both hands.

Sir Edward Benthall repeated that he was not in a position to give an answer.

When the first demand on the Railway Board was put to the Member started the slogan: "Rokossovsky, throw it overboard."



ESS PLEDGE SEDITIOUS?

Govt's Reply To Questions In Assembly

Ranajit Guha

Feb. 26.—A number of questions were asked in the Assembly about the Pledge first made in 1930, but it had been repeated at various times. It did not mean that Government regarded the Pledge as seditious.

Government advised that the Pledge was made in 1937, and again in 1937, and the occasion for the Pledge was the obtaining of independence.

Government had informed the House in 1937 that it was intended to revive the Pledge in its original form.

The Home Member added that Independence Day celebrations had been prevented only on the grounds that the Pledge contained seditious language or that they were calculated to assist the operations of an unlawful association.

Mr. Maitra asked how Government intended to revive the official version of the Pledge.

Government replied that they would have their own version of the Pledge.

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Dwijendra Narayan Jha

(1940-2021)

ARMISTICE OFFERS

LONDON, Feb. 26.—The Hungarian News Agency states that at 7 o'clock on Friday night, there was a strong earthquake shock accompanied by underground tremblings in Bucharest.—(Reuters)

PREPARATION FOR EVACUATION OF BUDAPEST

LONDON, Feb. 26.—The Budapest... (Continued on Page 6)

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1940.

(1) The question of the Armistice... (2) The question of the Armistice... (3) The question of the Armistice...

The question of the Armistice... changes in Finnish Gov...

Reports that the Russians invited a Finnish military and political delegation to proceed to Moscow as soon as possible were received in usually well-informed quarters in Stockholm tonight, according to "Reuter's" Stockholm Correspondent.

The reports add that the delegation will be presented with armistice and moderate peace terms. The request for the delegation is said to have been made to Dr. Juho Paasikivi before he left Stockholm for Helsinki two days ago and is now believed to be under consideration by the Finnish Government.

Roughly the Russo-Finnish armistice terms are said to be: (1) The Finnish troops are to be evacuated to the line from Hornsund to the Gulf of Bothnia. Within this framework must be discussed by the Finnish delegation in Moscow. According to an usually reliable diplomatic source, Dr. Paasikivi contacted Russian representatives here twice. Whether the contact was direct or through an official or unofficial go-between is not known but it is generally assumed that it was indirect.

NOT CONFIRMED

Reuter's diplomatic correspondent writes: If the version of Russia's armistice terms to Finland published in the "Dagens Nyheter" of Stockholm is approximately accurate, it would cause little surprise if Dr. Juho Paasikivi were soon heard of as having arrived in Moscow for their signature. The return to the 1940 frontier and the choice given to dispose of German divisions in Finland with or without Russian aid would be the minimum the Finns could expect the Soviet Government to require.

In official British quarters it is... (Continued on Page 2)

STRONG 'QUAKE SHOCK IN BUCHAREST

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the Navy might have been... (2) The question of the Armistice... (3) The question of the Armistice...

The question of the Armistice... changes in Finnish Gov...

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In official British quarters it is... (Continued on Page 2)

Brajadul Chattopadhyay

(1939-2022)



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Mr. Lalchand Navral: Takes on in both hands.

Sir Edward Benthall repeated that he was not in a position to give an answer.

When the first demand on the Railway Board was put to the Member started the slogan: "Rokossovsky, throw it overboard."

The voting resulted in a tie 43 on either side. Among those abstained were Mr. Jagan Mohan, Mr. N. M. Joshi and Mr. P. V. Srinivasan, who were surrounded by members trying to persuade them to go to one or the other side.

The three firmly resisted all offers. The Chair following the principle of maintaining the status quo announced by a mistake that he gave his vote to the 'Noes'. This was corrected by the members by the Opposition but the Gent later corrected himself and his vote was with the 'Yees' and demand was carried.

The other demands were all without a division.

MR. MEHTA'S CUT MOTION

MR. MEHTA'S MOTION regarding the Railway Board was put to the Member started the slogan: "Rokossovsky, throw it overboard." (Continued on Page 6)

Breakfast! With a view. These days do not know how to have a breakfast. With a little frugality are allayed. It's for every girl or boy. tel you I am crazy over

Valley-View

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**SUBALTERN
STUDIES I**

*Writings on South Asian
History and Society*

Edited by
RANAJIT GUHA

Economy & Society
in
Early
India
Issues and
Paradigms

D.N. JHA

BRAJADULAL CHATTOPADHYAYA

REPRESENTING

*The
Other?*

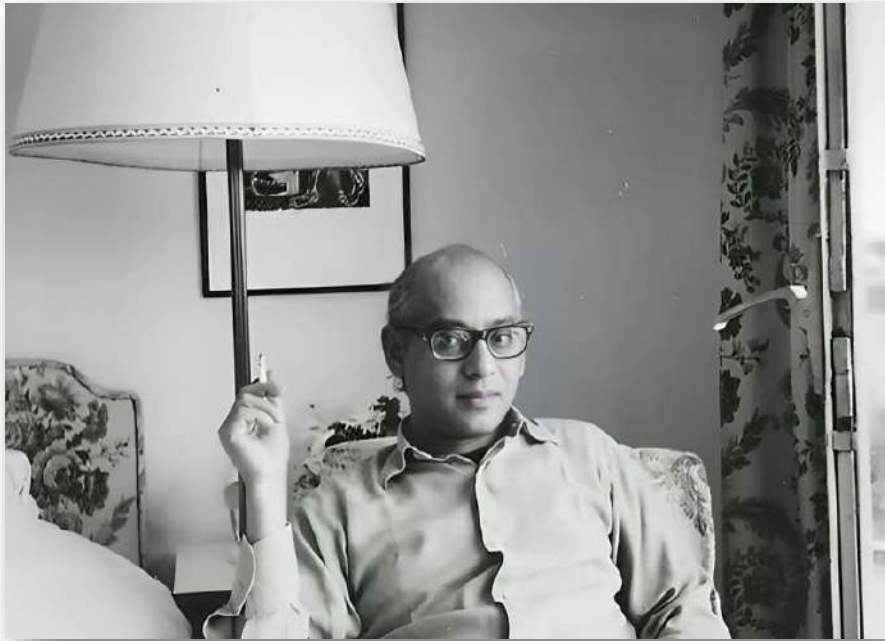
SANSKRIT SOURCES AND THE MUSLIMS

EIGHTH **TO** FOURTEENTH
CENTURY



সত্যের গুহ

The Birth of a *Talukdar* who turned *Subaltern*



Neil Bhattacharjee

Department of History, Semester V

Ranajit Guha was a prominent Indian historian who pioneered the Subaltern Studies group, a new approach to the study of post-colonial and post-imperial societies from the perspective of the marginalized and oppressed classes. He was also a prolific writer and editor of several books and articles on various aspects of Indian history, culture, and politics. Guha was born on May 23, 1923, in Siddhakati, a village in the Backergunge district of Bengal Presidency, which is now part of Bangladesh. He belonged to a wealthy family of landowners who had migrated from West Bengal. He received his early education at the Mitra Institution in

Calcutta, where he developed an interest in literature and history. He graduated from Presidency College, Calcutta, in 1942, and completed his master's degree in history from Calcutta University in 1948. He was influenced by the works of Susobhan Sarkar, a renowned Indian historian who challenged the colonial and nationalist interpretations of Indian history.

Guha was also involved in political activism since his student days. He joined the Communist Party of India (CPI) in 1940 and became a leader of its student wing. He participated in the anti-fascist and anti-colonial movements during the Second World War. He also represented the CPI in the World Federation of Democratic Youth, based in London. He returned to India in 1953 but left the party in 1956 after the Soviet invasion of Hungary, which he strongly opposed. He then started his teaching career at various colleges and universities in Calcutta but faced political persecution and suspension from his services due to his radical views.

Having left India for the United Kingdom in 1959, where he pursued his doctoral studies at the University of Manchester. His thesis was on the *Permanent Settlement of Bengal*, a colonial land revenue system that had far-reaching consequences for the agrarian society and economy of Bengal. He published his thesis as a book titled *A Rule of Property for Bengal: An Essay on the Idea of Permanent Settlement* in 1963. This book was one of the first critiques of the colonial historiography of India and challenged the assumptions and arguments of both British and Indian historians.

Guha continued his academic career as a reader in history at the University of Sussex from 1962 to 1981. During this period, he wrote several articles on various topics related to Indian history, such as peasant insurgency, tribal rebellion, colonial discourse, nationalism, and subalternity. He also developed contacts with other scholars who shared his interests and perspectives, such as Eric Hobsbawm, E.P. Thompson, Edward Said (and his students) Gayatri Spivak, Partha Chatterjee, Dipesh Chakrabarty, and others.

In 1981, Guha moved to Australia as a professor of history at the Australian National University. He retired from there in 1988, and settled in Vienna, Austria. In 1982, he founded the Subaltern Studies group, along with six other Indian historians: Shahid Amin, David Arnold, Partha Chatterjee, David Hardiman, Gyanendra Pandey, and Gyan Prakash. The group aimed to write a new history of India from the perspective

of the subalterns, or those who were excluded or oppressed by the dominant classes and structures of power. The group published a series of edited volumes titled *Subaltern Studies* from 1982 to 1999, which contained essays on various aspects of subaltern history and politics.

Guha was the editor of the first six volumes of *Subaltern Studies* and contributed several essays to them. His most influential essay was *On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India*, which appeared in *Subaltern Studies I* (1982). In this essay, he proposed a new framework for understanding the colonial situation in India as a domain of contestation between three groups: the colonial state (or domination), the Indian elite (or hegemony), and the subaltern classes (or resistance). He argued that most historians had focused on either the first or second group, ignoring or marginalizing the third group. He called for a new history that would recover the voice and agency of the subalterns.

Another important essay by Guha was *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, which appeared in *Subaltern Studies III* (1984). In this essay, he analyzed various forms of peasant resistance against colonial rule and exploitation in different regions and periods of India. He identified four elementary aspects that characterized peasant insurgency: negation (or rejection of colonial authority), affirmation (or assertion of peasant identity), appropriation (or seizure of resources or symbols), and transformation (or creation of alternative structures or visions). He argued that peasant insurgency was not merely a spontaneous or irrational reaction to oppression, but a rational and creative expression of subaltern consciousness.

Guha also wrote two monographs based on his essays: *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (1983) and *Dominance without Hegemony: History and Power in Colonial India* (1997). The former was an expanded version of his essay in *Subaltern Studies III*, while the latter was a revised version of his essays in *Subaltern Studies IV* and *V*. In the latter book, he examined the nature and limits of Indian nationalism as a hegemonic project that failed to represent or incorporate the subaltern classes. He argued that Indian nationalism was a derivative discourse that imitated the colonial discourse, and that it was unable to challenge the dominance of the colonial state.

Guha also wrote and edited several books and articles in Bengali, his native language. Some of his notable works in Bengali

are: *Bangalir Itihas* (The History of Bengal, 1976), *Chhotto Janer Itihas* (The History of the Small People, 1981), *Bangalir Atmakatha* (The Autobiography of Bengal, 1983), and *Itihaser Jalsay Jalsi* (History's Carnival, 1996). He also translated some of his English works into Bengali, such as *A Rule of Property for Bengal* (1975) and *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (1984).

Guha died on April 28, 2023, at the age of 99, in Vienna. He is widely regarded as one of the most original and influential historians of India, who challenged the conventional paradigms and methods of historiography, and opened new avenues for research and debate. His works have inspired generations of scholars and activists across the world, who have applied his insights and perspectives to various fields and contexts.

The Evolution of Subaltern Perspective

Subalternism is a theory that tries to understand the history and politics of the people who are not part of the dominant groups in society. These people are called subalterns, and they include peasants, workers, women, minorities, and others who do not have much power or voice. Subalternism challenges the views of history that only focus on the actions and interests of the powerful groups, such as colonialists, nationalists, or capitalists. Subalternism also questions the assumptions and methods of mainstream disciplines, such as history, sociology, or anthropology, that often neglect or misrepresent the subaltern perspective.

The subalternism theory was inspired by the writings of Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist who was imprisoned by the fascist regime in the 1920s and 1930s. Gramsci wrote a series of essays called *Prison Notebooks*, where he introduced the concept of subalternity. He used this concept to analyze the cultural and political situation of Italy, where he saw a conflict between three groups: the colonial state (or domination), the Italian elite (or hegemony), and the subaltern classes (or resistance) and the peasants who had missed to take part in industrial capitalism. He argued that the subaltern classes had their own autonomous and creative forms of politics, culture, and consciousness, that were often overlooked or suppressed by the dominant groups. He also proposed a new way of making history that would recover the traces and voices of the subalterns from below.

The subalternism theory was developed by Ranajit Guha and other Indian historians who were part of the Subaltern Studies group. They started their project in the early 1980s and published a series of volumes called *Subaltern Studies*. They were influenced by Gramsci's ideas, but they applied them to the context of India, where they studied various aspects of subaltern history and politics, such as peasant rebellions, tribal movements, religious cults, popular culture, nationalism, and colonialism. They argued that the subalterns in India had a different agenda than the nationalist and colonialist elites, who often tried to co-opt or crush them. They also argued that the subalterns in India had a different worldview than the Western or modern one, that was based on their own experiences and traditions. They tried to write a new history of India from the subaltern perspective, that would challenge and critique the existing histories written by the elites.

The subalternism theory is important in real life because it helps us to understand the diversity and complexity of human society. It helps us to recognize and respect the different ways that people live, think, act, and express themselves. It helps us to question and challenge the dominant narratives and structures that often justify inequality and oppression. It helps us to learn from and support the struggles and aspirations of the subalterns for justice and dignity. It helps us to imagine and create a more democratic and inclusive world.

Genesis

They say that a wise man learns from his mistakes, but a wiser man learns from the mistakes of others. Ranajit Guha, however, was a different kind of man. He learned from his own mistakes, and then he made a whole new field of study out of them. That's why he is called the founder of subaltern historiography.

Guha's PhD thesis, which he submitted to the University of Manchester in 1959, was a pioneering study of the pre-colonial and early colonial rural society of Bengal. However, his thesis was rejected by some of his examiners and reviewers, who found his approach and arguments to be unconventional, controversial, and even subversive. Guha did not give up on his thesis, but rather revised and published it as a book in 1963 under the title *A Rule of Property for Bengal: An Essay on the Idea of Permanent*

Settlement. This book became a classic work on colonial India, which challenged the prevailing views and exposed the negative consequences of the British policy that granted property rights to the zamindars or landlords in 1793.

Guha's thesis was like a seed that fell on rocky ground at first, but later sprouted and grew into a fruitful tree. His thesis inspired and influenced many other historians who shared his radical vision and methodology. In 1982, he founded Subaltern Studies, a collective project of historical scholarship that aimed to recover the voices and experiences of the oppressed and marginalized groups in colonial and post-colonial societies. Subaltern Studies produced twelve volumes of essays between 1982 and 2005, which had a huge impact on various disciplines such as history, sociology, anthropology, literature, cultural studies, and post-colonial studies. Guha also wrote several other influential books and articles on topics such as peasant revolts, subaltern consciousness, historiography, nationalism, culture, and post-colonialism. Guha is widely regarded as one of the most original and innovative historians of modern India.

Guha's book is a classic work on the history of colonial India, which examines the British establishment of the Permanent Settlement of Bengal in 1793, the first major administrative intervention by the British in the region and an effort to impose a western notion of private property on the Bengal countryside. Guha's main theme is to explore the intellectual origins, goals, and consequences of this policy, which created a new class of landowners, known as zamindars, who collaborated with the colonial administration and became the intermediaries between the state and the peasants.

Guha traces the genesis of the Permanent Settlement to the anti-feudal ideas of Philip Francis, a member of the Supreme Council of Bengal and a leading advocate of the policy. Francis was influenced by physiocratic thought, the precursor of political economy, which regarded land as the source of wealth and advocated a single tax on land rent. Francis also admired the French Revolution and its principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. He believed that by granting property rights to the zamindars, he was creating a class of enlightened landlords who would improve agriculture, protect the peasants, and support the British rule.

Guha challenges this view and shows how the Permanent Settlement was based on a misunderstanding and

misrepresentation of the pre-colonial agrarian system, which was not feudal but rather complex and flexible. He argues that the Permanent Settlement was not a progressive or benevolent measure, but rather a coercive and exploitative one, which disrupted the existing relations between land and labor, and between society and nature. He demonstrates how the Permanent Settlement led to several negative outcomes, such as:

- The alienation and dispossession of many zamindars, who were unable to pay the fixed revenue demand and were forced to sell or mortgage their lands to moneylenders and speculators.
- The emergence of a new class of absentee landlords, who had no interest or responsibility in improving or maintaining their estates, but only in extracting maximum rent from their tenants.
- The deterioration of agriculture and ecology, as the zamindars imposed high rents and taxes on the peasants, who resorted to intensive cultivation, deforestation, and soil erosion.
- The impoverishment and oppression of the peasants, who faced eviction, harassment, and violence from the zamindars and their agents, and had no security or incentive to invest in their lands.
- The rise of peasant resistance and rebellion, which challenged the authority and legitimacy of both the zamindars and the British.

Guha's book is an example of subaltern historiography, which aims to recover the voices and experiences of the oppressed and marginalized groups in colonial and post-colonial societies. Guha challenges the dominant narratives of history that are based on the perspectives of the ruling classes and the colonial masters. He demonstrates how subaltern studies can use alternative sources and methods to reconstruct the history from below, by paying attention to the gaps, silences and contradictions in the official documents, and by interpreting the signs, symbols and gestures of the subalterns. He also shows how subaltern studies can highlight the agency and autonomy of the subalterns, who are not passive victims of oppression, but active participants in their own history.

Guha's book is a valuable contribution to the fields of history, economics, sociology, anthropology, political science, and post-colonial studies. It offers a critical and nuanced analysis of the

social and cultural realities of colonial India, which are often overlooked or simplified by mainstream historiography. It also raises important questions about the politics of representation, the ethics of writing history, and the role of historians in engaging with the subaltern.

The Voice of the Voiceless

As a famous person once said, education is a vast ocean and he is picking stones near the shore, I feel that I have read the book where I have just started to imagine I am going to the shore but have not even collected the pebbles. In this light, I would like to draw an analogy with Ranajit Guha's work, which is like a sea of subaltern historiography, and out of that I have read three articles that show the main essence of his work.

One of the articles where Guha uses the legal documents related to the death of a young Bagdi woman named Chandra in 1824, who had an illicit affair with a Brahmin man and underwent an abortion, to reveal the complex dynamics of power, gender, caste and class in rural Bengal. He shows the official records of the colonial administration and the local elites distorted and silenced the truth about Chandra's death, and how the subaltern women expressed their solidarity and resistance through their own forms of communication and action.

Another one being *Nil Darpan: The Image of a Peasant Revolt in a Liberal Mirror*, where Guha critically analyzes the play by Dinabandhu Mitra that depicts the indigo rebellion of 1859-60 in Bengal. Guha shows how the play reflects the liberal ideology of the Bengali intelligentsia of the 19th century, who sympathized with the peasants but also sought to reform and civilize them according to their own standards. Guha exposes the contradictions and limitations of the play, which portrays the peasants as passive and helpless victims of oppression, who need the guidance and protection of the educated elite. He also criticizes the play for ignoring or distorting the role of women, religion, caste and class in the peasant movement.

The third article is *The Career of an Anti-God in Heaven and on Earth*, where Guha explores the subaltern religiosity and mythology in colonial India, focusing on the figure of Rahu, the demon who causes eclipses by swallowing the sun and the moon. Guha argues that Rahu represents the voice of the

subalterns, who challenge the hegemony of the Brahmanical gods and their upper-caste devotees. Guha shows how Rahu, through his three prevailing myths, exposes the contradictions and injustices of the Hindu cosmology and social order.

These three articles are masterpieces of subaltern historiography, which aim to recover the voices and experiences of the oppressed and marginalized groups in colonial and post-colonial societies. Guha challenges the dominant narratives of history that are based on the perspectives of the ruling classes and the colonial masters. He demonstrates how subaltern studies can use alternative sources and methods to reconstruct the history from below, by paying attention to the gaps, silences and contradictions in the official documents, and by interpreting the signs, symbols and gestures of the subalterns. He also shows how subaltern studies can highlight the agency and autonomy of the subalterns, who are not passive victims of oppression, but active participants in their own history.

Guha's work is a stellar example of historical anthropology, which combines historical analysis with ethnographic insight. He offers a critical and nuanced understanding of the social and cultural realities of colonial India, which are often overlooked or simplified by mainstream historiography. He also raises important questions about the politics of representation, the ethics of writing history, and the role of historians in engaging with the subalterns. Guha's work is a valuable contribution to the fields of history, literature, sociology, anthropology, gender studies, cultural studies and post-colonial studies.

Chandra's Death

The article by Ranajit Guha about Chandra's death is a remarkable example of subaltern historiography, which aims to recover the voices and experiences of the oppressed and marginalized groups in colonial and post-colonial societies. Guha uses the legal documents related to the death of a young Bagdi woman named Chandra in 1824, who had an illicit affair with her brother-in-law and underwent an abortion (bhek) to reveal the complex dynamics of power, gender, caste and class in rural Bengal. He shows how the official records of the colonial administration and the local elites distorted and silenced the truth about Chandra's death, and how the subaltern women expressed

their solidarity and resistance through their own forms of communication and action.

The importance of Guha's article in subaltern perspective is that it challenges the dominant narratives of history that are based on the perspectives of the ruling classes and the colonial masters. Guha demonstrates how subaltern studies can use alternative sources and methods to reconstruct the history from below, by paying attention to the gaps, silences and contradictions in the official documents, and by interpreting the signs, symbols and gestures of the subalterns. He also shows how subaltern studies can highlight the agency and autonomy of the subalterns, who are not passive victims of oppression, but active participants in their own history.

The importance of Guha's article in general is that it offers a critical and nuanced analysis of the social and cultural realities of colonial India, which are often overlooked or simplified by mainstream historiography. Guha's article also raises important questions about the politics of representation, the ethics of writing history, and the role of historians in engaging with the subalterns. Guha's article is a valuable contribution to the fields of history, sociology, anthropology, gender studies, cultural studies and post-colonial studies.

Guha's essay masterfully shows that there is an exercise of power in the secluded section of the society by men over women. Guha's essay also familiarizes us with tribal kinship and helps sociology. He describes the social structure and culture of the Bagdi community, which was a low-caste group of hunters and fishers. Guha went on explaining how the Bagdis had a matrilineal system of inheritance, where women had some control over property and marriage. Moreover, the Bagdis had a rich oral tradition, where women sang songs and told stories to express their emotions and opinions. He suggests that these aspects of the Bagdi society were sources of strength and resilience for the subaltern women, who faced multiple forms of oppression and exploitation.

Guha's essay is a valuable contribution to the fields of history, sociology, anthropology, gender studies, and post-colonial studies. It offers a critical and nuanced analysis of the social and cultural realities of colonial India, which are often overlooked or simplified by mainstream historiography. It also raises important questions about the politics of representation, the ethics of writing history, and the role of historians in engaging with the subalterns.

Nil Darpan: The Image of a Peasant Revolt in a Liberal Mirror

Guha's article is a critical analysis of the play *Nil Darpan* by Dinabandhu Mitra, which depicts the indigo rebellion of 1859-60 in Bengal. Guha argues that the play, despite its popularity and influence, fails to capture the true nature and significance of the peasant revolt. He shows the play reflects the liberal ideology of the Bengali intelligentsia, who sympathized with the peasants but also sought to reform and civilize them according to their own standards. Guha exposes the contradictions and limitations of the play, which portrays the peasants as passive and helpless victims of oppression, who need the guidance and protection of the educated elite. He also criticizes the play for ignoring or distorting the role of women, religion, caste and class in the peasant movement.

Guha shows how the play reflects the snobbish attitude and psychology of the middle-class intelligentsia, who were confused between Indian style paternalism and Western style liberalism. He argues that the play portrays the peasants as passive and helpless victims of oppression, who need the guidance and protection of the educated elite. He also argues that the play ignores or distorts the role of women, religion, caste, and class in the peasant movement. He suggests that the play is a product of the liberal ideology of the Bengali intelligentsia, who sympathized with the peasants but also sought to reform and civilize them according to their own standards.

Guha's article gives a look into the psychology of the people who were involved in or affected by the indigo rebellion. He analyzes how the different groups, such as the planters, the zamindars, the *ryots*, the bargadars, the missionaries, and the intelligentsia, had different interests and agendas, and how they interacted or conflicted with each other. He also examines how the rebellion challenged or changed the social and political order of colonial Bengal. He demonstrates how subaltern studies can use alternative sources and methods to reconstruct the history from below, by paying attention to the gaps, silences, and contradictions in the official documents, and by interpreting the signs, symbols, and gestures of the subalterns.

Guha's article is an example of subaltern historiography, which aims to recover the voices and experiences of the oppressed

and marginalized groups in colonial and post-colonial societies. Guha challenges the dominant narratives of history that are based on the perspectives of the ruling classes and the colonial masters. He demonstrates how subaltern studies can use alternative sources and methods to reconstruct the history from below, by paying attention to the gaps, silences and contradictions in the official documents, and by interpreting the signs, symbols and gestures of the subalterns. He also shows how subaltern studies can highlight the agency and autonomy of the subalterns, who are not passive victims of oppression, but active participants in their own history. Guha's article is a valuable contribution to the fields of history, literature, sociology, anthropology, gender studies, cultural studies and post-colonial studies. It offers a critical and nuanced analysis of the social and cultural realities of colonial India, which are often overlooked or simplified by mainstream historiography.

Braja Dulal Chattopadhyaya

Unveiling Excellence: Life and Legacy of B. D. Chattopadhyay

Neil
Bhattacharya
*Department of History,
Semester V*

Rupjit Banerjee
*Department of History,
Semester V*

Mainak
Bhattacharya
*Department of History,
Semester V*



Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya (1939-2022) was a distinguished Indian historian who specialised in the study of the early medieval phase of Indian history. He was born in Calcutta and graduated from Presidency College, obtaining his PhD from Cambridge University under the supervision of Raymond Allchin. He taught at distinguished institutions such as Burdwan University and Visva Bharati, and would spend most of his academic career at Jawaharlal Nehru University. He also held visiting positions at several prestigious universities abroad, such as Chicago, Heidelberg, and Leipzig.

Chattopadhyaya wrote extensively on various aspects of early medieval Indian history, such as economy, society, polity, culture, religion, and historiography. His first major work was

Coins and Currency Systems in South India, c. 225-1300 (1977), which won him the prestigious Prix Duchalais from the Institut de France. He also edited and wrote the foreword for D.D. Kosambi's *Indological Essays* (2002). They would, in addition, collaborate to expand the boundaries of numismatic studies.

Best known for his contribution to the debate on the periodisation and characterisation of early medieval India, he challenged the dominant paradigm of Indian feudalism proposed by R.S. Sharma and others, which equated the early medieval period (c. 6th-13th centuries CE) with feudalism based on concepts like land grants, decline of trade and urbanism, and emergence of caste hierarchy. This became in retrospect a groundbreaking proposal, since an attempt was being made to assimilate feudalism, a Western conception, into the Indian context. However, Chattopadhyaya argued that this framework was too rigid, monolithic, and Eurocentric, and that it failed to capture the diversity, dynamism, and complexity of early medieval Indian society.

Chattopadhyaya proposed an alternative model of early medieval India, which he called the integrative model. He suggested that the period was marked by a process of integration of various regions, communities, cultures, and traditions into a larger Indian civilisation. He emphasised the role of regional identities, local cultures, vernacular languages, popular religions, and folk traditions in shaping the early medieval society. He also highlighted the interactions between continuity and change in various aspects of economy, polity, and culture over time and space.

Chattopadhyaya continued to write and research on early medieval India even after retiring from JNU. He received many awards and honours for his scholarly achievements, such as the already mentioned Prix Duchalais from the Institut de France (1978), the Rabindra Puraskar from the Government of West Bengal (1987), the D.Litt (Honoris Causa) from Burdwan University (1996), the H.K. Barpujari Award from the Indian History Congress (2005), etc. He also served as the president of various academic bodies such as the Indian History Congress (1998) and the Asiatic Society (2005-2007). He passed away on July 13, 2022 at his residence in New Delhi after a brief illness.

Characterisation of early medieval India

Chattopadhyaya's perspective on the early medieval issue indeed separates him from the mainstream. He does not view the early medieval phase as a crisis or a decline of a pan-Indian social order, but as a process of integration and diversification of various regions, communities, cultures, and traditions. He criticizes Sharma for uncritically applying the feudalism theory of Marc Bloch, a French historian, to the Indian context, without considering the specificities and variations of the Indian situation.

Chattopadhyaya identifies three major processes that were operative throughout Indian history, and that shaped the early medieval society. These are: a) the expansion of state society through the process of local state formation; b) peasantization of tribe and caste formation; and c) cult appropriation and integration. He also challenges the notion that the early medieval period witnessed a decline in trade and monetary flow, in turn providing evidence of urban development and coin circulation in various parts of India during this period. He suggests that the early medieval economy was not stagnant or isolated, but dynamic and connected.

Chattopadhyaya, in his works on early medieval India, proposed the concept of the expansion of state society as one of the three major processes that shaped the early medieval society. He argued that the period witnessed the emergence and proliferation of local and sub-regional polities, which he called 'local state formations', in different parts of India. These polities were not mere fragments or segments of a larger imperial structure, but had their own distinct identities, cultures, and histories. They were also not isolated or static entities, but were involved in various forms of interaction and integration with each other and with supra-regional polities.

Chattopadhyaya used various sources, such as inscriptions, coins, literature, and art, to trace the origins, development, and characteristics of these local state formations. He showed how they were influenced by various factors, such as geography, ecology, economy, society, religion, and ideology. He also analysed how they contributed to the expansion of state society by incorporating various pre-state or marginal groups, such as tribes, peasants, artisans, traders, etc., into their political and cultural domains.

One of the examples that Chattopadhyaya gave to illustrate his concept of local state formation was the creation of

the Rajput class in north-western India. He challenged the conventional view that the Rajputs were descendants of foreign invaders or migrants who established their rule over the indigenous population. He argued that the Rajputs were a product of local state formation in response to the changing political and social conditions in the region. In addition, he suggested that the Rajputs emerged as a result of a process of peasantization of tribes and caste formation. He explained that some tribal groups, such as the Gurjaras and Huns, who had settled in the Northwestern region after invading or migrating from Central Asia, gradually adopted agriculture as their main occupation and assimilated with the local population. They also adopted Hinduism as their religion and claimed high caste status by forging genealogical links with mythical heroes or ancient dynasties. They would contribute towards the emergence of a martial ethos and a feudal polity based on land grants and loyalty. Thus, they formed a new class of warriors and rulers who came to be known as Rajputs.

Chattopadhyaya's concept of local state formation was an innovative and influential attempt to understand early medieval India in its own terms and context, which in turn opened up new avenues of research and enriched the historiography of early India.

He was widely respected and admired by his peers and students for his scholarship, originality, and rigour. Chattopadhyaya proposed the concept of peasantization of tribe and caste formation as another of the three major processes that shaped the early medieval society. He argued that the early medieval period witnessed the transformation of various tribal groups into peasants and castes, as a result of their integration into the expanding state society and the agrarian economy.

Chattopadhyaya used various sources, such as inscriptions, coins, literature, and art, to trace the origins, development, and characteristics of these tribal groups as they formed new social identities, hierarchies, and affiliations.

One of the examples that Chattopadhyaya gave to illustrate his concept of peasantization of tribe and caste formation was the case of the Gurjaras. He argued that they were a heterogeneous group of people who had diverse origins and affiliations. He suggested that some Gurjaras were originally pastoral nomads who migrated from Central Asia and settled in north-western India, while others were indigenous tribes who adopted the name Gurjara to assert their political and cultural

identity. He explained that the Gurjaras gradually adopted agriculture as their main occupation and assimilated with the local population. They also adopted Hinduism as their religion and claimed high caste status by forging genealogical links with mythical heroes or ancient dynasties. The Rajput-like martial character can be found within this group as well. Thus, they formed a new class of warriors and rulers who came to be known as Gurjara-Pratiharas.

Chattopadhyaya, proposed the concept of cult appropriation and integration as the last of the three major processes that shaped the society of the period. He argued that the early medieval period witnessed the assimilation and adaptation of various local, regional, and tribal cults into the dominant Hindu pantheon, as a result of their interaction and integration with mainstream Brahmanical ideology.

Chattopadhyaya also analysed how they contributed to the diversity and complexity of early medieval society by forming new religious identities, traditions, and affiliations. One of the examples that Chattopadhyaya gave to illustrate his concept of cult appropriation and integration was the case of Lord Jagannath. He challenged the conventional view that Jagannath was a manifestation of Vishnu or Krishna, or a synthesis of Buddhist and Jain elements, and argued that Jagannath was originally a tribal deity worshipped by a class of aborigines called Savaras or Sabaras in the form of Nilamadhava. He suggested that Jagannath was gradually ascribed Hindu features and attributes as a result of his association with various Hindu sects, such as Vaishnavism, Saivism, Tantricism, and Brahminism. According to Chattopadhyaya, Jagannath became a symbol of universal lordship and sovereignty as he was patronised by various kings and dynasties who ruled over Odisha. He also became a centre of cultural integration as he attracted devotees from different regions, communities, cultures, and traditions. Thus, Chattopadhyaya's early medieval age periodisation is forming the basic skeletal structure of that time by providing an alternative framework that is based on empirical evidence, comparative analysis, and historical synthesis. His work has opened up new avenues for further research and debate on this crucial phase of Indian history.

Dwijendra Narayan Jha

Iconoclast par excellence

Abhisambuddha Mukherjee
Department of History, Semester III



Dwijendra Narayan Jha (DN Jha) was one of India's most erudite and prolific scholars in the field of ancient and medieval Indian history. On February 4, 2021, he passed away aged 81. He had been debilitated by various illnesses over the past several years and was in and out of hospital, his eyesight had become weak and he needed a hearing aid, but his mind was sharp as ever and his will was strong. He was often referred to as an 'iconoclast,' 'stalwart' and 'doyen' among Indian historians. The entire history fraternity came forward to pay homage to Prof. Jha, which speaks volumes for the imprint he has left behind. Eminent scholars from all over the world, his former students who are now teaching in different universities and colleges and younger generations who

may never have even met him but who have known him through his work—all expressed their deep sense of sadness over his passing.

He was a former professor at the Department of History, Delhi University, and Secretary of the Indian History Congress for many years. He taught at Delhi University for over 30 years where he inspired countless students with his deep knowledge, analytical rigor, and passion for historical research. The early life of Prof Jha is not too well known. But some information could be gathered from his interviews and his family members. He was born in a brahmin family on 1 July 1940 (as found in the official service records) in Ganauli village (then in Darbhanga district, but now in Madhubani district) in Bihar. Gauri Devi and Devaswarup Jha were his parents.

It appears that the Jha family moved out of Ganauli not too long after DN's birth since his entire education up to the graduation level took place in West Bengal. As a boy, he showed tremendous promise when he secured First Division in both the Senior Secondary (Board of Secondary Certification, West Bengal) and Intermediate (Arts) Examinations (Presidency College, University of Calcutta, now an independent university) in 1953 and 1955 respectively. Further, he was just 17 when he completed his graduation (B.A. Hons in History), also from the Presidency College in 1957, where Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya and the late Sabyasachi Bhattacharya were his batch-mates became his lifelong colleagues.

Thereafter, for reasons not too well known, he moved back to Bihar and completed his Masters in History from the Department of History of Patna University (1959). DN went on to complete his Ph.D. in 1964 under his keen and watchful guidance and the supervision of Professor Yogendra Mishra of the renowned Patna College. Dr Jha got an opportunity to teach at this new alma mater for almost a decade (up to 1975). Following the appointment of RS Sharma as the first Chairperson of the newly constituted Indian Council of Historical Research by the Government of India in 1972 and his subsequent appointment as the Professor and Head of the Department of History, University of Delhi, in 1973, Prof Jha's *raison d'être* to stay back in Patna was losing appeal. The inevitable happened. DN joined the University of Delhi in 1975 as a Reader (now called Associate Professor) and retired from there as a professor on the 30 June 2005.

Jha's shift from Kolkata to Patna was not merely an academic transformation. It also laid a solid foundation for his ideological transformation that stayed with him till his last breath and affected his social, material and ideational attitudes and orientation. He had credited his father for instilling in him a 'preference for reason over faith'. Some sources also say that his father, Devaswarup Jha was a staunch critic of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and did not want any of his immediate family members to come under its ideological influence. Further it is said that he had joined the Communist Party of India in 1964/65 and worked for it for nearly four decades till at least 2002/03, or maybe even later. While in Patna, he was also instrumental in initiating the Centre for Studies in Marxism in the diversity and this association continued even when he moved to Delhi University. He always remained a vibrant inspiration for the Left within the DUTA (Delhi University Teachers' Association). It is to be noted that Dr Jha was already a Marxist when he joined Patna University. He presided over a Marxist Club there (with Dr PK Shukla as its secretary) wherein the evening lectures were delivered by luminaries from far and near, including Mohit Sen, Bipan Chandra, and Amiya K Bagchi, with the regular-enough presence of RS Sharma in the last bench of the audience. The club had a relatively short life and wound up after they left for Delhi. he had the utmost cooperation from his wife or *ardhangini*, Rajrani Jha as well, whom he had married in 1975.

Academic life

Tracking Jha's academic journey is a fascinating exercise. Taking the publication of his doctoral thesis under the title of Revenue System in Post-Maurya and Gupta Times in 1967 as a starting point, it became more than a fifty-year tour de force. Eight monographs were authored and twelve edited volumes were published by him in these years, and most of these works went through several editions/reprints. During the first half of his career, the paradigm shift brought in by his two perennial ideals, viz., Damodar Dharmanand Kosambi (An Introduction to the Study of Indian History, 1956) and R.S. Sharma (Shudras in Ancient India, Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India and Indian Feudalism c. 300-1200, published between 1958 and 1965), kept him interested in redrawing the frontiers of socio-economic formations of ancient and early medieval India (up to c. 1300 CE). Like his mentors, colonial

constructs, especially their communalised periodisation, were sought to be debunked and phases of early India were delineated in Marxian terminology of 'modes of production'. During the second half of, Jha was hooked on to the agenda of dealing with communal forces frontally and most of his writings and publications of this phase focused on issues of the so-called 'Hindu' identity and 'nationalism' based there on.

Jha's concern, like that of the two historians he admired and turned to frequently, D.D. Kosambi and RS Sharma, was to bust the colonial myths about the unchanging nature of Indian society throughout its long history, the latter's emphasis on the self-sufficient village economy, their assertion that private landholding was non-existent in pre-colonial times, and, very importantly, given the imperialist interests of the British, that the state/ king was the owner of all land and its resources. Even where foreign contact was acknowledged in such imperialist histories, instead of contradicting the insular image of India, they attempted to reinforce it by ascribing all agency to the external elements, as for instance, the Romans in the early Indo-Roman trade.

Jha demonstrated equally a critical appreciation of the writings of nationalist historians such as R.K. Mukherjee (*Indian Shipping and Maritime Activity*, 1912), K.P. Jayaswal (*Hindu Polity*, 1924) and R.C. Majumdar (*Corporate Life in Ancient India*, 1918), although these were often primarily aimed at refuting the assertions of British historians. So, while on the one hand these works demonstrated the existence of complex economic institutions and practices at different time periods, they failed to recognize, and in some cases sought to cover up, the social inequalities that marked those times, which was a serious drawback in Jha's assessment.

On feudalism

Almost two decades after the publication of R.S. Sharma's *Indian Feudalism, c. 300-1200* in 1965, the world of Indian history writing across the subcontinent and in major fora of professional discussions such as the Indian History Congress was dominated by scholars standing up for or against the 'feudal model' as the basis for identifying the 'medieval' (mind you, not 'Muslim') period of Indian history. DN Jha was a very important contributor to this debate. The contrasting Presidential Addresses of the Ancient and Medieval Indian history sections of the 40th Annual Session of the IHC by DN and Professor Harbans

Mukhia respectively, set off this debate. While Jha's proposition in favour of the 'feudal model' was buttressed by rich empirical evidence, Mukhia's contestation thereof arguing for a 'free peasantry' turned out to be more of imagination. Nevertheless, the debate went on and scholars outside India also got interested, forcing the renowned *Journal of Peasant Studies* to bring out a special issue on 'Feudalism and Non-European Societies' (1985, later published as a monograph), wherein Professor Mukhia retreated saying, 'I realise that the case (of 'free peasantry') had probably been overstated, if unintentionally.' However, the debate propelled DN Jha to bring out three edited volumes (one of which was in Hindi) on Indian feudalism between 1987 and 2002 (*Feudal Social Formation in Early India; Bharatiya Samantavaad: Rajya, Samaj aur Vichardhara; The Feudal Order: State, Society and Ideology in Early Medieval India*). His two other monographs, viz., *Studies in Early Indian Economic History* (1980) and *Economy and Society in Early India: Issues and Paradigms* (1993), extended the contours of this debate through three seminal essays dealing with empirical evidence from Tamil inscriptions of the Pallava-Chola times (c. 700-1300 CE). Incidentally, the latter of these two monographs was awarded the prestigious Professor H.K. Barpujari Award of the Indian History Congress in 1995. Historians like BD Chattopadhyay were highly critical of his theories and in some cases, he had changed his form of argument in line with BD Chattopadhyay's argument.

Ram Janmabhoomi case

Just when the movement for the liberation of the Rama Janmabhoomi at Ayodhya was taking off in the late 1980s. Marxist historians like RS Sharma and DN Jha were skeptical about Babri Masjid. The target, of course, was the destruction of the Babri Masjid as interpreted by the them. RS Sharma then immediately mobilized the IHC to pass a strong resolution appealing 'to all authorities to give due protection to all religious structures of archaeological interest and to prevent interference from any quarter with their present use and control'. This was done at the 47th Session of IHC held in the Kashmir University, Srinagar in October 1986, when Jha was Secretary, IHC (1986-89). Professor Sharma himself published a tract on Rama's Ayodhya in 1990 and then released the *Babri Mosque or Rama's Birthplace? Historians' Report to the Nation on Ayodhya* in

1991, which argued on the basis of textual and archaeological evidence that there was no Hindu temple under the Babri Masjid. DN Jha was one of the four historians who signed this report (the other three being Professors R.S. Sharma, M. Athar Ali and Suraj Bhan). An equally strong resolution condemning the destruction of the Babri Masjid structure and the illegal Ayodhya excavations at that site after the destruction was passed by IHC at its 53rd Session (Kakatiya University, Warangal, February 1993). Until the last leg of his life, he remained highly critical of B.B. Lal, the former director-general of the ASI who first excavated at Ayodhya, for having changed his stance in 1990 regarding a possible temple underneath the mosque. Many critiqued the historians for not having any former archaeological training but still commenting on them. BB Lal himself critiqued Jha for his comments. However, their claim that there was no Hindu structure under the mosque has been questioned by several archaeologists like ASI's former director KK Mohammed. The country's apex court in 2019 delivered the verdict on the ram mandir case which were derived from ASI's excavations. Supreme Court, in its final judgment in November 2019, did not accept the findings of the post demolition excavations Report, they dismissed the aforesaid historians' report as an 'opinion' at best.

The New Agenda

He said 'they' distort Indian history and religion and nurture a culture of intolerance. In this milieu, Jha donned the role of a public intellectual. Harnessing his professional training and skills, he considered it his duty to let people of India know about the many-sided truths of this identity. Busting several myths about 'Hindus' became his prime agenda and he became a zealous iconoclast.

The first act of iconoclasm was Holy Cow: Beef in Indian Dietary Tradition (2001; reprinted several times as The Myth of the Holy Cow in 2002 and thereafter). The subject was not new since scholars had been debating the 'sanctity' of the Indian cow for more than a century. DN decided to resume the thread of this debate to demolish one of the stereotypes of Hindu identity. Drawing heavily on textual evidence spread over more than three millennia, the monograph convincingly demonstrated that neither the ancient Indians nor their gods and goddesses abstained from eating beef. Indeed, at some point, it was even considered a

delicacy to be served to special guests. The antiquity of the notion of the 'sacredness of cow' and prohibition of beef for the 'Hindus' needed to be located in temporal and spatial terms. Consumption of beef by many Indians, including even amongst some Hindu families, is quite prevalent till this day in different regions of India. The story of the cow through millennia, the author argued, is full of inconsistencies, thus rendering its supposed 'holiness' elusive, indeed as elusive as Hindu identity itself. He was severely criticised by many historians and common people for 'distorting Hindu beliefs,' FIRs were lodged against him in different parts of India, which needed to be contested in law courts, his movement got restricted and he almost lived under police surveillance. And yet, his zeal to fight the communal forces did not wane. Arun Shourie, a minister of the former Vajpayee government and also a Hindu scholar, had accused DN Jha of distorting history.

This streak of iconoclasm found a major expression in January 2006, when he delivered the General President's Address at the 66th Annual Session of IHC held at Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan (2005-06). Titled 'Looking for a Hindu Identity', it demolished several stereotypes of Hinduism. These two iconoclastic exercises were further polished, expanded and presented in a somewhat altered version as *Rethinking Hindu Identity* (2009; translated into Hindi as *Hindu Asmita: Ek Punarchintan*, 2012). Some of his works strongly debunk the Hindu religious fundamentalist mythomania.

People have always admired DN Jha's determination and phenomenally strong will power. Battling colossal physical problems involving numerous and extremely complicated surgeries throughout his life, he never ceased his academic activities. Despite being repeatedly under the doctor's scalpel, literally from head to toe, his lively spirit never died.

Within the professional circle, Jha was respected both in India and abroad. Several honours were bestowed upon him during his lifetime. He was elected sectional president of Andhra Pradesh History Congress (1987) and General President, Punjab History Conference (1999). He was also a UGC National Lecturer (1984-85) and Honorary Research Fellow, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla. The Asiatic Society of Calcutta honoured him in 2011 for his significant contributions to history writing. He had held visiting assignments at several universities in India and abroad. At the time of his death, he was

also Honorary President, International Institute of South Asian Studies, Rome (Italy).

He was absolutely reluctant about owning his 'Maithili Brahmin' tag, in the eyes of his immediate surroundings in Bihar, the issues seem to have got further complicated by his espousal of the cause of Dalits, the social underdogs, religious minorities, especially the Muslims. On the other hand, his early upbringing and education in West Bengal - going up to graduation at the prestigious Presidency College in Kolkata, but retreating to pursue further higher studies in Patna (Bihar), may not have gone down well amongst the people of Bengal. He once said to his associate Krishna Mohan Shrimali that he didn't get out of the psyche he once described to her as: 'Shrimaliji, people of Bihar do not accept me as one of their own, nor am I accepted as a "Bengali" in Bengal.' Did this make him a loner? Perhaps not.

For him, historical research was as important as creating a conducive environment for people to develop and accept a sound historical understanding. He stoutly resisted the communal interpretations of Indian history, now made often in the garb of nationalist historiography of India. Till his very last breath, D.N. Jha read the history of the subcontinent to highlight, celebrate and uphold its plurality and was at the forefront against a homogenisation of the past which rides on majoritarian agenda.

In some respects, Jha had been a complex persona. Though quite forthright on most occasions, his diplomatic silences on several others became riddles. Though generally soft-spoken and mild-mannered, people had also seen him losing his cool and shouting at people. In the midst of pleasant conversations, he could fling a surprise of biting sarcasm and tongue-in-cheek humour. He loved citing litterateurs/poets such as Pablo Neruda, Orhan Pamuk and Firaq Gorakhpuri, and some of his close associates suspect that some of his rebellious temperament may have been nurtured by their works. The tag of an 'iconoclast', that he once ascribed to D.D. Kosambi more than half a century ago, can be easily and perhaps with greater justification be affixed to him as well. More so because of the changed cultural milieu of India. Kosambi lived and wrote in times that were relatively more tolerant. The sufferance undergone by Prof Jha certainly was the product of chilling hostile times. He emerged out of it as an 'iconoclast par excellence.'

Cuttack,
8.1.13.

My dear brother,

Another year has rolled by and we find ourselves responsible to God for the progress or otherwise that we have made during the last twelve months.

When I survey my last year's work I cannot help reflecting on the goal of life. Leninism I think, is a staunch optimist and strongly believes that the world is progressing day by day. Is it really so? Are we really nearing our longed-for goal? Is our dear country, India, on the high-road to progress? I can't think so.

May be, good may come out of evil — may be India is wading through sin and corruption towards peace and progress. But as far as the eye of presentness, the prophecy or foresightedness can behold, all is darkness —

কৃষ্ণা বসু

সাক্ষাৎকার



স্মৃতিস্মরণ

দেবায়ন ব্যানার্জী
স্কটিশ চার্চ কলেজের প্রাক্তনী, ইতিহাস বিভাগ, ব্যাচ- ২০১৭-২০১৯

আমরা তখন স্কটিশ চার্চ কলেজের ইতিহাস বিভাগের স্নাতকস্তরে পাঠরত। বিভাগের কয়েকজন মিলে একটা নতুন কিছু করার উদ্যোগ নিয়েছিলাম সেই সময়। আমরা চেয়েছিলাম এমন একটি পত্রিকা তৈরি করতে যার প্রতিটি পাতা হবে ইতিহাসে সমৃদ্ধ। জানা-অজানা ঐতিহাসিক তথ্যে সমৃদ্ধ এই পত্রিকা নির্মাণের উদ্যোগ প্রাণ পেয়েছিল আমাদের বিভাগের অধ্যাপক এবং অধ্যাপিকাদের ঐকান্তিক প্রচেষ্টায় এবং সহযোগিতায়। সেই সময় আমরা এই পত্রিকার একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ অংশ হিসেবে এমন কিছু ব্যক্তিত্বের সাক্ষাৎকার গ্রহণের প্রয়োজনবোধ করি, যাঁরা সরাসরি ইতিহাসের সঙ্গে যুক্ত, যাঁরা ইতিহাস সম্বন্ধীয় গবেষণার মাধ্যমে তুলে ধরেছেন বহু অজানা তথ্য, যা আমাদের এই সুবিশাল ঐতিহাসিক ভাণ্ডারকে সমৃদ্ধ করেছে। এমন ব্যক্তিত্বদের নিয়ে তৈরি আমাদের তালিকায় যাঁর নাম শীর্ষে ছিল, তিনি হলেন একাধারে শিক্ষাবিদ, রাজনীতিবিদ, সংসদ সদস্য এবং সমাজকর্মী কৃষ্ণা বসু। দুটি দিন, দুটো ভাগে এই সাক্ষাৎকার পর্ব সুসম্পন্ন হয়। সেই পর্বে অংশগ্রহণ করেছিলেন সুগত বসু এবং সুমন্ত্র বসু। নেতাজি সুভাষচন্দ্র বসুর দেশপ্রেম, সাহসিকতা, দৃঢ়তা, রাজনৈতিক চেতনা, জীবনদর্শন সম্পর্কিত বহু তথ্যের সমাহারে আমরা সমৃদ্ধ হই। Netaji Research Bureau-র চেয়ারম্যান থাকার সুবাদে কৃষ্ণা বসু নেতাজি কেন্দ্রিক যে গবেষণা দীর্ঘকাল ধরে নিষ্ঠার সঙ্গে করে এসেছেন সেই বিষয়েও তিনি আমাদের

অবগত করেছিলেন। গান্ধীজি এবং নেতাজির মধ্যকার সম্পর্কভিত্তিক আলোচনাও এই সাক্ষাৎকারে স্থান পেয়েছে। তবে আমাদের এই পর্যালোচনা শুধুমাত্র সুভাষচন্দ্র বসুর পরিধির মধ্যেই সীমাবদ্ধ ছিলনা। কৃষ্ণা বসু স্মৃতির অতলে পৌঁছে আমাদের সঙ্গে ভাগ করে নিয়েছিলেন তাঁর নিজের শৈশবকালের রঙিন দিনগুলি, তাঁর বড়ো হয়ে ওঠা, বিবাহের পর বসু পরিবারে কাটানো দিনগুলি, তাঁর কর্মজীবন। সাক্ষাৎকার শেষে তিনি আমাদের হাতে তুলে দিয়েছিলেন স্বাক্ষর-সহ তাঁর লেখা বই *Lost Addresses: A Memoir of India 1934-1955*, আমাদের পরম প্রাপ্তি! বইটি বর্তমানে আমাদের কলেজ লাইব্রেরিতে সযত্নে রক্ষিত।

তবে দুর্ভাগ্যবশত সকলের ঐকান্তিক প্রচেষ্টা এবং সহযোগিতা সত্ত্বেও সময়ের মধ্যে আমরা এই পত্রিকা প্রকাশের কাজ সম্পূর্ণ করে উঠতে পারিনি। যখন শুনলাম স্কটিশের ইতিহাস বিভাগে পাঠরত বর্তমান ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের উদ্যোগে আমাদের অসম্পূর্ণ কাজ পূর্ণতা পেতে চলেছে তখন আমার আনন্দের সীমা ছিলনা। স্মৃতির কোলাজে সযত্নে সাজানো এই বিশেষ সাক্ষাৎকারের দুটি দিন যেন চোখের সামনে ভেসে উঠছিল, তারই কিছু রঙিন মুহূর্ত সকলের সঙ্গে ভাগ করে নিলাম....

আমরা
ইন্ডিয়ান

○ নেতাজিকে নিয়ে অনেক বিষয়ে গবেষণা হয়েছে, একজন বসু পরিবারের সদস্য হিসাবে আপনার কি মনে হয়, কোনো বিষয়গুলোর উপর গবেষণার জন্য বেশি পরিমাণে গুরুত্ব দেওয়া উচিত আর কোনগুলো উচিত নয়? যেটা আপনি সবচেয়ে ভালো বলতে পারবেন কারণ...

প্রথমত আমার একটা আপত্তি বলে নিই, বসু পরিবার বলে নয়, বসু পরিবার বলাটা আমরা, মানে, নেতাজি নিজে বলে গেছেন যেটা, My family is co terminus with my country, সুতরাং তোমরা as much বসু পরিবার as anyone else, আর সেটাই কিন্তু আমার স্বামী Dr Sisir Bose ও মেনেছেন, [আমার] — এটি আমার ছোট ছেলে ও LSE তে পড়ায়, Professor ছোটজন —এরা যখন বড় হচ্ছে, আমরা এদের সর্বদাই বলেছি নেতাজী ওদের কাছে নেতাজি। তোমাদের দাদু বা কাকা বা মামা ওরম কিছু নন, সেইজন্যে as a family member আমি বলতে পারছি না, তবে as it happened, Dr. Sisir Bose was close to him politically and — as a — ভাইপোও বটে। He said যে আমরা সকলেই তো নেতাজিকে ভীষণ ভালোবাসি, ভীষণ শ্রদ্ধা করি, ২৩শে জানুয়ারি মালা-ঢালা পড়াই তারপরে ভুলে যাই ২৪ তারিখ থেকে, উনি বলেছিলেন যে, এই সব ভালোবাসা আর [মানে] Public Memory তে ভরসা করা যাবে না; and it is true যে after independence the then government, was not very much interested in him তো সেই জন্য আমরা যদি scientifically কিছু রেখে না যাই, একদম preserve করে, [এই] তোমাদের generation কিছু জানবে না; তো সেই জন্যে এইটা করেছিলেন। As it happened I was part of it, সেই করতে গিয়ে I got very much involved। [তো] আমার বলতে পারো যে একদিকে বইপত্র পড়ে, Document দেখে, আরেক দিকে আমার খুব সৌভাগ্য যে, all the INA officers and

men they had come, আমার guest হয়ে থাকছেন আমার বাড়িতে, আমরা গল্প করছি, কথা বলছি। এইভাবে আমি জানি ঠুঁকে, আমি বাড়ির লোক বলে জানি না। তাই forget the family, You remember his work । আর আমরা এইখানেও যেটা [আমরা] করি ,We concentrate on his life, his ideals যেটাতে, ইদানিং কালে একটা হয়েছে- Death has become very much a— এবং which I hate, I must say, ……

○ কোথাও আমরা ঠুর idea থেকে সরে আসছি……

Idea থেকে তো সরে যাচ্ছেই, আজকের একটা বাচ্ছাকে তুমি যদি জিজ্ঞাসা কর যে, who is Netaji? সে কি তোমাদের বলবে? যে ওই যে একজন লোক, যার death নিয়ে একটা রহস্য আছে। First of all, there is no রহস্য at all । If we are looking for a mystery, there is no mystery at all। কেউ বললেন তিনি গুহাতে বসে রইলেন— সাধু-সন্ন্যাসী হয়ে, he was not that type at all— not at all—আর তাছাড়া উনি যদি আজকে নেমে airport এ দাঁড়িয়ে বলতেন— আমি ফিরে এসেছি কারুর সাধ্য নেই তাঁকে আটকাবার। তিনি লুকিয়ে বসে থাকবেন চুপটি করে কোথাও— এটা হয়ে কখনো? এখনও লোকে, আমাকে কেউ-কেউ বলে উনি বেঁচে আছেন কোথাও [কোথাও আছেন]— ১২০ না ১২২ বছর হবে ওইজন্যে আমি এইগুলো নিয়ে কথা বলি না কখনও, Just concentrate on his life and work, নইলে উনি যেন মারা যাওয়া ছাড়া আর কিছুই করেননি, তা তো নয়?

○ নিজের ভ্রাতৃপুত্র অমিয় বসুকে লেখা একটি চিঠিতে (সন্ ১৪ই এপ্রিল, ১৯৩৯) উল্লেখ করেছিলেন, Nobody has done more harm to me personally and to our cause in this crisis than Pandit Nehru, আপনি এইটাকে কি ভাবে ব্যাখ্যা করেন?

The point is this, যখন এই কথাটা বলছেন, তখন ঠুঁদের মধ্যে একটা মন কষাকষি হচ্ছিল, কিন্তু that doesn't mean that they were enemies to each other। প্রথমত যখন ঠুরা দুজনে একসঙ্গে Politics এ আসছেন Nehru was 8 years older to him, কিন্তু ঠুরা দুজনেই looked upon as তরুণদের leader, [দুজনেই কিন্তু], এবং একই সঙ্গে কাজ করছেন, they were very friendly, এবং তারপরে আমি প্রথম যখন কাজ করছিলাম, দেখেছিলাম যে when Kamala Nehru was dying, in Europe, Sanatorium এ রয়েছেন, Nehru in prison এখানে, [কিন্তু] নেতাজিও বাইরে, [কিন্তু প্রথমত] exile হিসেবে[ও]।

তিনি বাইরে, তারপরে খুব অসুস্থ, নিজের পেটের অপারেশন হয়েছে, সেই অবস্থাতেও he is looking after Kamala Nehru; চিঠি-পত্রতে দেখছি যে তিনি লিখছেন যে, আজকে আমি Vienna to Prague যাচ্ছিলাম—Prague অবধি আমি একসঙ্গে গেলাম, কমলা নেহরুর সঙ্গে, – ও বারবার যখনই কোথাও যাচ্ছেন একবার উনি গিয়ে যে Sanatorium এ আছেন, তিনি ঘুরে গিয়ে দেখে যাচ্ছেন, কিছুদিন Austria, কিছুদিন Switzerland, কিছুদিন Germany, বিভিন্ন জায়গায় ছিলেন, তারপরে যখন গুরুতর অসুস্থ, একদম Dying, তখন এইখানে ইংরেজরা Jawaharlal Nehru কে ছেড়ে দিলো, Nehru came, আর তারপর last days এ আবার, actually যখন Kamla Nehru is dying, তখন ওঁর beside এ কারা, তিনজন খালি—Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Subhash Chandra Bose। Whatever it is, Nehru and he were very friendly, উনি [Nehru] বলছেন এই বিপদের সময় তুমি আমাকে বলবে যা দরকার হয়, অন্যদিকে ইংরেজরা বলেছে, He is in exile [Subhash Chandra Bose], তুমি যদি দেশে ফেরো, ফিরলেই কিন্তু তোমাকে আমরা ধরবো। তখন উনি সেটারও পরামর্শ চাইছেন Nehru র কাছে—। What I am trying to say is that they were very close, যখনকার কথা তুমি বলছো, যুদ্ধটা যখন বাঁধলো, তখন তো উনি বললেন যে যুদ্ধের সময় let us act, Nehru-Gandhi বললেন No, এবং যখন উনি 1938 এ he was the president of the Indian National Congress এবং '39 এ যখন উনি আরেকবার চাইলেন হতে, এবং যেটা অনেকেই চেয়েছিলেন including Rabindranath Tagore, কারণ রবীন্দ্রনাথের চিঠিপত্র পড়ছি আমরা, [তো] উনি লিখছেন যে, We are—, দুজন modernist রয়েছে খালি Congress এ Jawaharlal Nehru আর Subhas, [তো] উনি বলছেন যে— Subhas Chandra যখন Congress President হলেন Planning Commission করলেন, করে Planning Commission- এর President Jawaharlal কে বললেন তুমি হও, তাহলে গান্ধীজিকে আমাদের একটু বোঝাতে সুবিধা হবে— [তো] Tagore is saying, already Jawaharlal planning এর এতে আছেন আর ওঁ যদি আরেকটা Term পায়, তাহলে আমরা ভালোভাবে এগিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে পারবো। তো এইটা ওঁরা বলছেন [চেয়েছিলেন] অনেকে, কিন্তু এটা হল না শেষ অবধি [হল না]। কিন্তু এটাতে যেটা খুব বাধা হল, I must say, ওই একটা period এ Gandhiji একদম ভীষণ জেদ ধরে রইলেন, [ভীষণ] এবং যখন for once, আমাদের তো কংগ্রেসের ঠিক নির্বাচন হয় না কখনো, মোটামুটি স্থির হয়ে যায় কে হবে তারপরে একটা নির্বাচন ডেকে— ওটা তো এমনি। তখনকার দিনে গান্ধীজি ঠিক

করে দিতেন কি হবে। The only election was held in '39। সেই election এ Gandhiji যাকে দাঁড় করালেন, he was defeated and Subhash Chandra Bose won। Gandhiji সেটা ঠিক নিতে পারলেন না, উনি কিছুতেই আর ওটা ক্ষমা করতে পারছিলেন না। এইরম যখন অবস্থা তখন আমরা যাকে কংগ্রেসের old guard বলি like সর্দার প্যাটেল, গোবিন্দ বল্লভ পন্থ এরা সকলে গান্ধীজির সঙ্গে, –He is the elected President। I must say তখনো কিন্তু জওহরলাল নেহেরু [কিন্তু] এদিক পুরোপুরি যে গুঁদের সঙ্গে তাও নয়। উনি গান্ধীজিকে বলছেন, [গুঁকে] সুভাষকে না একটু বোঝালে ও বোঝে, [কেনো] একটু বোঝালে হয়, এইরকম। তবে যেটা হতো, গান্ধীজির বিরুদ্ধে দাঁড়িয়ে কথা বলার মতো সাহস তো কারোরই ছিল না তখনকার দিনে নেতাজি যেটা মাঝে-মাঝে, আর নেহেরু বলতে চেষ্টা করতেন। কিন্তু Gandhiji is saying, চিঠিপত্র দেখেছি আমরা, তুমি যদি আমার এটা পছন্দ না করো, of course, তুমি আমার সঙ্গে disagree করতে পারো, এটা বলছেন কিন্তু in the last state এ নেহেরু সব সময়ই succumb করে যেতেন। [কিন্তু] তখনও আমি বলবো যে নেহেরু কিন্তু চেষ্টা করছেন, till the last। Netaji resigned. রবীন্দ্রনাথের বিখ্যাত চিঠি আছে যে, তুমি resign করো না, আমি তোমার জন্য বলছি, আমি দেশের জন্য জওহরলাল নেহেরু অনেকবার গুঁকে বলেছেন যে তুমি resign করো না। [কিন্তু] ওই সময় গুঁদের মধ্যে একটা চিঠি চালাচালি [হল] হয়েছিল। 27 pages of typed বোধহয় চিঠি জওহরলালকে লিখলেন যাতে গুঁ এটা লিখেছেন, যে, গুঁর খুব অভিমান হল যে এক মাত্র জওহরলালই তো গুঁর সঙ্গে ছিলেন, কিন্তু ঠিক right time এ 100% আর গুঁর সঙ্গে আর থাকলেন না। তাই বলছেন যে, you have done me more harm than anybody else আর জওহরলালের চিঠির উত্তর যেটা সেটাও very much like him। জওহরলাল বললেন, I plead guilty to all that you have said, হ্যাঁ, আমি তো পারলাম না, [এই রকম]। দুজনের খুব ভাব ছিল। সেই জন্য এটাও উনি যখন বলেছেন যে অভিমানের বসত বলছেন, কিন্তু that doesn't mean যে নেহেরু আর জওহরলালের ভীষণ ঝগড়া ছিল – কিংবা গান্ধী আর সুভাষ, অনেকেই দেখবে বলবে যারা Subhash-ite বেশি, গান্ধীজি কিছুই করেননি নেতাজির জন্যই তো হল। একজনকে বড় করার জন্য আর একজনকে ছোট করার কোনো দরকার নেই। গান্ধীজির great role আমাদের এখানে। উনি আমাদের অহিংস-অসহযোগ আন্দোলন দিলেন, , non-cooperation, non-violence, – আজও সেটা তো লোকে ব্যবহার করে। Martin Luther King ও করেছেন Nelson Mandela ও করেছেন –

but doesn't also mean উনি [Netaji] যেটা alternative leadership দিলেন, যুদ্ধ করলেন-
 রণক্ষেত্রে আর কেউ করেননি। একটা army নিয়ে এসে যুদ্ধ করে দেশে ঢুকলেন পর্যন্ত,
 [এসে] সেটারও একটা great role; সেটা একটা alternative leadership, so সেটা মানতে
 হবে, এবং তিনি যখন ঢুকলেন এসে, ঢোকবার পরে যখন INA soldier সবাইকে নিয়ে
 এলো, তখন তো গান্ধীজি was great admirer of সুভাষ চন্দ্র বোস। উনি তো গিয়ে দেখতে
 গেলেন INA soldier দেব, imprisoned in লাল কেল্লা। তোমরা মৌলানা আজাদের বই
 যদি পড়, মৌলানা আজাদ একটু complaint করেছেন যে, গান্ধীজি ভীষণ influenced
 হচ্ছেন by সুভাষ। গান্ধীজি ঠুকে publicly বলছেন, আমি যেটা চেয়েছিলাম, unity হিন্দু-
 মুসলিম-শিখ-খ্রীষ্টান-রাম-রাহিম [অনেক] আমি পারিনি; সুভাষ করে দেখিয়ে দিয়েছে,
 হাতে কলমে করে। সেই জন্য গান্ধী বা ঠুঁদের, এই যে আমাদের একটা perception আছে
 যে, ঠুঁদের দু'জনের খুব ঝগড়া হতো, দারুন ঝগড়া, এটা true নয়। এটা হচ্ছে [সেটা]
 একটা খুব অভিমানের সময় লেখা [এটা] ঠুঁর। উনি চেয়েছিলেন জওহরলাল নেহেরু ঠুঁর
 পাশে পুরোপুরি দাঁড়ান, সেটা উনি দাঁড়ালেন না which is true। তবে এটাও true যে উনি
 ঢের বেশি সঙ্গে ছিলেন rather than, ঠুঁরা ছিল না কেউ, I must say - সর্দার প্যাটেল,
 গোবিন্দ বল্লভ পন্ড। ঠুঁরাতো একটা resolution আনলেন যে, গান্ধীজির অনুমতি ছাড়া
 উনি working committee-টা করবেন না। নেহেরু তো করছেন। নেহেরু গিয়ে বার-বার
 সুভাষের সঙ্গে দেখা করছেন, কি করে এইটা resolve করা যায়, অনেক চেষ্টা করছেন,
 কিন্তু শেষ অবধি করা গেলো না এই আরকি।

O Throughout your life, Memorable ঘটনা, আপনার জীবনে কি কি থাকতে পারে?

এইটা বলা খুব শক্ত, বরঞ্চ পার্লামেন্ট এর বললে বলা যেত।

O হ্যাঁ নিশ্চয়ই, parliament এরই বলুন।

ইন্দিরা গান্ধীকে জিজ্ঞাসা করা হয়েছিল বোধহয় একবার যে, তোমার সবচেয়ে
 memorable moment in your life কি, উনি বলেছিলেন, birth of Rajiv Gandhi। একজন
 মেয়ের পক্ষে এটা কিন্তু খুব একটা moment-- তা ইন্দিরা গান্ধীর এতো কর্মময় জীবন,
 কিন্তু উনি বললেন birth of Rajiv Gandhi। আমার জীবনে- অনেক ঘটনা ঘটে যাচ্ছে –
 “মোর জীবনে বিচিত্র রূপ ধরে তোমার এই ইচ্ছা তরঙ্গিছে” ইচ্ছে যেটা বলে, কারণ আমি

এই যে আমি— পড়াশোনা করলাম, আমাদের সময় যেটা ছিল— school leaving হওয়া মাত্রই, প্রায় যারা আমার বয়সী যারা 16, তাঁদের তো সব বিয়ে হয়ে গেলো, তখনো সেটা চলছে। তারপর আমাদের intermediate বলে একটা ব্যাপার ছিল, আমরা IA পড়তাম। আমার মনে আছে intermediate পরার পরে তো everybody got married, মানে খুব কম লোকই রইল, কিন্তু তারপরে আমরা BA পড়ছি, আমার বাবার [ইয়ে] ছিল যে, I must —পড়াশোনা শেষ করতে হবে, সেটা না হলে আমি আর ordinary খাতে চলে যেতাম।

○ আপনি তার সঙ্গে সংগীত চর্চাও করেছেন?

হ্যাঁ সেটা, I was an only child, বাবা wanted me to be an all rounder আরকি। সুতরাং আমাকে গানও গাইতে হবে, নাচও নাচতে হবে। আমার কাকারাও ছিলেন, নিরোধ চৌধুরী আমার একজন কাকা, তিনি এই করতে হবে, [সেই] সাইকেল চালানো শিখতে হবে। তখনকার দিনে মেয়েরা সাইকেল চালিয়ে ঘুরছে খুব একটা [ইয়ে] ছিলনা। [কিন্তু] আমি তো সাইকেল চালিয়ে ঘুরছি, দিল্লির রাস্তায় ঘুরছি, এখানে lake এও ঘুরেছি, lake এ সাইকেল চড়ে ঘুরছি, তখনকার দিনে এরম ছিল না। আমার আর এক কাকা ছিলেন, আমাকে রাইফেল চালানো শিখতে হল, আমার জন্য 0.22 bolt rifle কেনা হল, আমি rifle shooting করছি, যেগুলো খুব unusual ছিল,— সেই জন্য ঘটনাগুলো আমার জীবনে নিজে-নিজে ঘটেছে, এটাকে memorable বলা যায় কিনা আমি তো জানি না। তারপর যখন আমি ঠিক করলাম আমি পড়বো, চাকরি করব, তখনও আমি যে class এ আছি সেখানে মেয়েরা চাকরি খুব একটা করে না—কিন্তু আমি তো চাকরি করব ঠিক করলাম এবং আমি চাকরি join-ও করলাম, মানে খুঁজে-খুঁজে নিজে দেখে, interview দিয়ে

○ তখন আপনার কি কোথাও মনে হয়েছিল society র থেকে আপনি একটু আলাদা?

আমি যেটা বলছি ঘটনাচক্রে ঘটে যাচ্ছে এগুলো, আমি যে ইচ্ছে করে করছিলাম তা তো নয়। কিন্তু এটা আমার luck বলা বা বলা whatever, এভাবে ঘটে গেলো, তারপর আমি চাকরি করব ঠিক করেছিলাম। প্রায় ঠিক সেই সময় আমার বিয়েও ঠিক হয়ে গেলো এবং—সেই সময় তো আমার মা বলেছিলেন যে, ভীষণ নিন্দে হবে শ্বশুরবাড়িতে চাকরিটা ছেড়ে দাও তাড়াতাড়ি, তো আমি ছাড়িনি এই, আর তো সেটাও রয়ে গেলো —

তারপরে my involvement into Netaji thing – নেতাজি as a statesman, যেটাতে আমার interest হয়ে গেলো, সেটা অবশ্যই এখানে এসে because of my husband's work in this side, I had to be involved in it। সেই জন্যে — Life এ things আপনে-আপনে অনেক কিছু ঘটে, যেগুলো তুমি explain করতে পারো না বোধহয়, বুদ্ধিতে যার ব্যাখ্যা চলে না— you can't just explain। তারপর ঢুকলাম in politics যেটা, সেটাও তো আবার accidental, I never wanted to be in it or thought that I would ever be in it, accidentally ঢুকে পড়লাম। [কিন্তু] ঢুকে পড়লাম বলে that is also a very important part of my life, আমি তো অনেক কিছু শিখলামতিনবারের জয়ী আমি, তিনবারই MP ছিলাম ওখানে, MP থাকাকালীন আবার just because I became richer person of it, foreign affairs committee, আবার অন্যরকম অনেক experience হয়ে গেলো আবার, এইগুলো যে আমি ইচ্ছাকৃতভাবে কিছু করছিলাম তা বলবো না তাই জন্য কোনো টাকে ফেলে কোনো টাকে আমি memorable বলবো জানি না, things kept on rolling.... আমি লিখতাম বরাবরই – On education, education সম্বন্ধে আমার critique একবার লিখে I sent it to 'Statesman', তখনকার দিনের সবচেয়ে বড় কাগজ, I don't know why they published it, এবং আমি আমার নিজের নামে লিখিনি, roll number 13 বলে লিখেছিলাম । Next 6 months আর কিছু বেরোলো না, শুধু ওই আমার লেখার উপরে, ভালো-মন্দর তর্কবিতর্ক চলতেই লাগলো। Nobody knew who I was because আমার Roll no. 13 ,আর বাংলাতে আমি প্রথম লেখা লিখেছিলাম দেশ পত্রিকায়, topic আবার modern art, আমি তখন খুব art critic হবো ঠিক করেছিলাম। প্রথম জীবনে তো modern art -এর উপরে লেখা একটা, সেটাও সাগরময় ঘোষ, খুব legendary সম্পাদক দেশ পত্রিকার, গুঁর হাতে পড়েছিল। উনি ছেপেছিলেন। লেখার কাজটা আজকেও চালাচ্ছি ।

○ আপনার principal হিসেবে অভিজ্ঞতাটা কেমন?

I never wanted to be a principal, আমি professor of English literature ছিলাম অনেক দিন, তারপরে departmental head এও বেশ বহুদিন আছি। অবশ্যই আমার ছাত্রদের সঙ্গে সবথেকে ভালো সম্পর্ক ছিল। যেদিন Obama প্রথম জিতলেন, মানে black president জিতেছেন America এ, খুব হৈ-হৈ আমাদের এখানে। আমি একজন কে meet করলাম, সে আবার বলল যে আমি আপনার ছাত্রী ছিলাম। আমি বললাম তাই নাকি?

তখন বলল হ্যাঁ এই Obamaর এই election দেখছি তো যে আমি আর চোখে ভাসছে আপনি দাড়িয়ে পড়াচ্ছেন – *Abraham Lincoln* বলে একটা নাটক পাঠ্য হয়েছিল, তো বলল, আপনি একবার *Abraham Lincoln* পড়াচ্ছিলেন, ওইটা পড়াতে গিয়ে আমাদের ওখানকার যে problem with the black people, এই সব বোঝাচ্ছিলেন। তো Obama-কে দেখছি আর মনে পড়ছে যে আপনি যা পড়াচ্ছিলেন। I never wanted to be the principal। আমি America তে ছুটি কাটাতে গেছিলাম summerএ। ফিরে এসে শুনে যিনি principal ছিলেন তিনি retire হয়েছেন, এবং governing body has chosen me as to be the principal। তো আমি তো city college south-এ ছিলাম। ...

তবে যেটা বললাম দেখো, সব জিনিসই না যেটা জীবনের ধন কিছুই যাবেনা ফেলা, সবটাই শিখলাম। ...

○ বিবেক চেতনা সম্বন্ধে কিছু বলুন। আপনার ওটা নিয়ে কি future plans আছে?

না, না। ওটা কিন্তু ঠিক আমার plan বলবো না। We deal with distressed women and children। গ্রামে গিয়ে কাজ হয়। এখানেও হয়। এখানে ধরো কিছু distressed women বসে কাজ করে। সেলাই-টেলাই করল। সেটা বিক্রি হল। তারা কিছু টাকা পেল তার থেকে, একটু self-reliant হল। রামকৃষ্ণ মিশন একটু জড়িত। জড়িত মানে দূর থেকে। সারদা মঠ যেটা মেয়েদের যেটা, সেখানে মুক্তিপ্রাণাজী (মারা গেছেন) প্রথম বলেছিলেন কিছু younger women যাদবপুর ইউনিভার্সিটির, প্রফেসর কাউকে ডেকে যে তোমরা কিছু একটা কর না সবাই। তখন ওইটার নাম মুক্তিপ্রাণাজী দিয়েছিলেন– বিবেক।

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সাক্ষাৎকার নিয়েছেন দেবায়ন ব্যানার্জী, সৌভিক দাস, স্বয়ম্দিপ্ত মুন্সী, অন্তরা বাগচী, শর্মিষ্ঠা মল্লিক, সৌভিক চক্রবর্তী আর শতদ্রু মুখার্জী।

অনুলিখন করেছেন অভিসম্বুদ্ধ মুখার্জী, অরুণোদয় হালদার, রূপজীৎ ব্যানার্জী, অরিত্রিকা গুপ্ত আর কৃতি সেন
সম্পাদনা করেছেন ডাঃ শ্রীময়ী গুহ ঠাকুরতা, অভিসম্বুদ্ধ মুখার্জী, অরুণোদয় হালদার আর দীপ্ত গঙ্গোপাধ্যায়



Essays



Nirad C. Chaudhuri's College Days: Some Fragmentary Reflections

Dr. Supratim Das

Vice Principal, Scottish Church College

Nirad C Chaudhuri studied history at Scottish Churches College (renamed Scottish Church College in 1929) and topped the University of Calcutta. Among his contemporaries in the college were Subhas Chandra Bose and Abhay Charan De (later known as Sri Sri Prabhupada). They belonged to a germinal time in the history of this great institution under the brilliant leadership of the then Principal Dr. William Spence Urquhart. This was the second decade of the twentieth century which witnessed various Societies working in the college with creative ideas and inspiring achievements. The foremost among them were the Historical Society, the Philosophical Society and the Literary Society. Nirad Chaudhuri was closely associated with the Historical Society while Subhas Chandra Bose made some lasting contributions to the Philosophical Society as its Secretary. While Nirad Chaudhuri's teacher Dr. Kalidas Nag founded the Historical Society in 1915 and devoted much time and energy to it, the Philosophical Society was guided by none other than the Principal Dr. Urquhart. Looking back to this eventful period is truly a joy forever.

As a Fourth-Year student of History, Nirad Chaudhuri presented an intriguing paper called "The Objective Method in History" in the Historical Society in early 1918. Well researched and an outcome of hard work, the essay invited a heated discussion in the session. Even the freshers in the department such as Ajit Banerjee, Kartik Mitra and Indra Goswami made significant intervention in the seminar. From the Report of the Secretary of Historical Society Pratul Chandra Auddy, it appears that Dr. Kalidas Nag, who was presiding over the session, offered a fresh and original interpretation of the problem of history writing in his concluding observations. As Pratul Chandra Auddy nicely put it, Prof. Nag called upon the attention of students to the sign posts behind the veil of history where new vistas could be opened to view the inner working of the soul of the historian. As Auddy rightly said, that was the job of the historian. On the one hand, historians deal with the odds like irrational thinking, superficial ideas and unhistorical perceptions. On the other hand, they struggle to find out the truth using the tools of history writing. There may be divergent documents and discourses, and the historian's challenge lies in building up a justifiable rubric.

The situation was notable. The speaker in the Seminar was Nirad C. Chaudhuri. In chair was his illustrious teacher Dr. Kalidas Nag, who also problematised the theme of the presentation in his concluding note. But the reason behind Nirad Chaudhuri's decision to present a paper on the craft of history writing was no less interesting. Chaudhuri himself referred to this in his Autobiography. In his words, like others he also became a great admirer of the youngest faculty in the department – Dr. Kalidas Nag. He was not only a fine scholar, but his style of teaching was also highly impressive. His lectures created a charismatic appeal in the classroom. But one day's incident was not in consonance with Nirad Chaudhuri's sense of historical judgement. He suddenly realised that "he [Dr. Nag] had a serious flaw in his scholarly constitution whose existence I [Nirad Chaudhuri] had not suspected."

What was the incident? By the end of 1917, the Calcutta University Commission came to visit Scottish Churches College for a few days. The Committee was chaired by the British educationist and university administrator Sir Michael Ernest Sadler and the members included the renowned British historian Ramsay Muir. One day in January 1918, as Dr. Nag was teaching ancient Indian history in the class, Prof. Muir entered the classroom and took his seat on a back bench. As noted by Nirad

Chaudhuri, Dr. Nag was giving an excellent lecture in his normal way. But with the coming of Prof. Muir, he deviated from his original lecture and started talking on a different topic in a forcefully patriotic vein. Dr. Nag made a comparison between the blood thirsty nature of the Europeans and the tolerance and pacifism of the Hindus. In a broad sweep of analysis, he brought into consideration all the issues from Sicilian Vespers to the Inquisition. An “ashamed” Nirad Chaudhuri discovered a sense of satisfaction in his teacher’s behaviour and came back home with boiling anger and resentment. He almost overnight wrote an essay on the importance of objectivity in History for the Historical Society.

The question remains: What made Nirad Chaudhuri so angry on hearing his teacher’s lecture so that he dramatically wrote the first original historical essay of his life (“My first original essay on an historical subject”)? Surely this kind of outburst was perfectly in tune with Nirad Chaudhuri’s mentality and attitude. True that he himself spoke of “historical integrity”. As he wrote, “When most of my fellow students and teachers appeared to think that history existed only for the sake of exalting Indian nationalism, I with all my love for my country came to regard a lapse from historical rectitude as even more condemnable than a lapse from moral conduct.” Perhaps the reality is that his self-crept in.

Considering the episode from Kalidas Nag’s side, one may conclude that by comparing the “blood-thirstiness” of the Europeans with the tolerant culture of the Hindus in Ramsay Muir’s presence, he deviated from his original point and made a generalisation. By judging the Europeans and the Hindus (perhaps implying Indians) in black and white, he also essentialized the matter. Neither was Europe a geographical or cultural monolith, nor were all the Hindus tolerant and pacifist. Kalidas Nag was no doubt influenced by the fervour and legacy of the Swadeshi Age. Himself a Brahmo, he expressed the [Hindu] nationalist emotion in front of a European intellectual. This kind of nationalist outburst against the European attempt at establishing hegemony in India was in the air. Nirad Chaudhuri condemned this as “... a tremendous patriotic harangue”.

But Chaudhuri himself expressed his profound admiration for British civilisation and his strong disapproval of the activities of Indian nationalists in most of his later political writings. He loudly expressed his complimentary views of Great Britain and the British Empire. He believed that an imperium could be a

civilising force and the British Empire in India was “the best political regime which had ever been seen [there], in spite of its shortcomings and positive evils”. In the 1930s, he sharply criticised Indian politics and politicians. He disapproved of both Mohandas Gandhi and Subhas Chandra Bose. As early as 1936 he “wholly rejected the idea of a transfer of power to Indian hands by Britain as a possible solution of the Indian problem. On the contrary, I thought that power in Indian hands would be a calamity for the Indian people.” It would not be far-fetched to draw a link between his reaction to what he called his teacher’s “patriotic harangue” in 1918 and his later writings that earned him the appellation of “anti-national”. But that is a different story.

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**'I made it, and I unmade it':
An Analysis of 'Hind-Swaraj',
Gandhian Thought and few
glimpses of the present**

Saptarsha Seal

Alumni (2019- '22) Scottish Church College

The idea of nationhood in Gandhiji's mind had undergone through a path full of dynamism. The pillars of that mental construct of Gandhiji, were reflected from time to time in the writings of Mahatma; the idea of 'Hind-Swaraj' reflect a few glimpses of Gandhiji's thought in the making of the nation which was very different from the definition of state. He highlighted the fact that 'Swaraj' is something which can be achieved when each one would feel it from the bottom of their heart. Gandhiji's own idea of 'Swaraj' is quite different from the 'general idea' of 'independence' brought forward by the contemporary Indian nationalists. Nearly after 114 years of 'Hind-Swaraj' and after the 150th birth anniversary celebration of 'the father of the nation', a re-evaluation, re-analysis, of the significance of 'Hind-Swaraj' in 'independent' India is the focus of this paper. Analysis from different angles in today's context can portray different views which can be even diametrically opposite from each other. This paper will explore the relevance of the same with an attempt of drawing a parallel with the 20th century context along with the juxtaposition of the 21st Century arena in a limited scope.

"I am biding my time, and you will find me leading the country in the field of politics when the country is ready. I have no false modesty about me. I am undoubtedly a politician in my own way, and I have a scheme for the country's freedom. But my time is not yet..."

Gandhiji-Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, when we use to hear his name, some words come to our mind 'the father of nation', 'Mahatma' and 'ahimsa'. These words and the Making of these words in contemporary era, it's meaning and the making of the word had a different philosophical context which have undergone a lot of changes with the flow presently if we try to measure it's significance taking time as the scale to measure it's depth as Gandhi himself uttered to P.C.Joshi that "I made it and I unmade it"ⁱ Gandhi commented that he was a man of idea.ⁱⁱ Being the students of social science, we only have the capability to re-evaluate the ideas of a great personality under an analytical lens. Although we are not an expert on Gandhiji, but we being the citizens of 'independent' India (that we got on August 15,1947), can try to assess our 'Bapuji' by analysing his arguments. This is just a short 'critical study' within a very limited scope. Analysis of Gandhi's theory, neither mean rejection or reflection of the whole of his mental construct. But it elaborated Gandhi's argument and provides logical defence too in the light of the civilization of 21st century in 'Independent India'.

Now, the question is what is 'Swaraj' and how the concept of 'Swaraj' comes in the political vocabulary in India. Some scholars state 'Hind-Swaraj' is the 'Bible of Gandhian Thought', whereas some critics pointed it as 'the paper of criticism of civilization'. But, this word was not introduced in the dictionary of politics by Gandhi himself, as it is a concept mentioned in the Vedic texts. Gandhiji in this sense continued the Vedic tradition of morality. At first, the concept 'Swaraj' was used by Bal Gangadhar Tilak saying that it is the 'birth-right', who was called by Mahatma Gandhi as 'the maker of Modern India'ⁱⁱⁱ. Later on, it became a watch-word alike 'freedom' that became a watch-word too during French Revolution (1789) or part of 'the heritage of the revolution' in the context of 19th century France as observed by Maurice Agulhon^{iv}. 'Swaraj' comes from 'Swa' and 'Raj' that mean 'of the self' and 'rule or government' respectively. So, etymologically it means 'Self-Rule'. It is known to all that Gandhiji was the symbol of non-violence. Henry Thoreau's "On The Duty of Civil Disobedience" (1847) was a 'masterly treatise' to him, whereas Tolstoy's "The Kingdom of God is Within You" (1893) overwhelmed him. "When a book gripped his imagination, he meditated on it, brooded over its message, put its central ideas into action, and 'grew from truth-to-truth'."^v Besides, Plato's 'Apology', Salters's 'Ethical Religion'(1889), Ruskin's 'Unto this last'(1862) encouraged him in different ways to discover the doctrine of non-violence and love when he was 'Mahatma-in-the-making' and Gandhiji's 'pratap'(power/glory) ^{vi} was not known to the masses.

Gandhiji in his 40th year had written the book entitled 'Hind-Swaraj' in Gujarati (1908-'09) that was translated by him later in English.

Gandhiji's concept of Swaraj and the concept of 'independence' are quite different from each other. If we subtly follow the ideas of Gandhiji, it will become easier to understand that Gandhi's idea is metaphysical, but concept of 'freedom of nation' is more political by nature. Gandhiji linked the concept of Swaraj along with the practice of 'satyagraha'^{vii} as Gandhi tried to portray his thought about Swaraj in two ways. So we may say that both at the individual level from inside and at national level from the core of the nation's soul the voice of Swaraj must be heard-that was the destiny of Gandhiji's idea. "The root meaning of 'Swaraj' is self-rule... Independence means license to do as you like...Swaraj is positive, Independence is negative. The word 'Swaraj' is a sacred word, a Vedic word,meaning self-rule...and not freedom from all."^{viii} Gandhi did not only want to see the independent India, but he wanted to see the expression of common people after getting the opportunity to self-rule. Gandhi said, an individual had to be capable of self-rule: "Swaraj has to be experienced by each one for himself"^{ix}. Hence, in 'Indian Opinion', Gandhiji opined 'Real Swaraj consists in self-constraint. He alone is capable of this, who leads a moral life...'^x One commentator once wrote on "Hind-Swaraj" that it is "the point d' appui of Gandhi's moral and political thought".^{xi} It can be stated that the nation was like a body to Gandhiji, whose filtration was needed from the core.

Some of Gandhiji's ideas are inclusive by nature still now in today's context. In the decade of putting the title of 'anti-national' to many personalities, be it a student leader or an eminent historian, when a group of people are busy on promoting majoritarian principles in the society, in the name of 'nationalism', Gandhiji's ideas of 'patriotism' was undoubtedly more inclusive by nature. "By patriotism" Bapuji "mean the welfare of whole people."^{xii} Gandhiji had gone to the extent of saying that "if any Englishmen dedicated his life to the freedom of India, resisting tyranny and serving the land, I should welcome that Englishmen as Indian."^{xiii} So, he was ready to even accommodate the British, if they would undergo through the process of 'Indianization'. Gandhiji put much stress to protect the own traditional culture of the country. Thus, he was ready to accept each and every one who would follow that culture or accustom themselves with it.

Gandhiji had a dream of making an ideal society. There are some pillars of that society formed by a group of individuals. Polity and governance, economy etc. are among the important pillars. In the eyes of Gandhi, Man is a value concept only. He is not just made of flesh and blood. According to Aristotle, man is a rational animal. But, Gandhian 'man' differs from Aristotelian 'man' who is distinguished from an animal by possession of its values. Man is the trio-in-one i.e., 'body-mind-spirit' complex. Gandhi criticized modern western civilization as it treats man as a lump of matter. Nowadays, the age in which we live is the age of information and technology. Science always makes a man more rational in his thoughts. But this rationality manifests itself in the development of science and technology bidding to accumulation of power." But, the word 'power' mentioned here is nothing else but undoubtedly it was the offspring of

reason and knowledge. When an individual knows more, he tries to manipulate others. In a broader perspective, a nation too manipulates and exploits another nation only by his power; then man lacks rationality and here lies the essence of anti-colonial tonal reflection of Gandhi's words. "Reason and knowledge should not only endow man with physical process".^{xiv} So, Gandhian man was not essentially a rational one only but also a value-seeker too.

If we go through the essays of 'Hind-Swaraj' by M.K.Gandhi, it will draw our attention to the fact how he criticized the modern western civilization. In some writings some scholars directly mentioned it as a 'paper to criticize Western Civilization'. He opined "India is being ground down, not under the English heel but under that of Modern Civilization".^{xv} He criticized different sites of the modern civilization. The 'half-naked fakir'^{xvi} was against the use of machinery in some cases. He strongly criticized four aspects of Western Civilization competition, survival, profit and last but not the least, manipulation. According to him, all these would ultimately lead us to greed, avarice, jealousy and mutual hatred. Thus, at some points Gandhiji opined "Swadeshi in every sense is necessary"^{xvii}. Nowadays it is in news while the Union Government is promoting the idea of 'Made In India' initiative. But, the age in which we are living is the age of robotics, artificial intelligence, we cannot even think of a life without machineries, without this android phone, without this laptop or other machineries, we are using every day. Far ago during the making of the Planning Commission, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the ardent follower of Gandhi also moved away from Gandhiji's idea of a society without mechanization to continue the process of the growth of the newly-born nation as he had mentioned himself that the idea of the Planning commission which is acting behind the commission as a fuel was 'the idea of further industrialisation'^{xviii} which was diametrically opposite to the Gandhian vision of 'modernity'. Although Louis Fischer in his writing mentioned that Bapuji's room in Sabarmati Ashram was even standing there without electricity, we in this age would face a lot of problems if we would try to follow it. Once in the interview with Charlie Chaplin, Gandhiji mentioned –"I am not against machineries. But I will condemn the use of machineries when it will become aggressive. People of our country have been turned into slaves by you people. When we will be independent we will use the machineries as per our need".^{xix} It is interesting that John Middleton Murray, a Socialist once argued that Gandhi forgot "in the urgency of his vision, that the spinning-wheel he loves is also a machine, and also unnatural. On his principles it should be abolished"^{xx} In 1924, in Delhi when Gandhiji enquired of whether he was against all the machineries he told –"How can I be when I know that even this body is a piece of machinery?"^{xxi} Even Gandhiji had opined that "her civilization required the use of a different and higher weapon for self-protection"^{xxii} So, a re-evaluation suggests that there were different layers in Gandhiji's vision about the concept of machine and the world of mechanics and artificial instruments; in the question of modernity Gandhian concept was something different, but Gandhi's views on the machines and its usages were not diametrically opposite to each other to say in a simple manner.

As Gaganendranath Tagore criticized colonial education through his paintings, 'Gurudev' Rabindranath Tagore established 'Viswabharati' to establish a new education policy, different from colonial education, Bapuji also spoke against this particular problem. His words are even true in today's context, "Today, the youth educated in our universities either ran after government jobs or fell into devious ways and sought outlet for their frustration by fomenting unrest"^{xxiii}. So, Gandhiji had also shown a remedy. He stated, "Our ancient school system is enough. Character-building has the first place in it and that is primary education. A building erected on that foundation will last."^{xxiv} Here, I have mentioned only about the ideas, but respective academicians can explain its significance more effectively.

Now it is the time to analyse a question what Gandhiji defined and what we had got through independence on August 15, 1947 and afterwards. Another question is what Gandhi wanted and what we want. Gandhiji once wrote – "True democracy of the Swaraj of the masses can never come through untruth..Individual freedom can have the fullest play only under a regime of un-adulterated 'ahimsa'."^{xxv} In May, 1919, Gandhi while starting his political journey in Indian soil, he himself made a comment on his idea of 'Hind-Swaraj'. He stated- "After years of endeavor to put into practice the views expressed in the following pages, I feel that the way shown therein is the only true way to Swaraj"^{xxvi}. Gandhiji in his life had done 'satyagrahas' for several times in several issues, that was started with Champaran-Kheda-Ahmedabad and continued later on. He had led three significant national movements-non-cooperation movement (1920), Civil Disobedience Movement (1930) and Quit-India Movement, but all the movements were standing on the pillar of 'ahimsa'. Gandhiji stated- "Swaraj of my dream is the poor man's Swaraj"^{xxvii}. In history and social science, Gandhiji is a figure of debate and it becomes more significant when the debate between Gandhiji's thought and revolutionaries come. Although in today's context, when in different universities students are gaining the adjective of 'urban-naxal', Gandhiji's thought was different. In 1931, he mentioned in 'Young India' after withdrawing 'Non-cooperation movement' due to the violence of Chauri Chaura incident at Gorakhpur that his target is to get "Purna Swaraj". But he again mentioned that it cannot be achieved by force but by organization and unity. He opined that when the dumb and lame millions would speak then only it can be achieved. So, in today's context too, we have to remember it to maintain peace.

RAMA-RAJYA: A Very Short Discussion: Gandhiji in his whole life had documented his thoughts in different writings. He had a dream to see such a government where "the ruler will be the protector, trustee and friend of people."^{xxviii} In Indian Polity, this debate had come several times whether the rulers could reach to this state or would be able to reach to that state or they had already reached to this state. Secondly, Gandhiji mentioned that the people need a 'Ram-Rajya'. Now, some can speak against me and some can state that we are now in the state of 'Ram-Rajya-in-the-making', which can be a separate matter of debate for politicians and academicians but we have to properly analyse Gandhiji's thought before making any statement from our thoughts. "By Rama-Raj, I do not mean Hindi-Raj" said Gandhiji in "Young India"(1929)^{xxix}. According to him, "Rama symbolized justice

and equity, Rama symbolized truth and charity”.^{xxx} So, we need an India where the basis of ‘Bharat’ will be the ‘Raj of equity and justice’.

Gandhiji not only told a lot about ‘Hind-Swaraj’ only, but also about ‘Village Swaraj’. The basic principles of ‘Gram-Swaraj’ as laid down by Gandhiji are –co-operation, best utilization of man-power, village governance by panchayats, decentralisation, supremacy of man, self-sufficiency, equality and ‘nav talim’. Our honourable Prime Minister, former chief minister in Gujarat had taken initiatives like ‘Samras Gram Yajana’(unanimous election of Panchayats), ‘Tirth Gram’(award of 2 lakh to villages free of social disturbance for five years), ‘Pani-Samiti,’ ‘E-gram Viswa Gram Yojana’, ‘Apna Taluko Vibrant Taluko’, ‘Kaushal Vardhan Talim Kendra’etc to use Gandhiji’s idea in practical in the platform of reality. As in the 21st century, it is quite difficult to lead a rural life like Vedic Ages for the people who live in semi-rural and urban areas. In today’s India, if this initiative can be taken all over the country, undoubtedly India will be able to touch the near possible peak of the pillar of Bapuji’s dream soon.

If we look upon the views of the scholars, we can see different views which are supporting to each other in some cases and diametrically opposite in some cases too. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Gandhi’s ‘political guru’ regarded the book of ‘Hind-Swaraj’ so crude and hastily conceived, whereas Nehru, admirer of Gandhi and first prime minister of ‘independent’ India in a letter of October 4,1945 had written- “It is many years ago since I read Hind-Swaraj and I have only a vague picture in my mind. But even when I read it 20 or more years ago it seemed to me completely unreal”.^{xxxii} On the contrary, veteran author, Gerald Heard finds it more significant than treatises of some of the veteran intellectuals of the West even like Jean Jacques Rousseau’s ‘Social Contract’ and Karl Marx’s “Communist-Manifesto”.^{xxxiii} Erickson on the contrary calls it a “rather incendiary manifesto for a man of peace”.^{xxxiiii} Nationalist leader of Vietnam Comrade Ho Chi Minh once told- “I and some others can be revolutionaries but directly or indirectly we all are the disciples of Mahatma Gandhi, not more than that or not less than that”. Thus, from time to time the principles of Gandhiji and his thoughts would be surely question and would be brought under the lens of analysis but the relevance would stay in the minds of people as once Nayantara Sehgal after Bapu’s death had written that even after Bapu physically would not remain with them, his ideas would remain and they would be the flagbearers. The flag is now with us on our shoulder who can bring his principles in the society whenever required.

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Society and Bengali Theatre in Colonial India

Anushka Mandal

Department of History, Semester V

The history of the Bengali Theatre can be traced back to the founding of the Calcutta Theatre in 1779, which had Warren Hastings as one of its patrons. The first play that was staged was by a Russian dramatist, Horasim Lebedev along with a theatre connoisseur, Goloknath Das on 7th November, 1795. It was a Bengali translation of the two English comedies, 'Disguise' and 'Love is the best doctor' in Calcutta. Lebedev made himself well-acquainted with the classical Indian language and dramatic techniques of the Indians. He devoted a lot of time to organize a company of Bengali actors and taught them in European style. Although it was successful but nothing significant growth took place in Bengali theatre after that. Bengali theatre started to prosper and came into limelight only from the first half of the nineteenth century.

One of the important expressions of popular culture that developed in Calcutta was the dramatic performances depicted through the medium of *jatra-palas* and folk plays. But gradually these forms of entertainment came to be disliked by the people due to their loud and over dramatic enactment style. So, these cultural forms shifted to the European style of theatre which led to the introduction of the concept of proscenium stage where the performance would take place on an elevated platform. Thus, theatre was a European import which was highly patronized by the people of Calcutta especially by the Bengali *Babus* in the 19th century. The Bengali elites or the *Babus* were enlightened by the European education and culture, so they wanted to incorporate British traditions in their way of life to create a class of their own. In the course of time, theatre evolved from a private means of entertainment for the rich class to an art form which became open to

all classes of people throughout the nineteenth century. Initially, only the elites and the influential could enjoy and organize such theatrical shows and events. Most of them were *zamindars*, *rajas* and British employs as it became a status symbol for these classes of people. Theatres started to develop under them centering on the private places owned by the elites like their private residencies, farmhouses, etc.

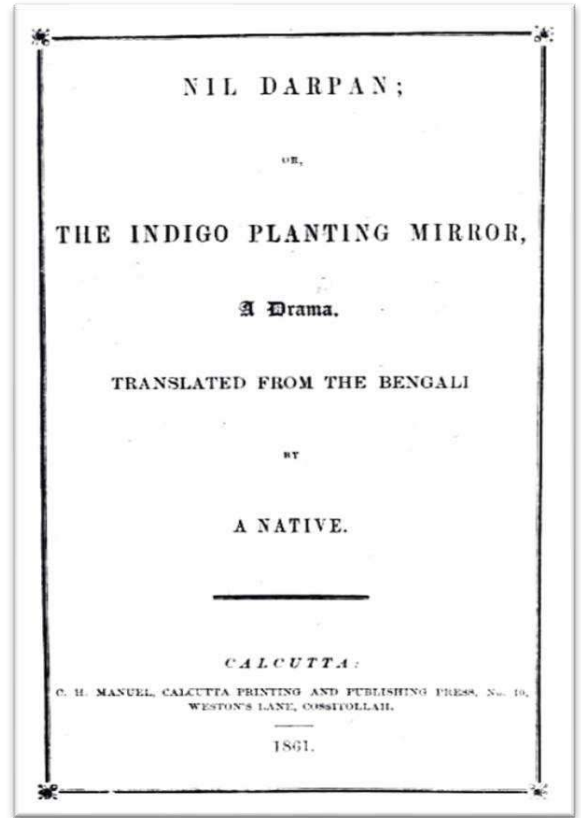
Prasanna Coomar Tagore in 1831 founded the 'Hindu Theatre' which is regarded as the first theatre by a Bengali intellectual. The first performance which was staged was the English translation of Bhavabhuti's *Uttar Ramacharita* on December 14, 1831, thus laying the foundation of modern theatre. After this several theatres were set up by elites like Nabin Basu's theatre at Shyambazar, Peary Mohan Bose's Jorasanko theatre, Shobhabazar Private



John Robinson's translation of
Shakespeare's *Othello*.
Engraved by R.D Sornokar

Theatrical Society by Radhakanta Deb and so on. Theatres of this time revolved around the translated works of English plays and many Sanskrit dramas. The students of the Oriental Seminary founded the Oriental theatre and staged the famous plays *Othello* and *Henry IV* of Shakespeare. Following that, we can see the staging of *Julius Caesar* in Jorasanko theatre. By the mid-19th century plays were written which were based on British naturalistic models, fused them with Indian music and songs. Rabindranath Tagore's '*Raktakarabi*' and '*Raja*' were an effort to experiment with the content of the Bengali theatre. The staging of Sanskrit dramas was widely accepted after the inauguration of Kaliprasanna Sinha's '*Vidyatsahini*' stage in 1857 which encouraged Kaliprasanna to translate Sanskrit dramas into Bengali. He translated Kalidasa's '*Vikramorbashi*', '*Malati-Madhav*', and wrote '*Savitri Satyavan*' based on Hindu Mythology. In that same year Kalidasa's '*AbhijnanaShakuntalam*' was organized by Ashutosh Deb in his theatre. The Bengali elites were more comfortable with this content rather than focusing on the contemporary social issues. Another factor which led these elites to adapt to Sanskrit dramas was a sense of nationalism by showcasing the country's past heritage and rich literature. It is also noteworthy that the influence of the Western theatre forced these entrepreneurs of theatre to explore the classical Sanskrit literary texts, symbolizing the monarchical hierarchy for their source material.

From the second half of the 19th century, we can observe a shift in the writing and content of the plays. The Bengali theatre became a platform for portraying social, political and issues of relevance to the common masses. Social plays occupying the stage and making political statements through theatrical means captured the Bengali



Title Page of Dinabandhu Mitra's Nil Darpan's First translated edition;1861

theatre of that period and thus a quiet revolution took place in Bengali theatre. Ramnarayan Tarkaratna's *Kulin Kula Sarbasva* (1854) is considered a breakthrough in this regard as the people could relate it to a contemporary social evil of polygamy. Dinabandhu Mitra's publication of *Nil Darpan* in 1860 is considered a significant landmark in that era of public theatre. It was published after the Indigo Revolt and the play depicted the ruthless exploitation of the indigo cultivators by the British businessmen. Mitra's firsthand experience of the farmers as a postmaster in rural Orissa and Bengal were portrayed in the play. The play was a major success and was widely accepted by the people. It made the common masses more conscious and aware of the ongoing social and political upheavals. It inspired many such plays which purported to hold up a mirror, as it were to the evils of society.

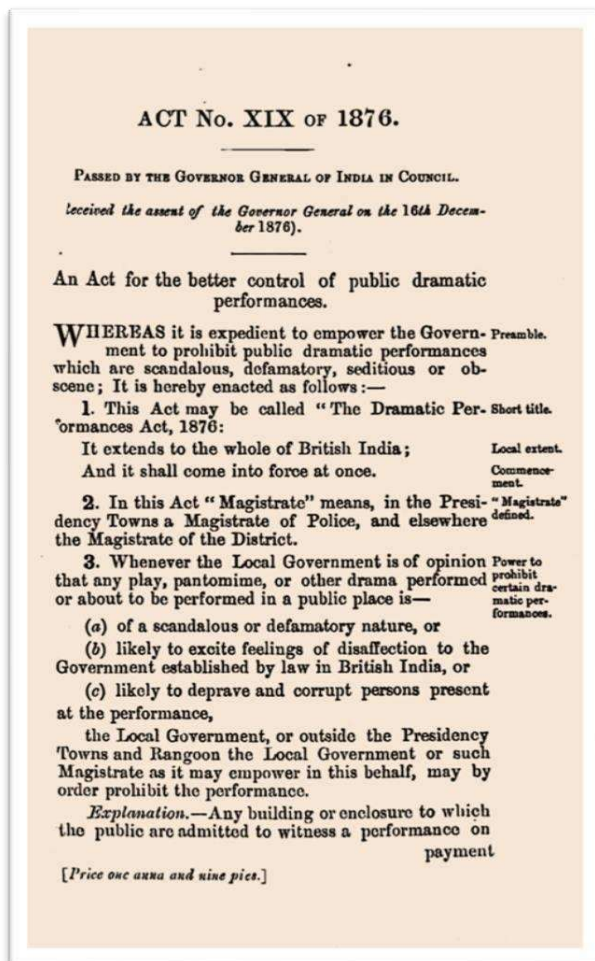
Among them were Mir Mosharraf Hossain's *Janidar Darpan* (narrating a peasant revolt against the landowners), Dakshinaranjan Chattopadhyay's *Chakar Darpan* (depicted the poor working conditions of the workers in British tea estates) and *Jail Darpan* (dealt with the terrible life of the prisoners in Bengal) and many more which focused on the injustices faced by the Indians at the hands of the British. In 1856, Umesh Chandra Mitra wrote *Bidhaba Bibaha Natak* on Widow Remarriage Movement. The wave of social movement through theaters continued to prosper with various dramas and skits on issues like child marriage, polygamy, prostitution, alcoholism etc.

Another notable figure in this context was Michael Madhusudan Dutta, who wrote some of the earliest original plays in Bengali. In his *Ekei Ki Bole Sabhyata*, he criticized the members of the Young Bengal group who blindly followed the European education and culture and in *Budo Shaliker Ghade Ron*, he exposed the hypocrisy of the luxury loving Bengali elites or the *Babus* of the society. Many of the theatres shifted from the Sanskrit dramas to original written plays reflecting contemporary issues and which catered to the demand of the public. The Jorasanko Natyashala Committee started to produce scripts focusing on the conditions of Hindu females and the misery of the village zamindars. It was only from the second half of the nineteenth century that the Babu theatres emphasized portraying the life of the common people in the

theatres. Girish Chandra Ghosh wrote a series of historical plays on the theme of British oppression.

The era of public theatre finally got its recognition with the opening of the National Theatre in 1872 and premiered the *Nil Darpan*. It introduced the ticketing system for viewers. Unfortunately, the screening of this play received criticism and agitated the British officials as they felt it as the destruction of their dignity and prestige. Famous Indian personalities and the people widely accepted and made it successful throughout the country. The following year, the National Theatre produced the play *Gajadananda O Jubaraj*. The play was a satirical account of Jagadananda

Mukherjee, a well-known barrister of Calcutta, who had entertained the visiting Prince of Wales in his house and allowed the women of his family to meet him. This was regarded as a violation of native traditions by the orthodox society where the women were kept away from the Britishers.



A facsimile page of the infamous Dramatic Performances Control Act, 1876

resolved later, with them getting bailed). These consecutive plays

The English Government condemned this act of Jagadananda and accused him of sacrificing his ethics and culture. The play was penned down by the director of the National Theatre, Upendranath Das. The play was immediately shut down by the government after its second show. The Great National Theatre produced another satirical skit *The Police of Pig and Sheep* targeting Mr. Hogg and Mr. Lamb (two high ranking British offici). After this, when the play *Sati ki Kalankini* was being performed on the stage of the National Theatre, the police entered the spot and arrested the director Upendranath Das and eight others on charges of immorality (which was

enraged the British government and ultimately led to the passing of the Dramatic Performances Control Act in 1876 despite strong public oppositions. The Act led to the end of freedom of public theaters and political activism. Their main motive was to ban the staging of the nationalistic plays like *Neel Darpan*, *Bharat Mata* and so on. The British became fully aware of the growing popularity of these plays, so they wanted to curb that through this Act. Commercialization of theatre soon took place and the plays produced mainly looked at making money by putting up big advertisements.

Theatre in the nineteenth century had a profound impact on the Bengali society. It portrayed the socio-economic conditions of Bengal, and the essence of nationalism was also felt. We clearly observed how the Bengali theatre transformed itself into a more mature form of art throughout the years. It has changed according to the ongoing trends to remain popular and active. The monopoly of the theatre passed on from the elites to the common people and it became a strong medium of communication where the societal changes were depicted. Theatre, received from the British, was perceived as a parameter of a progressive culture and much more glorious than the native forms. It played a crucial role in manifesting the opposition to the British rule. To conclude, theatre has always been an integral part of the Bengali culture and it is connected to the depiction of a rich cultural heritage.

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Considering the Suitability of a United Bengal

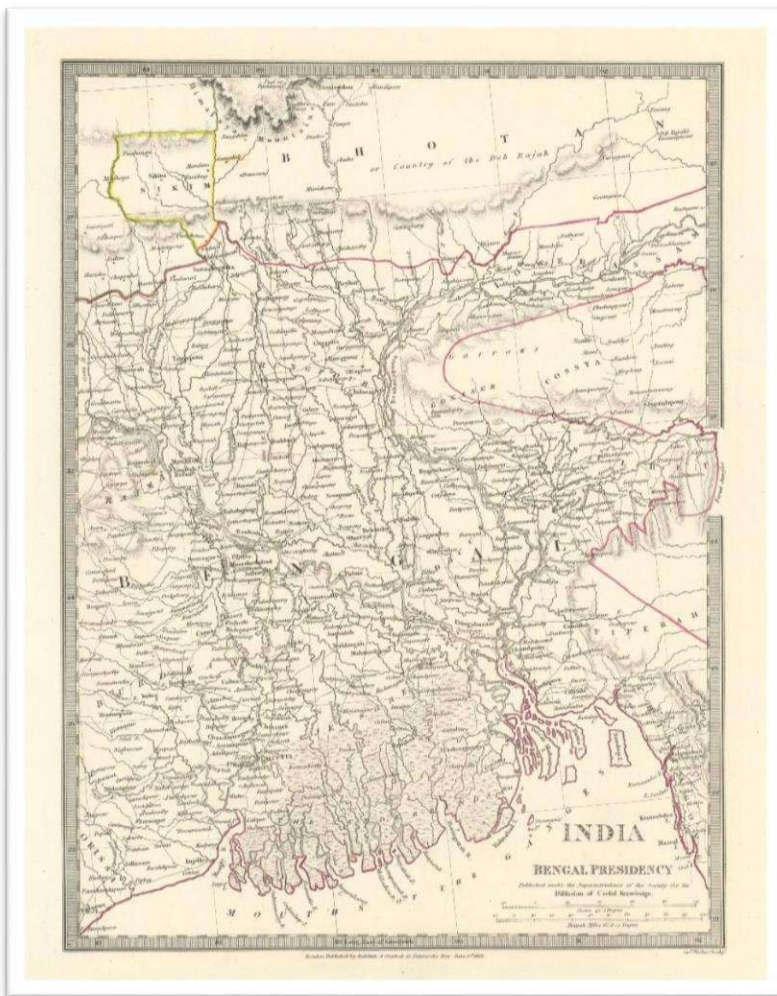
Girvan Mandal

Department of History, Semester V

In the lead up to Indian independence and amid calls for a separate Muslim dominion of Pakistan, there was a consideration of a third State, the nation state of Bengal, undivided and constructed based on language. First advanced by H.S. Suhrawardy, it was also supported by Sarat Bose and KS Roy. Although some discussions did take place, the proposal fizzled out as the British were already decided on a partition and the Hindus and Muslims had already come to blows and did not wish to co-exist. Although the proposal failed, it is interesting to consider the idea of a United Bengal as a sovereign nation, to speculate whether this hypothetical nation-state could have succeeded.

The first consideration is the issue of territory. If the Bengal Province, reorganized in 1912 would form the new State, it immediately puts a question mark on the problem of the Northeastern States. Could they form independent States of their own? Or would they join India as an exclave? Or would they be absorbed by Bengal? There was also the issue of Bengali speaking people in neighbouring states like Bihar, Orissa and Assam. Given that a lot of state reorganization had to take place to create proper linguistic states, several districts exchanged between states, the

process of agreeing on a boundary would have been a long and arduous task. A border dispute could have developed or even violence in districts that fell on the wrong end of the border. That would have been one border dispute the English would not be blamed for. As for the Northeast, if it was to be an Indian exclave, that would threaten the smooth administration of the region and prompt hostile relations between India and Bengal. Had they been independent states of their, they would have been immediately threatened by the



Map of the Bengal, the province which raised the question of, whether to be left united or be partitioned?

larger states on their borders, Bengal and Burma and even faced some hostility from China. It would have been a geopolitical hotspot. Were this region to be absorbed into Bengal, the immediate problem would be rights of religious and linguistic minorities, the problem of local autonomy and even secessionism that has been strong in the region since 1947 and would have

affected Bengali rule over the region as Bengal was to be constructed on the basis of language and Bengali identity and pluralism is doubtful as the Bengalis were in a position of demographic strength to impose a majoritarian system of language on minorities, that may have resulted in resistance in the Northeast. Thus, we find that the issue of territory and the issue of Northeast would have complicated matters and required a very strong leadership to skilfully navigate these problems.

The next issue is that of demographic profile of the population. United Bengal would have been a Muslim majority State with a substantial Hindu minority and smaller minorities of other religions. Although the figures would vary with different possibilities of territorial makeup, but the Muslims would maintain a demographic advantage. The demographic difference between the Hindus and Muslims in Bengal would have been a cause for concern. The Muslims would dominate in a democratic set up, something that the Hindus, used to a more powerful position during the British Raj would not accept. Communal tensions would be likely, as both communities would be large enough to threaten one another and mobilize to defend their own communities.

The Bangladeshis stood up to the Pakistanis because of their demographic strength; Muslims in India are at odds with Hindus due to their demographic strength. These unbalanced demographics would make governing the State a massive challenge and a power sharing agreement would make Bengal a second Lebanon. Given the record of people in the subcontinent attempting to coexist with people of other faiths and cultures, the outlook appears grim. In terms



Muslim League leader Suhrawardy and Gandhian leader Satish Dasgupta marched in Calcutta for Hindu-Muslim harmony, but it turned into a farce a year later, as the city of Calcutta was gripped by horrific fratricidal riots in 1946.

considerations would also vary if the Northeast were to be independent, part of Bengal or part of India, and all eventualities appear to be ugly.

Bengal would also have a problem of resources. While the region is adequately fertile and has enough rainfall to sustain agriculture, freshwater would come from rivers that originate in other countries. Both the Ganges and Brahmaputra are transboundary rivers. Water security, in a turbulent geopolitical space, cannot be guaranteed. China and India would take a lion's share of the water resources. In terms of natural resources, Bengal wouldn't exactly be blessed. Most minerals required for industry would go to India, and Bengal would have to be import dependent. Some coal and mineral resources would be obtained from the western reaches bordering India but mostly the country would be resource scarce. It would be a difficult situation and would require a very good economic policy to ensure growth in industry. Bengal would be

rich in biological resources, although all of that would be under threat as they are even now.



Many Gods- Many Voices; By 1947 there were various range of opinions regarding the future of Bengal Province.

Bengal's population would mostly be rural with a few urban areas like Dhaka (Dacca), Kolkata (Calcutta) and Chattogram (Chittagong) having large metropolitan agglomerations and smaller urban clusters across the country. Governing a mostly rural country would be a challenge. Providing

necessities of life would have been a challenge, let alone the task of developing these areas. Given the record of the efficiency of local governments in West Bengal and Bangladesh in providing necessities of life to rural areas, the outlook for a United Bengal doesn't look convincing. The urban areas would also be a

problem, although nothing that is unique to Bengal, the issues faced would be the same as they are now.

It is in politics that Bengal would face a great challenge. Its two religious groups are divided geographically and as stated earlier these groups would treat one another as potential threats. The choice of capital city would be in doubt with Muslim Dhaka and Hindu dominated Kolkata being at odds with one another. Neither would be comfortable with the superiority of the other. Although a hypothetical Bengali constitution would be secular, in reality, communalism would dominate politics. Bengali Hindus, having enjoyed a more privileged position during the British Raj, would not be willing to take a backseat while the Muslims with a demographic advantage could control power. Two possibilities open up, a Muslim majority dominating a large Hindu minority or a Hindu elite taking power despite demographic weakness. Both are troubling. A political divide would be a likely scenario.

Given all these challenges, it seems exceedingly unlikely that United Bengal would succeed as an independent country, although not impossible. To be successful, to manage its security and development, Bengal would have required very strong, capable and skilful leadership. Otherwise, the democratic institutions would be too weak to sustain a united polity. Judging by the quality of post-Independence leadership of both West Bengal and Bangladesh, the outlook for leaders of a United Bengal does not look good, although it would be impossible to predict what kind of leaders would rise in a United Bengal. In the absence of strong democratic leadership (which is likely due to demographic profile of the country), the country would either get fragmented into separate autonomous units or see the emergence of a strongman, an iron fist leadership to keep the country together. A lot would have to go right for Bengal to thrive as an independent State. Weakness of neighbouring countries, good political handling of the communal and language divide, good economic policy and good diplomacy and defence policies would be necessary preconditions for a stable existence. All these factors seem unlikely. India as a large nation would be a threat to Bengal, communal tensions would complicate politics and the language divide would cause tensions.

In conclusion, I am convinced that although with extraordinary leadership, Bengal could have been a stable country, the possibility of success is just too slim. More likely than not, Bengal's existence

as an independent State would have been turbulent, at best, and a humanitarian disaster, at worst. The proposal was made simply based on language and in opposition to Bengal being partitioned twice, but there was ultimately no consideration for the challenges Bengal would face if it were to be an independent State. It is most likely that a United Bengal would not be a stable and secure country. Thus, the proposal for a United Bengal was not a suitable idea.

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*Sketch by Nandalal Bose
Source: Online*

An Essay on The making of Taliban

Jayaditya Mukherjee

Department of History, Semester V

*By blood, we are immersed in love of you,
The youth lose their heads for your sake,
I come to you and my heart finds rest.*

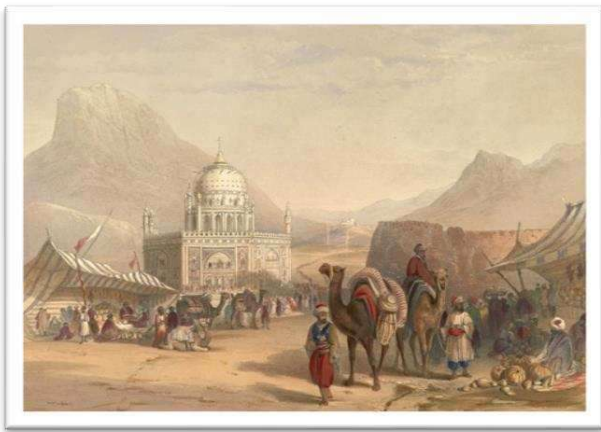
-Ahmed Shah Durrani

Serving as the crossroads between West Asia and South Asia, the various regions of the country can be divided, in the words of Mr. Barfield into four “lego blocks” comprising of Herat in the West, Mazar-e-Shariff in North, Kandahar in the South and Kabul in the center. Another block which is presently out of the country’s recognized borders is the Kybher-Pakhtunkhawa subah with its provincial capital at Peshawar, which before its annexation by the British used to serve as the winter capital of the Afghan rulers.

The country was united in 1747, when the *Loya Jirga* (Council of Elders) elected Ahmed Shah Abdali as the king of Afghanistan, who established his capital at Kandahar and took the title of “Durr-i-Durran” from which the *Abdalis* christened themselves Durrani.

In popular memory, Ahmed Shah Durrani transformed himself into a mythical figure with the title of *Baba* being conferred on him and his tomb in Kandahar being a popular place for pilgrimage. Upon the succession of his son Timur Shah to the throne, the capital was transferred to Kabul.

From a historical purview, the state in Afghanistan was always dependent on cooperation between the monarch and the Tribal elders for sustenance. Direct control of the state seldom existed beyond the city and its environs. The personality of the ruler determined the amount of cooperation he would receive from the feudal Khans. The clerics, while serving in the State Judiciary as *Qazis* were always subjugated to the ruler.



The Tomb of Ahmed Shah Durrani, one of the first individuals to unite the Afghan nation in the 18th Century.

The very word “Afghanistan” creates a perception of a rugged Pathan tribesmen in the mountains, for whom life is every ready to present challenges and seldom does he turn his back to them. However, the *Pashtuns* while comprising the majority of the country’s population they are not the sole inhabitants of

the country, which houses a myriad of ethnic groups. The *Tajiks*, who make constitute nearly 30% of the country’s population and overwhelmingly reside in the country’s urban centers. The *Hazaras*, the only *Shia* community in an otherwise *Sunni* country make up 15% of the population and inhabit the Hazarajat located in the Hindu Kush, a region which was independent but later integrated into the Durrani kingdom during the reign of Amir Abdur Rahim (Iron Amir). The *Uzbeks*, amount to 10% of the country’s population. Among the other smaller ethnic groups such as the *Aimaqs*, *Nuristanis*, *Qizilbashs* are the most notable for they were

recruited in the praetorian guard of the kings. All members of the *Pashtun* community, trace their descent from the common ancestor Qais, a general of Prophet Mohammed, who is credited with converting the peoples of the region to Islam. The *Pashtuns* are divided into various tribes the notables being *Durrani*, *Ghilzais*, *Afridis*.

In recent years, with the US withdrawal from Afghanistan and its subsequent fall to the Taliban, it has become necessary to probe the origins of the Taliban. How did the country, once a bastion of tolerance and hash smoking hippies in popular imagery, suffer such an upheaval of religious extremism? The answer to this question lies in the post Saur Revolution period, when the soviet invasion occurred for the roots of the Taliban lie in the socio-political crisis in the post Afghan Jihad period.

In 1929, with the brief Bacha-i-Saqao interregnum coming to end with the establishment of the Nadiri dynasty and Saradar Nadir Khan being crowned king. Nadir Shah was succeeded by his son, Zahir Shah during whose four-decade long reign witness several experiments such as Democratization were conducted. In 1973, Zahir Shah's regime was toppled by Sardar Daoud, who declared Afghanistan a republic, in all but name, while retaining his



characteristic autocratic style of rule.

In 1978 during the Saur Revolution, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) in a successful coup d'état ousted President Daoud from power, under the leadership of Nur Mohammed Taraki, a self-taught journalist. Taraki's protégé, Hafizullah Amin had successfully recruited the dissatisfied Soviet trained junior officers in the military, a pivotal element in the coup. The ascent of President Taraki, a member of the *Ghilzai* tribe, marks an important phenomenon in the nation's

A glimpse of the Kabul University from the 1970s. While the Socialist regime had instilled modernization in the urban life, the rural front of the country remained neglected and underdeveloped.

political history for it destroyed the notion of Durrani supremacy in state power.

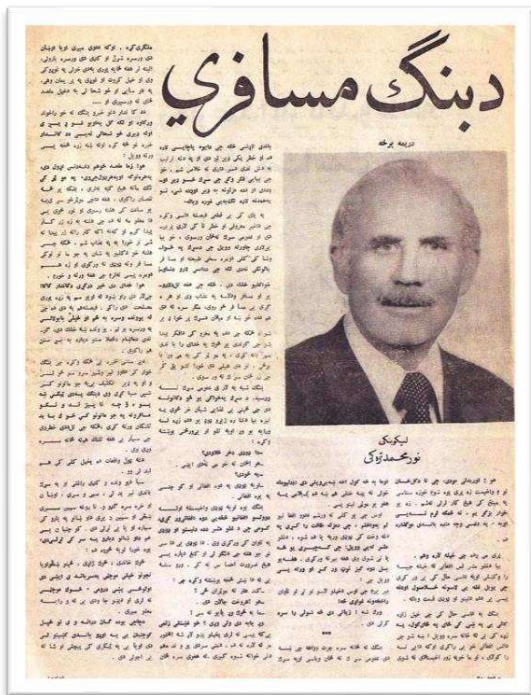
Upon coming to power, the Khalqi faction of the PDPA led by Taraki, soon exiled the Parchamis from Afghanistan by assigning them, albeit important foreign postings. As the differences between

Taraki and Amin accentuated, he had “The great teacher” assassinated and combined the offices of President and Prime Minister. In face of growing domestic instability, Amin appealed to Moscow for troops to preserve the revolution. Moscow responded by assassinating Amin in the presidential palace with a Spetsnaz contingent and installing Babrak Karmal, head of the Parchami faction as President.

Amidst these series of coups in Kabul, resistance against the communist regime was growing and the Soviet occupation drew the country into the nexus of cold war politics.

The opposition found refuge in Pakistan where, the military regime of General Zia had started a program for Islamisation of the country. The Zia regime which always nursed the fear of Pakistan getting trapped between two hostile states (Afghanistan & India) played

host to the opposition. The recognized Peshawar based resistance parties, which collectively styled themselves as *Mujahedeen* (i.e. Holy Warriors) started receiving military and financial aid from the USA and Saudi Arabia, which was channeled through the Inter-Services-Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan. The American Arms helped the mujahedeen, especially the Stringer surface to air missile which enabled them to counter Soviet air assaults. The majority of the mujahedeen resistance groups fighting on the field were comprised of local elements and their loyalty was determined by which party or faction would provide more weapons to them. Foreign nationals, from countries primarily Arab, inspired the prevalent propaganda migrated and took part in the resistance. During the Afghan Jihad, as



A Newspaper featuring a novelette by President Taraki. With Taraki, two new trends emerged in Afghan politics: The steep rise of Socialism and the elimination of Durrani supremacy.

the Russians determined to restore Kabul's hold over the country, embarked on a scorched earth policy, several Afghans fearing their safety either moved into remote provinces or crossed the borders into Pakistan where they were settled in refugee camps.

In 1989, the Soviets withdrew and the erstwhile President Najibullah, former head of the KHAD, proceeded to abandon socialism in favor of nationalism, renaming the PDPA as *Hizb-e-watan*, which outraged the Khalqi faction, who in turn attempted to seize power in a failed coup. President Najibullah had begun strengthening the government forces and banked on gaining legitimacy by overseeing distribution of Soviet aid. In 1991, with disintegration of the USSR the channels for soviet aid were blocked and therefore, the regime fell in 1992. The Peshawar based leaders, failed to create a mutual understanding and establish a provisional government, thereby a civil war among the Mujahedeen broke out.

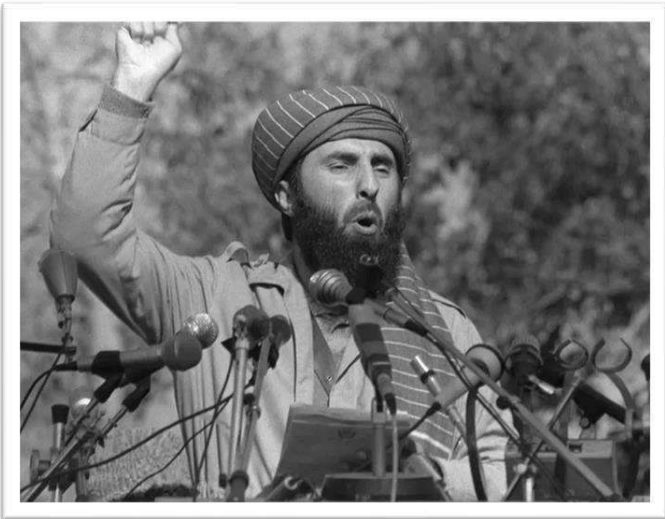
On the eve of the emergence of the Taliban, the Government of Burhanuddin Rabbani with his charismatic general Ahmed Massoud controlled Kabul and the northeast. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the head of Hizb-e-Islam began indiscriminately shelling Kabul to gain control of the city, killing civilians. The Uzbek General Rashid Dostum, a ruthless disciplinarian controlled six provinces in the northwest, while Ishmail Khan, controlled Herat and three neighboring provinces. The south was controlled by several petty ex-mujahedeen warlords, who tortured the population. It is in this context, the Taliban emerged in Kandahar province as a local resistance to the marauding commanders, who tortured the population by arbitrarily imposing taxes, kidnapping children.



In Early 1989, the soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan as the mobile attacks by the Mujahedeen forces made further occupation too costly. The political cartoon above, shows the pestle of jihad crushing the Soviet Union in the mortar of Afghanistan.

The word "Talib," which denotes a madrasa student, is the source of the name Taliban. The figurehead of the new movement, Mullah Omar, an ex-Mujahedeen village cleric from Singesar, Mewand who had fought in the Afghan Jihad. The movement began with the objective to stop the infighting and create a government of good Muslims, which would impose uniform authority.

The Pakistani ISI had lost confidence in its one-time favorite Gulbuddin Hekmatyar following his failure to capture Kabul. The Bhutto Government, which had been elected in 1993, wanted to open the route to Central Asia via Afghanistan and harness the economic opportunities created by the opening of the Central Asian Republics. The access to Central Asia from the North was disrupted by the prolonged civil war among the Mujahedeen groups and



Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, head of Hizb-i-Islami, the largest of Peshawar based resistance parties, emerged at the center of a power struggle for Kabul with fall of the Najibullah regime.

Tajikistan was engulfed in a bloody civil war, thereby making the route from Pakistan to Turkmenistan via Kandahar and Herat a viable option. In South, the numerous petty commanders, who imposed too many taxes on traffic, frustrated the transport mafia who thrived on illegally smuggling the goods imported under Afghan Transit Trade Agreement of 1978.

The transport mafia which had engulfed several politicians, military officers and customs officials thrived by smuggling the imported tariff free goods from Afghanistan

back to Pakistan and selling them without at a relatively cheaper price than the available alternatives. The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) led by Maulana Fazlur Rahman, which had emerged as the strongest coalition partner in the Bhutto government of 1993, shared a strong sense of solidarity with the Taliban as several of them were educated in JUI funded madrasas in Pakistan. With an absence of any other pro Pakistan leader or group in Afghanistan, it made Pakistani

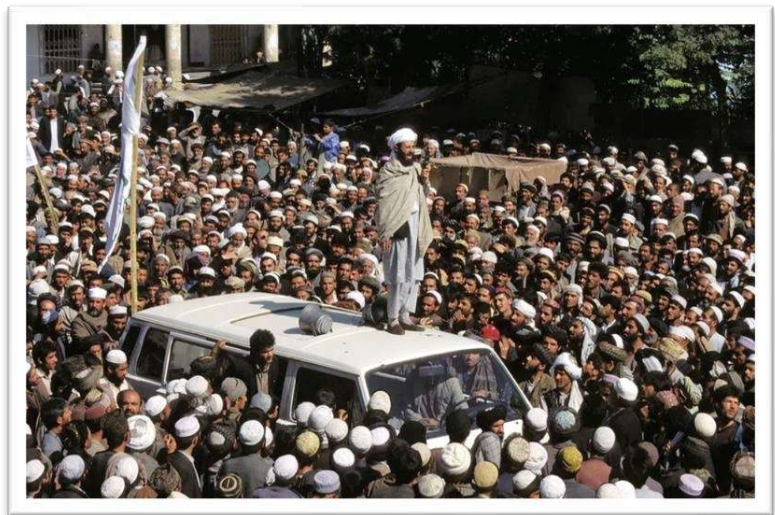
support for the Taliban a prudent option. The need for a united Afghanistan also with chances of the construction of gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan via Afghanistan by the American firm Unocal in future, increased. Thus, America adopted a soft policy towards Taliban by giving the Pakistan and Saudi a free hand in the region.

In October, 1994 a few hundred Taliban seized an arms depot at Spin Boldak controlled by Hekmatyar troops, capturing some 18000 Kalashnikovs, artillery pieces and vehicles. The next month, the Taliban successfully completely overran Kandahar and retired the notable commander Mulla Naquib to his village and enlisted some of his men. They also captured few MIGs, a remnant of the Soviet era, thereby giving them air power.

In January 1995, the Hekmatyar, General Dostum and the Hazaras under Ali Mazari began a joint assault on Kabul under the

aegis of an ISI brokered alliance. The Taliban taking advantage of this, launched an offensive against Hekmatyar, whose headquarters in Charasyab was captured and he fled to Jalalabad. While the Tajik offensive on the Hazaras forced them to submit to the Taliban and the subsequent assassination of Ali Mazari. Another offensive by Massoud prevented them from

seizing the capital and they now focused their attention on Herat in the West. In February, Taliban captured two of the three provinces under Ismail Khan's control and marched to Sinbad. Ismail Khan aided by Massoud's fighters retaliated by pushing back the Taliban and inflicting heavy casualties in a bloody battle with the body count crossing 3000 dead. In August, Khan made a bid for Dilaram which but while doing he overstretched his troops making his supply lines



By 1996, The Taliban took over Kabul. This was followed by the assassination of Najibullah, the former president. Mass rallies were witnessed, as in the image above across Kabul.

vulnerable to mobile ambushes. Now allied with the former communist strongman General Dostum, Taliban pushed Khan back, which culminated in the fall of Herat in September.

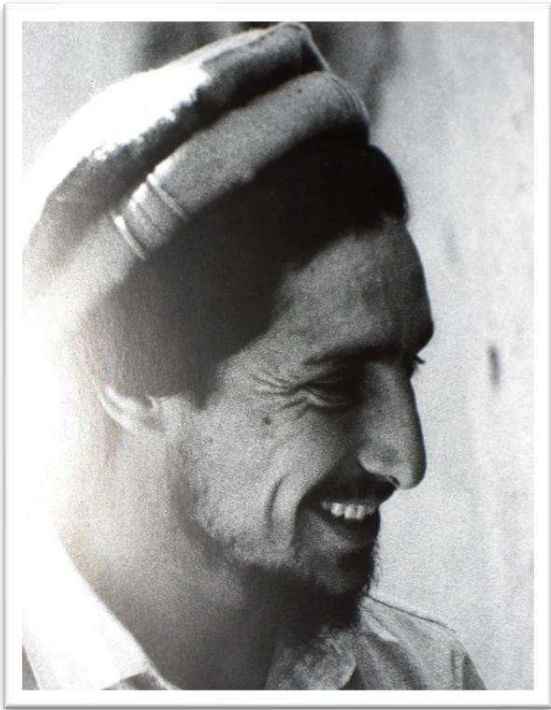
In April, 1996 after the Kandahar Shura bestowed Mullah Omar with the title of “Amir-ul-Momineen”, which provided him with badly needed legitimacy, he declared jihad against the Kabul based Rabbani regime. With a successful capture of Jalalabad in

September, they turned their forces on Kabul. Keen to avoid further devastation of the city, Massoud surrendered Kabul and conducted a planned retreat to Panjshir via the Selang highway, blowing up roads and causing landslides in a bid to slow the Taliban advance. General Dostum, Massoud and Hazaras Karim Khalili created the “Council for Defence of Motherland” and advanced towards Kabul massacring the extremists. However, with fresh recruits from across the border, the Taliban soon retook Bagram and Charikar pushing Massoud to Panjshir.

In May 1997, Taliban successfully secured the defection of Dostum’s second-in-command General Malik Pahlawan, who ousted Dostum from his stronghold in Mazar-e-Sharif. Mulla Abdul Razzak at the head of a 2500 troop contingent entered Mazar, to take

over the reins of governance. General Malik was refused the autonomy earlier promised and while disarming an armed Hazara group clashes broke out resulting in 600 Taliban dead. General Malik soon recaptured the four Northern provinces, killing 3000 Talibs and taking 2600 prisoners, most of whom perished. General Dostum, returned from exile and took over the Uzbek forces setting up his base in Sheberghan as Mazar was dominated by Hazara groups.

In July, 1998 Taliban routed General Dostum forces and captured his headquarters in Sheberghan, while Dostum fled to Turkey. In



Ahmad Shah Massoud, *The lion of Panjshir*; led the Northern Alliance, principal opposition to the Taliban.

August, they again captured Mazar-e-sharif and immediately after their takeover, indiscriminately killed over 6000 Hazaras and Tajiks. In September, Bamiyan which had been facing acute food shortages due to a blockade fell to marauding forces of Taliban. The only opposition left to the Taliban in the whole country was Ahmed Shah Massoud in his stronghold of Panjshir.

The rise of the Taliban Movement and its capturing control of nearly 90% of the country within five years of its genesis, is an unprecedented phenomenon, with various interpretations of the phenomenon being propounded by scholars. The answer lies in the Taliban's successful mobilization of the Pashtuns.

Larry Goodson has identified five factors to explain the Taliban's rapid ascent to power. He stressed on the shared ethnicity of the Taliban and the areas they were occupying and the lack of Pashtun leaders in the Tajik dominated regime of Burhanuddin Rabbani. The south which was divided among rapacious petty commanders

made the population weary of further conflict and the message of religious piety advocated by the Movement attracted the populous. The fourth factor being the use of bribes to secure defection in commander's ranks and the fifth being access to Pakistani resources.

Commenting on the Taliban's rise to power, Abdul Kader Sinno postulated that they

presented a calibrated and well-maintained image of themselves as a pious, non-fractious group which wanted to restore peace in the country. Their clean past, non-

involvement in Mujahedeen civil war or petty politics and aims to impose a uniform system brought them popularity. The population tolerated the excesses committed by the zealous clerics for security.

An anomaly of the Taliban, a radical Islamic fundamentalist is its formalization of poppy cultivation and the subsequent drug trade. During the Afghan Jihad, the trucks convoys that crossed the border into Afghanistan smuggled opium back into Pakistan. It became a



A Poppy farmer with his crop from Helmand, Afghanistan. Intoxicants obtained from the Poppy plant contribute largely to the economy of Taliban.

lucrative source of income for every Mujahedeen leader, Pakistani military officers and traders. After capturing Kandahar, Taliban decreed a ban on all drugs but did a complete few U-turns when it issued Islamic sanction to poppy cultivation on the pretext of opium being consumed by “infidels”. It taxed the profits of the farmers as *zakat* at a whopping 20% completely ignoring the Quranic prescribed rate of 2.5%. The drug trade quickly developed as one of the major sources of revenue for Emirate. It had an adverse effect on the region, skyrocketing the number of heroin addicts everywhere. The overwhelmingly majority of the Taliban studied in conservative Deobandi Madrasas with Wahabi and Salafi sympathies, funded by the Pakistani state where strict discipline as imposed and women were labeled as “objects of temptations to be avoided” by barely educated Maulvis, whose interpretation of the sharia was deeply influenced by Pashtunwali. Clerics from the prestigious Al-Azhar University in Cairo have rejected the Taliban’s interpretation of Sharia as “unislamic”. As majority of the Taliban had a rural background and were not well acquainted with governance of cities, which it viewed as dens of blasphemous profanity, it usually committed excesses in a bid to impose their puritanical code of conduct. Popular forms of entertainment such as kite flying, an integral part of the traditional Afghan life was banned.

The social policy adopted by Taliban has been subject to vehement criticism, particularly the gender policy pursued by the fundamentalist regime. Upon its takeover of Kabul, the regime prohibited women from venturing out of the confines of the house without a veil and they had to be compulsorily always accompanied by a male relative The Mujahedeen parties which also advocated for an Islamic state run in accordance with Sharia, were at least



Afghan women protest for their rights under Taliban rule in Kabul, Afghanistan. The Taliban regime has often faced criticisms regarding its orthodox, fundamentalist gender policies.

modernists to a certain degree. For instance, in Herat, which was controlled by Ismail Khan, half of the students studying in the schools were girls. Schools for girls were closed and educational activities dwindled. It was a stark contrast to the times of King Amanullah, when Queen Soraya appeared without a veil in public and co-ed education for girls and boys were mandated by law. Upon the conquest of Kabul, new laws dictating the behavior of women were introduced, which restricted them from working in any other profession except the medical sector. The Taliban's continued mistrust of the United Nations and other aid agencies culminated in the organization suspending its operation in the country which severely affected the urban population, particularly families of widows, who increasingly relied on aid agencies for survival.

The *raison d'être* behind the American invasion of Afghanistan was the Taliban's continued harboring of the ex-Mujahedeen leader of Arab Afghans, Osama bin Laden who was accused of engaging in terrorist activities against the United States. The son of an émigré Yemeni construction magnate close to the Al-Saud royal family, he had a deep religious inclination since boyhood. While studying at University in Jeddah, Osama met the Palestinian ideologue Abdullah Azzam, who subsequently took the role of being the former's mentor. In 1984, Azzam and Osama jointly founded the Makhtab-al-Khidmat in Peshawar, which assisted the new foreign recruits. After the Afghan jihad, Bin Laden settled in Sudan where he assisted the Sudanese Government by investing infrastructure and agricultural projects. With increasing US pressure on the Sudanese Government to extradite Osama, he left the country for Afghanistan in 1996. In Afghanistan, he successfully built a rapport with the Taliban leadership, who to some extent shared his pan-Islamic outlook and permitted him to build training camps, after he gave *bayat* to Mullah Omar. In 1998, he convened a meeting under the aegis "Islamic Front for Jihad against Crusaders and Jews" and consequent fatwa issued declared it a personal duty of believers to strike American allies. A few months later, the US embassies were also bombed in Kenya and Tanzania which resulted in America mounting pressure on the Saudis to persuade the Taliban to secure the surrender of Osama. In 1998, when the erstwhile Saudi Intelligence chief Prince Turki-al Faisal met Mullah Omar to discuss the Osama issue, the Amir insulted the prince and refused to give up Osama, which culminated in Saudi Arabia and UAE revoking recognition of Kabul.

With Trans-Afghanistan pipeline project wrapped up and repeated American efforts failing, the United States found it hard to continue its soft approach to the Taliban regime. Following the 9/11 bomb attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center in New York, the United States began planning the invasion of Afghanistan to capture Osama. On 7th October, the United States launched the Operation Enduring Freedom, by bombarding Taliban bases using Northern Alliance (NA) troops to locate the targets. In the coming few weeks, northern, western and central Afghanistan fell to the Americans as the Taliban were reduced to Kandahar. On 5th December, Mullah Omar surrendered Kandahar and fled to Pakistan, while majority of the Taliban top brass followed suit.

In the recent history, the Afghan political landscape has always been characterized by a tension between radical change and subtle gradualism induced by conservatism. In the post Afghan Jihad period as groups started fighting each other to gain control of Kabul, which fragmented the country broadly along ethnic lines, and the traditional institutions of power became non-existent. With such a precarious situation at hand, Taliban emerged partially propped up by foreign powers and seized power in the country to impose clerical rule, a historical anomaly in Afghan context.

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Dawns along the Danube

Rudrarup Paul

Department of History, Semester I

“A collective name, a common myth of origins, a shared history, a distinctive culture, association with a particular territory and a sense of solidarity, are very similar to the constituent elements of a nation.”

*-- The ethnic origin of Nations,
Anthony D. Smith*

Identity, Ethnicity, and Trust are the critical elements that promote civic engagement and the community building of a state. Cross-national Research has tied ethnic differences or variations in social and economic differences as the causes of lower rates of economic growth, lower provision of public goods, higher corruption, and other economic problems. Russian Federation offers a bridge of line against the context. Surveys revealed far higher faith in acquaintances and even more trust within their families among the citizens, implying a fertile ground of exclusionary ethnic trust.

The social structure of Russia contains over 120 groups of ethnic tribes where The Celts, The Franks, The Gauls, The Goths, The Huns, and The Serbs all have served as the people of the country that stretches about six thousand miles from West to East from the shores of Caspian Sea through the centre of Europe across Asia to the Altai mountains and two thousand miles from North to South from the frozen islands in the Arctic Ocean to the Caucasus mountains.



A leaf from Nestor's *Primary Chronicle*, which traces the history of the Slavic people all the way back to the times of Noah,

The origin of Russia as much as we can know is from archaeological sources, literary sources from Romans and the Middle East, and the Epic compiled in 1101 CE by the monk Nestor: *Tale of Bygone Years* renowned as the *Primary Chronicle*. According to the epic, the Slavic tribes of northwest Russia agreed to invite the Rus, the branch of Vikings ruling the areas of Scandinavia. However, it is a fact of debate whether Scandinavians laid the foundation of the Ruling history of Russia, where Early Slavs were ruling beforehand.

The emergence of Slavs was thus nothing new or surprising to the long History of Europe. Unlike Celts who were born within the rich Hallstatt culture upon the Northern Alps, the genesis of Slavs presents a more mystic born that the two schools of Slavic Culture (*Autochthonic and Allochthonic*) can only assume differently. Autochthons hold the belief that Slavs can be traced back to the Bronze Age over the Oder and Dnieper region. While Allochthones' beliefs are based on Archaeological and Written evidence that the Slavs were the migratory tribes.

Trying to precisely define the meaning of the syntagma 'Early Slavs' in the period of Great Migrations in the 1st Millennium CE specifically from the end of the 4th century. At the end of the 10th century, migrations led to a flight-footed change in the social, political, and demographical changes in the long term. While the Urban cities are on their mainstream changes in their culture and architecture, the Slavs still find their ethnic conflict. Since, following the invasion by West Romans, the settlement of Slavs

would have been incomprehensible for many reasons. A large quantity of Slavs was found in the cities of Greece, Rome, and Byzantine instead of returning their homes to the north of the Danube River. Finds of Slavic pottery from the cremation cemetery at Olympia, which may be regarded as the only archaeological hard piece that tells the migration and presence of Slavic peoples in Greece. James Davidson mentioned assemblages found in Corinth, Philippi, Eddessa, Athens, and Porto Cheli are associated with the “Slavic Culture of North Danube”.

Archaeologically, the ‘Early Slavs’ used specific types of material assemblages that archaeologists associate with pottery or fibulae. According to Czech Archaeologists Borkovsky and Emanuel Simek, the “Prague-Korchak” (a ceramic category found in Central and Southern Ukraine) pottery came to be known as the symbol, the main, and the only indicator of Slavic Ethnicity in material terms. As per the view presented by German and Polish

Archaeologists, Kossinna, Richthofen, Petersen, Parczewski, and Godlowski, Slavs came to the territory of present-day Poland not earlier than the 5th Century AD. Slavs did not develop any consistent material culture; Slavic sites comprised simpler household tools such as knives, spindles, and needles, but they found no luxury items or ornaments or any burial customs to symbolize their ethnicity. Slavic material culture is much simpler, unlike Germans or Alvars, who used various ornaments and burial customs to symbolize their ethnicity. A problem that was confined to only Soviet Archaeology, i.e., Misleading in dating archaeological sites. A significant change in culture and history emphasized the written sources that shed light on the Ethnicity of Slavs and used it for Archaeological dating of evidence have been responsible for the ill-dating of several regions, including Balkan Areas.



A typical example of an Early folk Slav pottery

Linguistically, reconstructing the history of the ‘Early Slavs’, according to Johann G. Herder’s concept of *Volksgeist* (*national character*) Slavs were the speakers of the early Slavic language, such as “Common Slavic” (based on modern Slavic Languages). With further pushing shreds of evidence and accounts that show the ethnic identity of Slavs, Russian historian A L. Pogodin tried to evacuate the *Urheimat* (homeland) of Slavs and considered the area Podolia and Volhynia, the oldest region based on the river names of Slavic Origin. As argued by Polish botanist J Rostafinski, using Linguistic Paleontology, he considered the Marshes along the Pripet River, Polesie. the archaeological schools endorsed the theory that was set up shortly before the verge of World War 2 and a multi-volume work *The Antiquities of the Slavs* by Lubor Niederle published before 1924. Later, studying Slavic Ethnogenesis became important as part of fostering Soviet Identity under Stalin. Soviet historians, archaeologists, and laureates like Boris Rybakov and Gavrila Derzhavin envisioned a vast territory stretching from the Volga to the Saale Rivers and from the Baltic Sea to the Aegean and Black Seas.

Along with language, historically interpreted sources, the foreign accounts affirmed the antiquity of the Slavs. The oldest ethnic name *Venedi* (also spelled as Veneti or Venethi) used in the book, *De Origine et situ Germanorum* by Tacitus denotes any group located to the east of the Germanic group presiding over the region of Northwestern Middle Europe. The ethnonyms *Venedi/Venethi*, *Anti/ Ante*, and *Slaveni/Sklavenoi/ Sclavi* refer to the ethnic groups inhabiting the area of Northwest Central Europe. Pliny the elder mentioned the *Venedi* were people who inhabited the Southern Coast of the Baltic, in the mouth of the Wista River while *Taticus* located them somewhere in the wooded steppes of Eastern Europe.



Personification of *Sclavinia* (extreme left) along with Germany, Gaul and Rome bringing gift to Emperor Otto II from the manuscript of *Otto's Gospel Book*.

The oldest ethnic name *Venedi* (also spelled as Veneti or Venethi) used in the book, *De Origine et situ Germanorum* by Tacitus denotes any group located to the east of the Germanic group presiding over the region of Northwestern Middle Europe. The ethnonyms *Venedi/Venethi*, *Anti/ Ante*, and *Slaveni/Sklavenoi/ Sclavi* refer to the ethnic groups inhabiting the area of Northwest Central Europe. Pliny the elder mentioned the *Venedi* were people who inhabited the Southern Coast of the Baltic, in the mouth of the Wista River while *Taticus* located them somewhere in the wooded steppes of Eastern Europe.

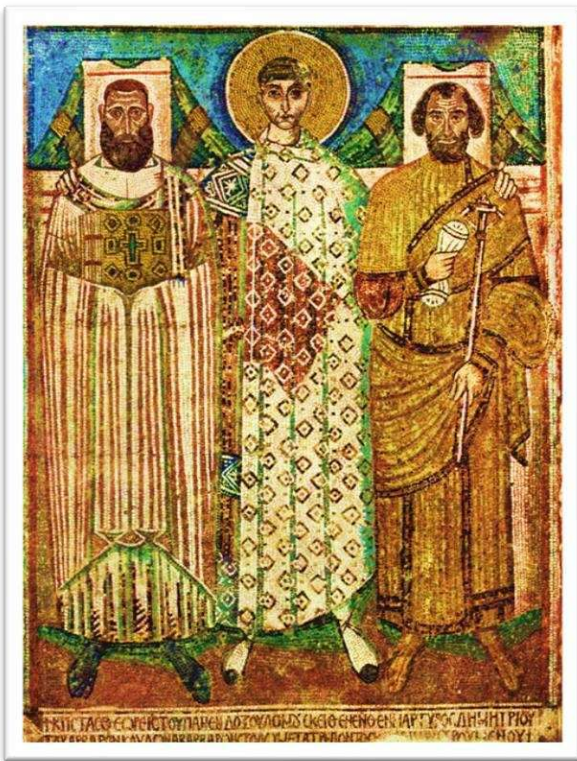
According to the view of Greek Scholar Procopius, Slav is a general concept of *oikumene/Ecumene (Greek)* meaning civilized world. Procopius classified *Sclavenes* and *Antes* as nomads while 6th Century Roman bureaucrat historian, Jordane, locates them in the Swamps and forests. Procopius locates Sclavenis close to the Danube River while Jordane placed them far north towards the Vistula River. Antes and Sclavenis established a democratic system of ruling countered by Jordane that King Boz ruled Antes in his book *Getica*. Though the source of Jordane's *Getica* was completely controversial, countered by historian Brian Croke.

After many concepts and approaches given by archaeological evidence, linguistic counters, historical sources, mythical stories, and epics the problem of *Urheimat* (homeland) of Slavs remains, concluding with the modern-19th-century historians used the concept of the Great Migration. Anthropologist Marija Gimbutas imagined that the Early Slavs were people of farmers traveling on foot with entire families or entire tribes who migrated to the promised land. Czech historian Frantisek Palacky and Ethnographer Pavel Josef Safarik believed that Slavic migration was peaceful compared to the brutal methods used by Germanic tribes for land acquisition. French historian Lucius Musset stated that afterward, particularly in the Communist countries, acceptable usage of terms like "migration" and "infiltration" was replaced with "invasion" and "raid."

Procopius was the 1st author to mention the raid of Slavs across the Danube River. According to the evidence, recorded by Procopius, Antenians (Romans described them as Barbarians) raided Western Romans and got defeated by Germanus *magister militum per Thraciam (military general of emperor Anastasius)* which may be dated to 518 CE. The society was becoming a place of warmongers and rulers encouraging the expansion of their territories. Procopius speaks of annual invasions of Slavs reaching Naissas (now Nis) and Adrianople (now Edirne) and the long wall protecting Constantinople. Justinian tried to stop them by rebuilding and strengthening the fortresses of the Danube lines. The described maneuver of the military campaigns proves the knowledge of military stratagems among the Slavic chiefs constituting the elements of the art of war. Most of them go to battle on foot, carrying large shields and short spears or long spears (kantaria) named *Rogatina (special spears with a crossbar underneath the blade)* but lacked armour in the early phases. Early Slavs used guerrilla tactics and sneak attacks with bows and arrows. Throughout the centuries that followed, Slavic armies

used combined arms, tactics, cavalry, and infantry. Specialization in fighting in tough mountainous and forested areas, compensating deficiencies of weapons of the times used by the Byzantine, Franks, and Gauls. Sources like *Syrianus Magister* and *De Militaria Scientia*, mention the use of Stratagems that bring good results concerning the Germans, Persians with the Antes, and Sclavs.

At the time of the *Strategicon* by Byzantine Emperor Maurice (539 - 602), the European Provinces were changing; engaged in battles with Persia and rapid invasions from the North were the disadvantages for the Byzantine Empire. Maurice in his accounts focuses on the tactics of Slavs that can be described as partisan operations and subversive warfare. They were ambushed in the mountains and forests and were splendid swimmers. They also mastered underwater warfare skills that they could wait for many hours underwater and could breathe through hollow reeds. Something had profoundly changed in Slavic society as the Slavic raiding activity resumed in late 570 CE. Independent Slavene raids began in the 540s and came to a halt after the North Danube campaign started by Maurice.



7th-century mosaic from the Cathedral of St. Demetrius in Thessalonica, depicting the saint with the city's archbishop (left) and the eparch (right). The Slavs made many attempts to siege the city unsuccessfully from Byzantine Empire.

Slavenes of 550 were into capturing Thessalonica but changed their plans accordingly with the changes they learned that the Gaermanus Army was in Sardica. Byzantian Historian Menander Protector (Menander the Guardsman) mentioned that in the 580-90's, Sclavenes were known remarkably about their location to strike without any major confrontations with the Roman armies, when to attack, to take advantage of the absence of troops. However, at the turn of the Century, *Strategikon* mentioned recruiting Sclavenian Chiefs with persuasion or Gifts to make the tribes united under one Ruler. The absence of troops was taken advantage of, but at the turn of the Century, *Strategikon*

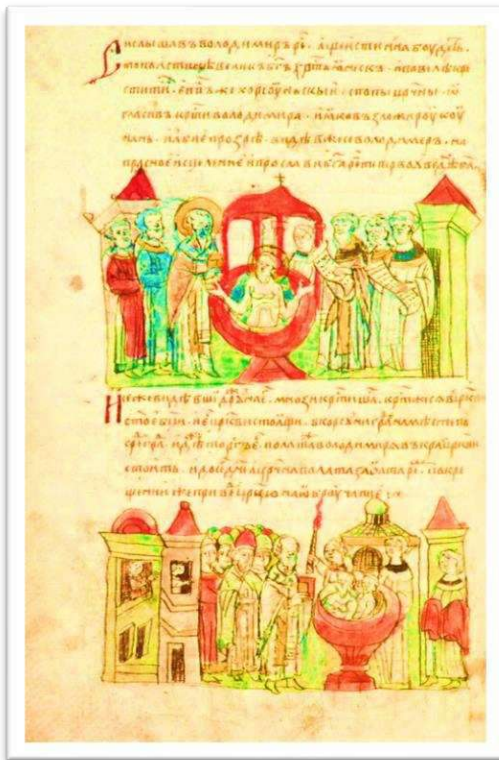
mentioned the recruitment of Sclavenian Chiefs through persuasion or gifts to unite the tribes under one ruler. However, sharp mentions are made of various Barbarian Chiefs/ leaders in Procopius' wars, including Dauratius, Ardagastus, and Musocuis, but there is no record of any Slavene raids before 550 being organized under any chiefs or one person. Changes in the social Organisation came on board the Sclavenes of 580s and that of 540s. Independent Sclavenes were killing their Rulers, and Chiefs were coming under treaties or under one ruler. All the sources-Greek, Latin, and Syriac spoke about Sclavenes and/or Antes while the author of *Miracles of St. Demetrius* introduced the names *the Drugubites (Drougoubitai)*, *the Sagudates*, *the Belezites*, *the Berzites*, and the *Rynchines* according to the locations instead of the Venedi/Venethi, the Anti/ Ante, and the Sclaveni/ Sklavenoi/ Sclavi. *Drougoubitai* were the Slavic groups who settled in the Balkans, Sagudates used to settle in present-day Macedonia, Belezites resided in the region of Thessaly, Berzites were the people of Byzantine Macedonia, and Rynchines (Rhynchinoi) were the peoples of Southern Macedonia.

Talking about the economy, the presence of merchants in the Sixth-century cities on the Black Coast shows signs of prosperity and economic activity. Archaeological evidence attested by inscriptions found at Tomis and Callatis, Romania tells us that the active economic life in the coastal cities provided the means of wealthy peoples. The Bulgarian Excavations on Krakra Hill reveal a similar picture of Greek cities, showcasing the dominance of Christian architecture. There was a wave of change in architecture and orientation of the new cities that emerged in the 6th Century with new buildings, especially churches. In Histria, the only monumental building erected was a Three-aisled Basilica with mosaic pavement. Under the reign of Justinian, another important city was built near the site of Nicopolis showing the change in planning. It was planned without any forum or orthogonal street grid or ring road. Instead, it was oriented by a three-aisled basilica and structured longitudinally, leading to the gates of the city proposing modern city styles that prevailed in later years. Byzantine Historian Theophylact Simocatta in his account of Maurice's campaigns against Slavs and Alvars in the 590s mentioned a list of thirty towns with a cluster of cities in Dacia and Moesia with rising economy, which he called Mlibft. Some cities in Thrace, like Philippolis, continued to erect figurines of Emperors and Army generals at the end of the Fifth Century, suggesting a strong monarchical structure. A similar picture

of Greek cities appears in the Bulgarian Excavations on Krakra hill where the dominance of Christian architecture is found. In Macedonian cities like Ohrid, seven churches were found near the city defenses. The new hexagonal architecture was introduced in early 6th century Europe, with stained glass designs stripped with lead, also found during the reign of Justinian (527- 565).

While the regions were setting up the new customized architecture and beliefs, the regions Slavs, were relocating their settlements in the sixth and seventh centuries found from Archaeological Excavation works at Dulceanca (near the city of Alexandria, Romania), Ukraine, Moldova, Poland, and Slovakia.

Two types of buildings were found in two centuries: Ground level houses and Sunken Houses (pit houses). A large portion of Settlement in Dulceanca f consisted of Pit houses which were



The baptism of Prince Vladimir I in Korsun in 988, from the Radziwill Chronicle. Christianity gradually became a highly influential force in the development of Slavs as a race.

more tent-like and circular. Sunken Buildings (*Grubenhäuser* in German) rest over a pint size ranging from four to twenty-five meters square with 1 to 5 m in depth and were surrounded by stones on the ground. These houses are resilient to harsh cold conditions. In the later seventh century, sites with tent-like circular buildings with one central pole with a multitude of surrounding posts named Yurts were found. Yurts are determined as the successor of *Poluzemlianki* (pit houses). The signs of Christian Symbolism were also found. Crosses and Molds were also popular for decorating pots found at contemporary sites in the Central and Western Balkan areas. This suggests the widespread cross-regional sets of religious symbols that were shared by potters. Archaeological evidence suggests that Long faraway cultural migration

did not occur, but there is a dispersal and exchange of cultural traditions and skills.

With a scattered notion of culture among Europe, Slavs were politically primitive like their pastoralist lifestyle, where there is no

such evidence of uprising of any Ruler as Procopius cited in *Wars VII* “For the nations, *Slavenoi* and *Antoe*, are not ruled by one man, but they have lived in the form of old Democracy and everything which involves their welfare, whether good or evil, referred to the people”.

At that time the notion of Democracy viewed by the eyes of Procopius was the opposite of the Monarchal Byzantine Empire. While Soviet Historians like Dmitry Oblonski believe Procopius had described what is now known as the Marxist Concept of “Military Democracy”. While referring to “*Strategikon XI*”, *Slavenes* was unable to stand for the war and internal obligations, there was a lack of government and ill feelings toward their related tribes made them into a Segmentary Society. Supported by archaeological evidence that involves the segmentary structure of space, which represents the primary tribal segment ruling and exploiting a certain area instead of adjoining others forming a residential identity.

None of the sources neither confirmed any indication of Slavic Chiefs before 560 CE nor gave us any detail about Slavic society. Indeed, Procopius recorded the names of Barbarian Chiefs along with the Leader (kings) of the Gepids, Herules, and Lombards or Centrigur chieftains but still neither of the kings or Chiefs initiated raids mentioned in *Wars I-VIII*. In contrast to Procopius, *Strategikon's* authors report that chiefs may unite and accept rule under one ruler in treaties and wither away with successful raids. The Early Slavic culture, with its exclusive and distinctive notions of extreme simplicity and pastoral living, adapted to Nature, which differed from the Aristocratic traits of the Eastern culture of the Danube River. The making of Slavs was less matter of ethnogenesis and more of labelling by the Byzantine and Roman Authors ends with the statement “We are Slavs” where Nestor claims the National Ancestry that still cherished by the Russo citizens.

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THE WASTE LAND

BY
T. S. ELIOT

"NAM Sibyllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculis meis
vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum illi pueri dicerent
Σίβυλλα τί θέλεις; respondebat illa ἀποθανεῖν θέλω."

NEW YORK
BONI AND LIVERIGHT
1922

T.S. Eliot
"Resurrection
in the
Underground"

Tributes

Virginia

Red river, red river,
Slow flow heat is Silence
No milk is skin as a river
Skin, heat, heat, move
Only through the mocking-bird
Head once? Skin hillo
Wait, gates wait Purple bees
White bees, wait, wait
Delay decay, living living,
Never moving Ever moving
Iron thoughts came with me
And go with me:
Red river, river, river

Theater am Schiffbauerdamm

Direktion: Ernst Josef Aufferdt

Die Dreigroschenoper

(The Beggars Opera)

Ein Stück mit Musik in einem Vorspiel und 8 Bildern nach dem
Englischen des John Gay.
(Eingelegte Balladen von François Villon und Rudyard Kipling)

T.S. Eliot





Tributes: 1

Brecht '125

*Lights, Stage: Brecht and his Epic
Theatre*

Arunodoy Halder

Department of History, Semester III

**“Art is not a mirror held up to reality but a hammer with
which to shape it.”**

--Bertolt Brecht

Art is not merely a passive reflection of the world as it is but a dynamic force capable of influencing and reshaping it. The German theatre practitioner and playwright, Bertolt Brecht, was one of a kind, who demonstrated and delved into the transformative power of art. The year celebrates the 125th year of birth anniversary of this bewildering figure.

Eugen Bertolt Friedrich Brecht was born on February 10, 1898, in Augsburg, the part of the Bavarian section of German empire. His father was the director of a paper company, and his mother was the daughter of a civil servant. Brecht began to write poetry as a boy, and his first poem was published in 1914.

In 1917, Brecht enrolled as a medical student at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, where he sometimes attended also the theatre seminar conducted by Arthur Kutscher.

Brecht's association with communism began in 1919, when he joined the Independent Social Democratic Party. His friendship with the writer Lion Feuchtwanger, was a turning point in his literary career. Feuchtwanger advised him on the discipline of playwriting. In 1920, Brecht was named chief adviser on play selection at the Munich Kammerspiele. In 1922, he married Marianne Zoff, the opera singer; later, in 1927, they got divorced. In the 1930s, Brecht's books and plays were banned in Germany, and theatrical performances were interrupted by the police. He went into exile, first to Denmark, and then, in April 1940, to Finland. Brecht settled with his family in Hollywood, hoping to write for the motion picture industry. Though he devised numerous scenarios, only one resulted in a released film, *Hangmen Also Die*, though the final screenplay differed vastly from Brecht's script. He mainly devoted his energy to projects for the stage, determined to make a career in the American theatre, there was hardly assurance that he might be able to return to a Germany not ruled by the Nazis. In 1947, Brecht was accused of Un-American activities, but managed to confuse with half-truths J. Parnell Thomas, the chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, who praised Brecht for being an exemplary witness.

After 15 years of exile, Brecht returned in 1948 to Germany. Brecht spent a year in Zurich working on Sophocles' *Antigone* and on his major theatrical work *A Little Organum for the Theatre*. After Zurich, Brecht moved in 1949 to Berlin where he founded his own Marxist theatre, the Berliner Ensemble. In the West as well as in the East Germany, Brecht became the most popular contemporary poet, outdistanced only by such classics as Shakespeare, Schiller, and Goethe. Brecht's works have been translated into 42 languages and sold over 70 volumes.

Journey through his literature

Brecht was a prolific writer and innovative modernist thinker committed to collaborative artistic practices, which he

coordinated throughout his life. He wrote forty extraordinary plays, created an exemplary body of some two thousand poems and songs, and authored numerous essays on art and politics, in addition to his diaries and journals, media analysis, extensive correspondence, film scripts, and countless notes.

Brecht formulated his literary theories much in reaction to Georg Lukacs, a Hungarian philosopher and Marxist literary theoretician. He disapproved Lukacs attempt to distinguish between good realism and bad naturalism. Brecht considered the narrative form of Balzac and Tolstoy. He rejected Aristotle's concept of catharsis and plot as a simple story with a beginning and end. From Marx, he took the idea of superstructure to which art belongs but avoided too simple explanations of ideological world view.

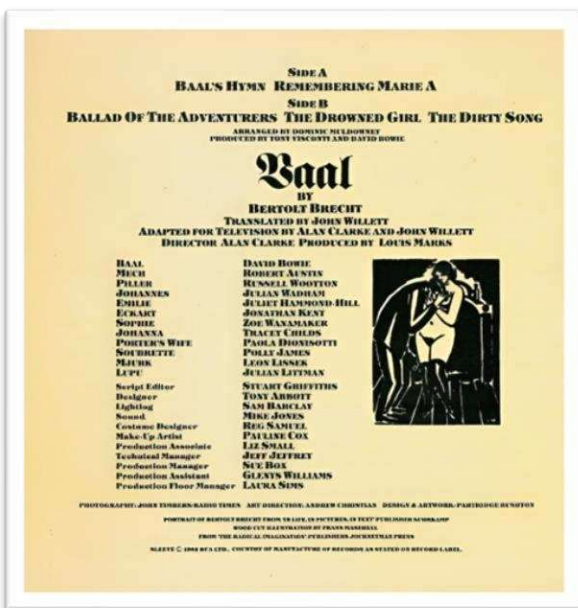
Brecht's first full length play was *Baal* in 1918 and his second major play was *Drums in the Night*. The play dramatizes

many of the grievances of the Spartacists in their uprising. The soldiers returning from the front felt that they had been fighting for nothing and that what they had before they left had been stolen. In November 1922, Brecht was rewarded by Germany's most significant literary award 'The Kleist Prize'. Most of Brecht's plays from 1924 onwards were written in collaboration with others including Elizabeth Hauptmann, Margarete Steffin, Ruth Berlau, Emil Burri and in collaboration with composers such as Kurt Weill, Hanns Eisler and Paul Dessau.

Brecht's co-authors contributed willingly to the informal 'Brecht collective' because they

believed in collective action as a political principle. This is based on the idea that working in a collective is liberating and can be more fruitful than individual work.

Brecht's early work could be described as Expressionist; only in the mid-1920s did Brecht become a socialist. Around this



Record cover of Alan Clarke's famous production of Brecht's *Baal*, 1982

time, his style changes radically. From the mid-1920s onwards, Brecht began to develop a form of theatre called ‘epic theatre’ which was intended to change the world by helping audiences to become more critically aware. Brecht criticized traditional theatre which for him was based on the Aristotelian principle of catharsis. Brecht saw this as a form of passive consumption; he claimed that he did not want to entertain people, but to make them think.

Brecht’s most famous musical collaboration is “*The Threepenny Opera*”. The work was adopted from John Gay’s “The Beggar’s Opera” a successful 18th-century “ballad opera”. Brecht and composer Kurt Weill filled the show with humorous scoundrels, riveting songs and scathing social satire. The play’s most renowned line is:

“Who is the bigger criminal: he who robs a bank, or he who
founds one?”

The play, *Life of Galileo*, shows a journey of hardships and struggles faced by Galileo as he tries to build to make society understand and come to believe the truth about the Earth. The play shows an interesting view into the typical common man’s mentality in the society, who finds himself incapable of being open enough to believe or understand new theories or ideas, or even if they do, they are easily shaken away from their belief because they do not have the courage to stand up for it. Brecht specifically uses the persecution of Galileo by the Catholic Church and the imagined discussions between Galileo and Andrea Sarti to raise questions about the role of the scientist in society.

Brecht’s most acclaimed work is *Mother Courage and Her Children*, which



Poster of Brecht’s, *Life of Galileo*, produced by *Berliner Ensemble*, which was established by Brecht and his wife, actress Helene Weigel.



Bertolt Brecht's grim tale of a woman for whom war is a source of income is committed to film with the definitive cast from Brecht's Berliner Ensemble in East Germany.

was wrote in the year 1939, in response to the Nazi invasion of Poland. It is often regarded as one of the finest anti-war plays. To demonstrate the devastating effects of war, Brecht sets the action of the play during the

Thirty Years' War, 1618-1648, which took place throughout Europe. Over the course of twelve scenes, he illustrates the personal toll of the war on Mother Courage, a woman who attempts to make a living from the war but pays a heavy price when she loses all three of her children to the war from which she attempts to profit.

“The audience has got to be good enough psychologist to make its own sense of the material I put before it. All I can guarantee is the absolute correctness and authenticity of what happens in my play. I am prepared to back on my knowledge of human beings. I leave the maximum freedom of interpretation.”

Techniques, Effects and Stage

Drawing on the Greek tradition, he wanted his theatre to represent a forum for debate hall rather than a place of illusions. From the Russian and Chinese theatres, Brecht derived some of his basic concepts of staging and theatrical Brecht stylization. Brecht admired the Chinese theatre, with its stylized acting, masks and anti-illusionist staging. Once said:

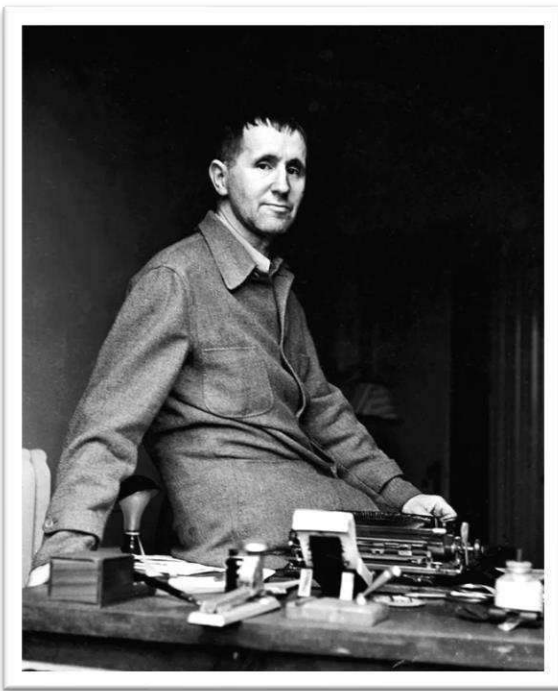
“Nothing is more important than learning to think crudely. Crude thinking is the thinking of great men.”

Epic Theatre

When Brecht was looking for a term that would encompass the type of theatre he was looking to create, he was influenced by the work of Erwin Piscator, a German director. Piscator was the first person to coin the phrase Epic Theatre. Brecht summarizes his theories of epic theatre in his notes to *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*; he later recapitulated and revised his theories in *A Little Organum for the theatre*.

Brecht has always proposed theatre as an instructive medium. Shakespeare's experiment with theatre reflects transformations- Hamlet which has a wrong endeavor, experimenting with high-class ideals, at the fall of traditional values of feudal family, which leads to disaster. Brecht observes Hamlet correctly between two worlds, the intellectual and the unhappy duty. "The idea is not to act this to the audience",

according to Margot Heinemann, "but to make the rehearsing actor aware that Hamlet is living in a time of changing values and has real choice." The coincidental identity with a character cannot be helped, but the deliberate effort is achieved in analytics and in alienated performance. This is naturalism for Brecht, where an actor should not be egocentric but a diffusing intellectual priority. Theatre, Brecht emphasizes, as the "epic theatre", where the audience listens to an account of things which have happened in the past with vivid representation. His retribution to theatre of 'illusion' (Aristotelian), vents to his practice of a didactic theatre, which keeps the audience estranged. It is an actor's art and a director's ploy to produce the alienation effect,



The one tribute we can pay the audience is to treat it as thoroughly intelligent, is what

Brecht was once heard being said. To Brecht's Marxian mindset, art is another product of the proletariat or the universal working class

which Brecht calls it, an ‘epic’ construction where ‘each scene’ is complete in structure without the illusion of unravelling a character through theatrical time with its identity.

The idea of objectivity and the absence of empathy developed into a concept of theatre that’s called Epic Theatre. The narrative starts and ends, leaving issues unresolved, confronting the audience with questions about what they will do. In Brecht’s view, Dramatic theatre numbs the audience by making it identify with the characters and become involved in the action. Scenes are episodic, which means they stand alone and are constructed in small chunks, rather than creating a lengthy and slow build of tension. If people are to learn from the theatre, they should be alert, rational, and socially concerned. In his notes to *The Threepenny Opera*, Brecht expresses his wish to create a theatre full of experts like those in sporting arenas. Epic Theatre often has a fractured narrative that is non-linear and jumps about in time.

Epic Theatre also shows an argument. The audience remains objective and watches a montage or a series of scenes. Standing outside the action emotionally, the audience can study the story objectively and should recognize social realities. Brecht noted that his theatre tries to reinforce certain emotions such as a sense of justice, the urge for freedom, and righteous anger. Although Brecht believed that the theatre should teach, he stressed that it should be entertaining as well. In the writings such as *A Little Organum for the theatre*, he noted that if the theatre were turned into purveyor of morality, it would run the risk of being debased. The function of epic theatre is not to moralize but to observe and to entertain the “children of scientific age”. Walter Benjamin helps to understand how the play gives its



Simon Stephen’s production of *The Threepenny Opera* at the National Theatre

messages by stating that “Epic theatre proceeds by fits, and starts, in a manner comparable to the images on a film strip”.

Toward the end of his life, Brecht wanted to change the name of his theatre from “epic” to “dialectical”, to stress the central role of argument in his play. In his preface to *Dialectics in the Theatre*:

“The essays which follow suggest that the term ‘epic theatre’ may be too formal for the theatre we mean. The epic theatre may be the underlying basis of these presentations, but it does not fully account for the way they show the productivity and malleability of society, which is the source of most of the enjoyment they provide. The term ‘epic theatre’ must therefore be regarded as inadequate, without our able to offer a new one”.

V-Effect

Verfremdungseffekt can be most accurately translated as the ‘making strange effect’, and it seeks to do precisely that, to make the things strange, to give everyday events the status of something grand or epic. This was done by getting the scene started, and then doing something unexpected. When the rhythm is interrupted, the audience stops getting lost in the emotion, story and characters. They are able to start to think and question. The idea with V-effekt was to constantly remind the audience they were in a theatre.

In the book, *Brecht on Theatre*, he said,

“Our representations must take second place to what is represented, men’s life together in society; and the pleasure felt in their [the representations] perfection must be converted into the higher pleasure felt when the rules emerging from this life in society are treated as imperfect and provisional. In this way, the theatre leaves its spectators productively disposed even after the spectacle is over (...)”.

To avoid lulling the audience into a state of passive acceptance, the illusion of reality, achieved through the audience's empathic identification with the tragic hero figure, must be shattered using the alienation effect. The actors must not lose themselves in their roles or seek to promote a purely empathic audience identification. They must present a role to the audience as both recognizable and unfamiliar (recalling Freud's notion of the uncanny), so that a process of critical assessment can be initiated. The situation, emotions and dilemmas of the characters must be understood from the outside and presented as strange and problematic. This is not to say that actors should avoid the use of emotion, simply that they should not resort to empathy.

Staging

There are multiple devices which use this effect in staging a play. Primarily, narration is one such thing, which is used to remind the audience that what they are watching is a presentation of a story. It helps to dissolve the emotional attachment developed while witnessing the play. Sometimes, commenting

upon a character as an actor is also a way of reminding the audience of theatricality. In midway of a heightened scene or during a climax, the action might break for the actor to comment upon their character in third person. Placard, a sign or an additional piece of written information, is presented onstage which helps to implement the effect.



Pipeline Theatre Company's adoption of Brecht's Caucasian Chalk Circle

Brecht uses various exercises to help and depict these ideas to the actor. The character should only be represented on stage. The character and the actor then remain separate entities the whole time. Brecht emphasizes this situation by saying: "Even

if one possessed, the actor must not appear possesses himself: how else could the spectators find out what it is that possesses the possessed?”

The impact of the new theatrical style, which was created by Brecht, can be seen in the stage design. Brecht succeeded in that by keeping the stage sets minimalistic, showing uncovered lighting instruments. The stage directions were shown by speaking out loud. The audience was tried to be aware that the theatre is not representation of life, and Brecht said that,

“It is... necessary to drop the assumption that there is a fourth wall cutting the audience off from the stage and the consequent illusion that the stage action is taking place in reality and without audience”.

Lighting was not used to create an atmosphere in the epic theatre. After the play started, the lights on the audiences were turned off because it was aimed to make audiences that take part in the play. Another task of lighting was to differentiate between the scenes.

Gestus

From *Brecht on Theatre*, “Gest is not supposed to mean gesticulation: it is not a matter of explanatory or emphatic movements of the hands, but of overall attitudes...Not all gests are social gests. The attitude of chasing away a fly is not yet a social gest, though the attitude of chasing away a dog may be one, for instance if it comes to represent a badly dressed man’s continual battle against watchdogs.... A good way of judging a piece of music with a text is to try out the different attitudes or gests with which the performer ought to deliver the individual sections.”

Gestus, another Brechtian technique, is a clear gesture or movement used by the actor that captures a moment or attitude rather than delving into emotion. Brecht described this way of showing contradictory human behavior through the art of acting *Gestus*. The interpretation will be built on the character’s social role and why they need to behave as they do, rather than looking

inwardly at emotional motivation. It is the combination of a gesture and a social meaning into one movement. It can be alienating to the audience, as it is an unusual and non-realistic way of forcing them to see the bigger picture of a situation.

The most famous example of gestus is in *Mother Courage and her Children*. Mother Courage shows her inner emotional turmoil not through words, but through a physical presentation. She looks at the audience and delivers a silent scream. Again, it is not the action alone that makes it gestus, but rather the combination of this action and the social meaning. Mother Courage has just lost a son, but if she makes any sound of recognition towards him, she will put her life and the life of her daughter in danger. She has been forced into a terrible situation and the audience gets to see this through her gestus of a silent scream.

Spass

Spass literally translates as 'fun'. Brecht always wanted to make his audience think, so he realized that when we are laughing in our subconscious we are thinking as well. Brechtian work isn't boring, and it is definitely not always serious either. Even if the message itself is serious, Brecht realized that comedy could be an excellent way of engaging the audience and forcing them to think about issues.

Spass was also an excellent way to break the tension. Brecht needed to break rising tension to stop the audience from following characters on their emotional journey. It might be used in the form of a comic song, slapstick or physical comedy or even a stand-up routine. It's 'silliness' in effect but often makes strong social comment in the way it's used in the treatment of a serious subject.

Song and Dance

One of the ways to ensure the audience, reminding them about a play which they are witnessing on stage. Often in Brechtian theatre the style of music and the lyrics do not seem to fit together in style. This distances the audience further. The

musical arrangement and melody are upbeat and joyous, but the lyrics are sinister and dark. He said:

“Gestic music is that music which allows the actor to exhibit certain basic gestic on the stage. So-called ‘cheap’ music, particularly that of the cabaret and the operetta, has for some time been assort of gestic music.... in my view Weill’s music is not purely gestic; but many parts of it are, enough anyway for it to represent a serious threat to the common type of opera, which in its current manifestations we can call the purely culinary opera.”

Stephen Brockman described Brecht as a practical philosopher:

“Brecht was an astute and articulate participant in his own era, seeking both to understand and shape it in his writing and thought. For him ratiocination itself- the process of thinking and, via thought, coming to terms with the complexity of the world- was deeply pleasurable. Even greater pleasure occurred when thinking produced not just understanding but also the potential for positive, intentional change.”

Through the creation of Brechtian theatre’s estranged imitations and metaphors about one’s living. The experience of joy in the careful observation of the audience or masses and imitation of human theatre, the medium for actors and audiences, one gets the glimpse of the nature of theatre’s pedagogical, and even in its function: ‘to contribute to the greatest art of all-the art of living’.

Tributes: 2



T.S. Eliot 135

A homage to a Literary Luminary

Surangana Dutta

Department of History, Semester V

“And I will show you something different from either
Your shadow at morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you
I will show you fear in a handful of dust”

— T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*

This year marks the 135th anniversary of the 1948 winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, Thomas Stearns Eliot, a highly distinguished poet, a literary critic, a dramatist, an editor, and a publisher. His poetry and criticisms brought about a revolution in the literary domain. He called attention to the forgotten writers and re-established the metaphysical, lesser-known Elizabethans, regained the popularity of Dante.

He overturned the secular humanistic attitude of 1920s and 1930s and wrote from a Christian point of view. This novel approach made him one of the greatest personalities of the 20th Century English Literature.

Born in St. Louis, Missouri on September 26, 1888, Eliot was the seventh and youngest child of Henry Ware Eliot and Charlotte Chauncy Stearns. His family allowed him the widest education available in his time. Starting from Smith Academy in St. Louis he went to Milton, in Massachusetts; from Milton he entered Harvard in 1906 where he received his B.A. in 1909. He spent the year 1910-11 in France, attending Henri Bergson's lectures in philosophy at the Sorbonne and reading poetry with Alain-Fournier. From 1911 to 1914 he was back at Harvard, reading Indian philosophy and studying Sanskrit. In 1915 he settled in England. His parents who had planned an outstanding academic career for him were disconcerted with his choice of profession and settlement in London. Soon Eliot had a register marriage with Vivian Haigh-Wood in 1915. However, Mrs Eliot had psychological and mental problems and she was kept in an asylum as incurably insane for fourteen years and passed away in 1947. Later in 1957, Eliot married his secretary Valerie Fletcher, and they lived happily till his death in 1965.

Eliot worked as a school master for some time, teaching French and Latin at Highgate School in London. However, he could not find time to pursue his literary interests.



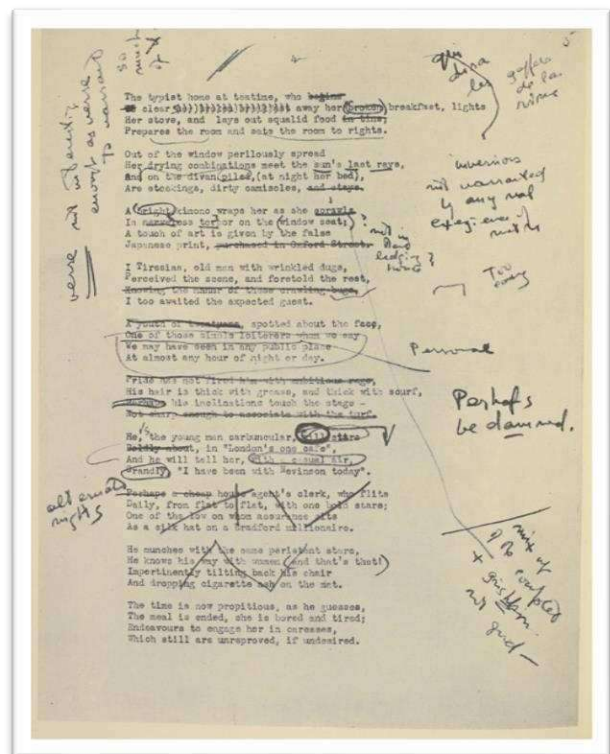
'There is not even solitude in the mountains'; Eliot always believed poetry to be not merely turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion.

So, he resigned his job and joined Lloyds Bank as a clerk, after which he was able to devote more time to his work on literary pursuits.

(2)

Eliot was influenced by many general and literary facts. The two World Wars had an overpowering effect on him. Humanism, which believed that man could attain perfection on earth by utilizing his reason, and knowledge of science, was another general influence. The literary influences started with his grandfather who was a writer himself. He was fascinated by the humanists Irving Babbitt, Paul Elmer More and George Santayana. He imbibed the significance of Classicism and Tradition from Irving Babbitt. George Santayana stressed the importance of imitation and classicism. The classicism of Ben Jonson of the eighteenth century suggested that a great writer should have natural endowment, imaginative imitation, vast knowledge and conscious craftsmanship. Eliot welcomed all these influences and added his concept of historical sense, that is, a knowledge of the past literature, a knowledge of the present, a knowledge of the influence of the past on the present, and an awareness of the likely influence of the present on the future.

Dante had a profound effect on Eliot's mind. He learnt from Dante, how to develop and refine language, how to acquire emotional range, and how to be a 'real European'. The Metaphysical poets highlighted the need for unification of sensibility, the necessity for intellect, and the blending of the old and the new. The romantic critic S. T. Coleridge caught his attention with his critical counters fancy and imagination. Besides these, Ezra Pound is the one poet who left a lasting impact on his life and works. When the American poet T.S Eliot went to study at Oxford University, he encountered the poet and critic Ezra Pound, who had a

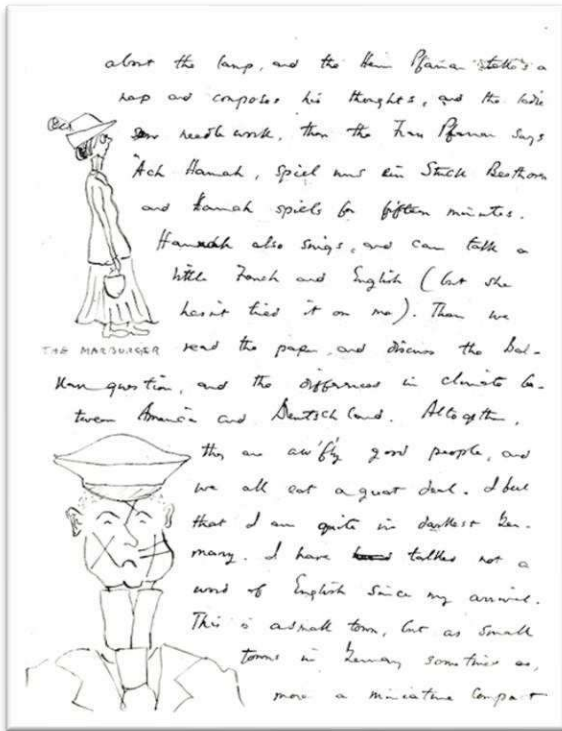


Manuscript of *Waste Land* with corrections by Ezra Pound. Pound left a long-lasting effect on Eliot's poetry.

significant influence on his work. Though the two were poles apart in terms of their politics and personalities, Pound became one of his most trusted advisors. He guided him on how to write, how to achieve intellectual clarity through free-verse prose that mixed cultural history with personal experience. It was here he harvested the concept that poetry is inspired mathematics giving equations not for line and circle but for human emotions.

The age in which T.S Eliot started writing poetry was the age of depression and disillusionment.

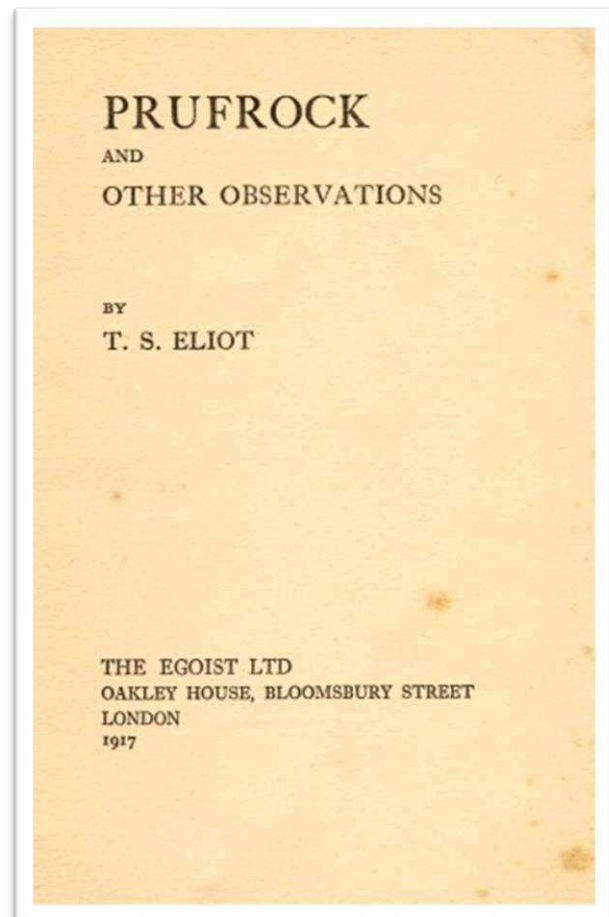
The end of the nineteenth-century came with the beginning of rapid industrialization of England, and with it, an increasing urbanization. Result of this was prosperity that gave birth to evils and affected the very basic aspects of life deeply. Materialistic outlook towards everything and the economic prosperity brought about a breakdown of values cherished so far. Money became more important than human affection and relationship. The greatness of man became more and more dependent upon his wealth and economic well-being. The qualities of mind and heart, no longer, held much importance. It naturally led to a breakdown of spiritual and religious values and beliefs. Family



An illustrated letter by Eliot for his book *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*.

relationships underwent a change. The assessment of the relative roles of man and woman changed. The younger generation and the older generation felt the gap between them widening, resulting in a change of relationship between parent and child. This sort of background of instability, uncertainty, confusion and breakdown of values altogether awakened the sensitive heart in T.S. Eliot. He wanted to present this situation of modern world through his literature. He wanted to draw attention of his readers to these defects of modern civilization. He is of the view that a poet's aim should not be to entertain. It must have moral and social purpose.

Eliot's first collection of poems titled, *Prufrock and Other Observations* was published in 1917. The poem 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' delves deep in the emotional and physical predicament of life. Prufrock belongs to the contemporary aristocratic world. His society shows the perfection of urban civilization with sophisticated luxury, artificiality, hypocrisy, loneliness etc. it is a world disgusted with itself, bored to death and finding some relief in love and gaiety. The words of Prufrock come straight from the drawing room and fashionable clubs.



This modern civilization preserved its formal manners and mechanical bits of conversation. This society is rotten and hollow at its core. It has no emotional or spiritual reservoir of strength. Eliot was quite aware of the degeneration, which was prevalent in his age and through his various poems, he has tried hard to raise a voice against this disintegration and degradation. In his poem 'Hollow Men', these hollow men show spiritual emptiness and barrenness. It contains the poet's reflection about human nature in the world and the relationship of this world to another, the world of death and eternity. Similarly, his poem 'Gerontion' affirms the views of Eliot about modern life and civilization--The thoughts of the protagonist recollected in tranquillity reflect the essential barrenness of modern civilization.

Title page of Eliot's first collection of Poems *Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917). The work signified a complete break with the nineteenth century tradition. It must indeed have been difficult to accept this new form of poetry seriously in 1917, for it defied the traditional canon of seriousness, with lines like:

"I grow old... I grow old... I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled."

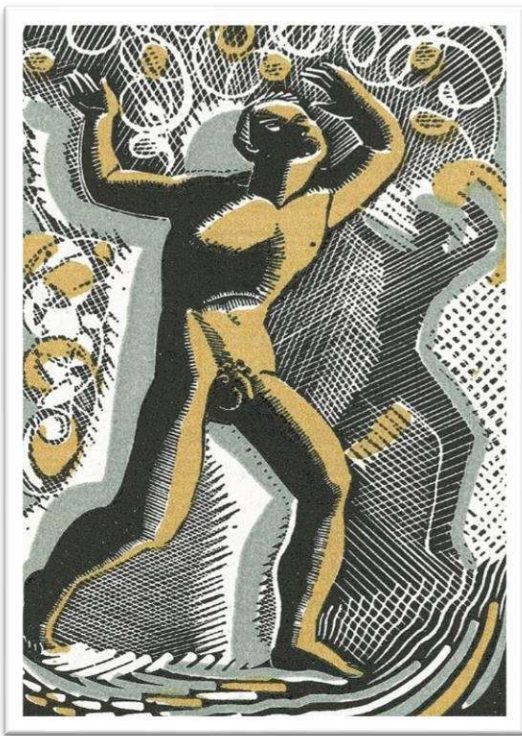
In 1922 he started his famous journal, 'Criterion' and 'The Waste Land' dedicated to Ezra Pound was published for the first time in it. The poem was not easily understood as it contained

many allusions, but it was lauded as the best in his earlier mode of writing poetry. The lack of spirituality in modern world is reinforced by the reflection of the mythical waste land devoid of water, the source of life. The poem is divided into five sections which illustrate various aspects of degenerated modern world. The first part 'The Burial of Dead' makes us aware of the spiritual barrenness in modern man's life. Eliot conveys a sense of apprehension and incomprehension in various characters presented in different situations. The second part, 'A Game of Chess' offers two scenes showing the essential emptiness in a lavishly decorated room, a rich lady whose constant questions express her anxiety and lack of control. The modern man is mentally impotent, becoming incapable of conceiving anything positive in his mind. The theme of sexual dissatisfaction is presented in Part III, 'The Fire Sermon', where Eliot, ranging about in time from Buddha and St. Augustine to the present day, has tried to show how man's aspirations to a higher i.e., more spiritually mode of living is constantly thwarted by his

subservience to his bodily appetites and his self-awareness. the part IV 'Death by Water' highlights materialistic degeneration. In this section, a drowned merchant's body decomposes in the sea. He seems to have achieved nothing. Further, the last section 'What the Thunder

Said' begins with a description of the death of Jesus and goes on to relate a difficult journey through the desert to an empty chapel. However, the poem ends with a hope of salvation. The poem gives some advice to regenerate themselves and wishes that everywhere in the world should be "Shantih shantih shantih".

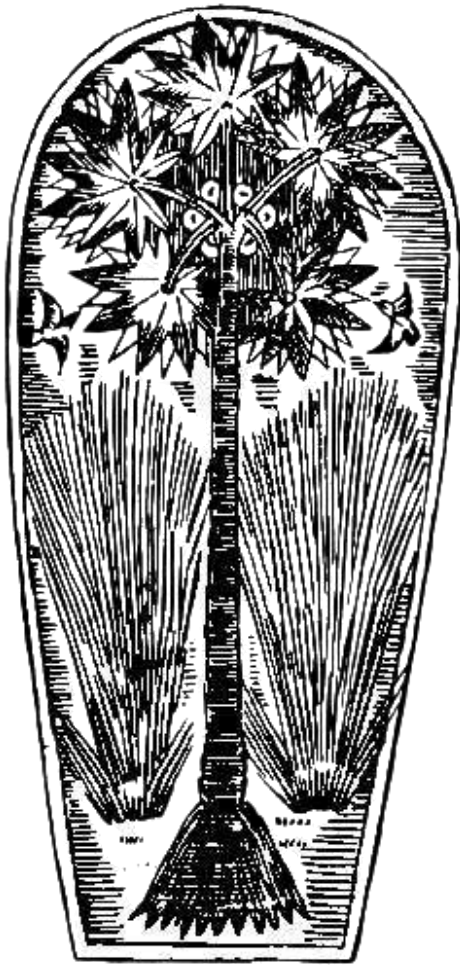
In his *Ash Wednesday* published in 1930, and the *Ariel Poems*, Eliot reveals a developed emotional and less stiff style to articulate his discovery of faith. The best work composed in this new style was *The Four Quartets*. Parts of it came out from 1936 onwards and the entire work was published in New



An illustration from Eliot's poem 'Animula', from *The Ariel Poems* - a sequence of beautifully illustrated poetry pamphlets, published by Faber from 1927 for the Christmas gift market.

York in 1943. These original poems are serious meditations on time and eternity. They deal with the personal and the general, and man's position in nature and in history. Through these poems he was able to treat in modern idiom the basic features of Christian faith and their effects. Eliot tried to bring back poetic drama through *Sweeney Agonistes* in 1932. This was followed by *Murder in the Cathedral* in 1935, *The Family Reunion* in 1939, and the three comedies *The Cocktail Party*, *The Confidential Clerk* and *The Elder Statesman* in 1950, 1954 and 1958 respectively. He tried to bring the style of poetic drama to the spoken language. His *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (1939) is considered an excellent piece, a classic among children's poetry books.

T.S. Eliot was thus an influential critic and his remarkable way of putting together of literary and social criticism has rightfully earned him the name *Arnold of the Twentieth Century*. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1948. The Order of Merit was also conferred on him. Eliot passed away due to emphysema at his home in Kensington in London, on Jan 4th, 1965.



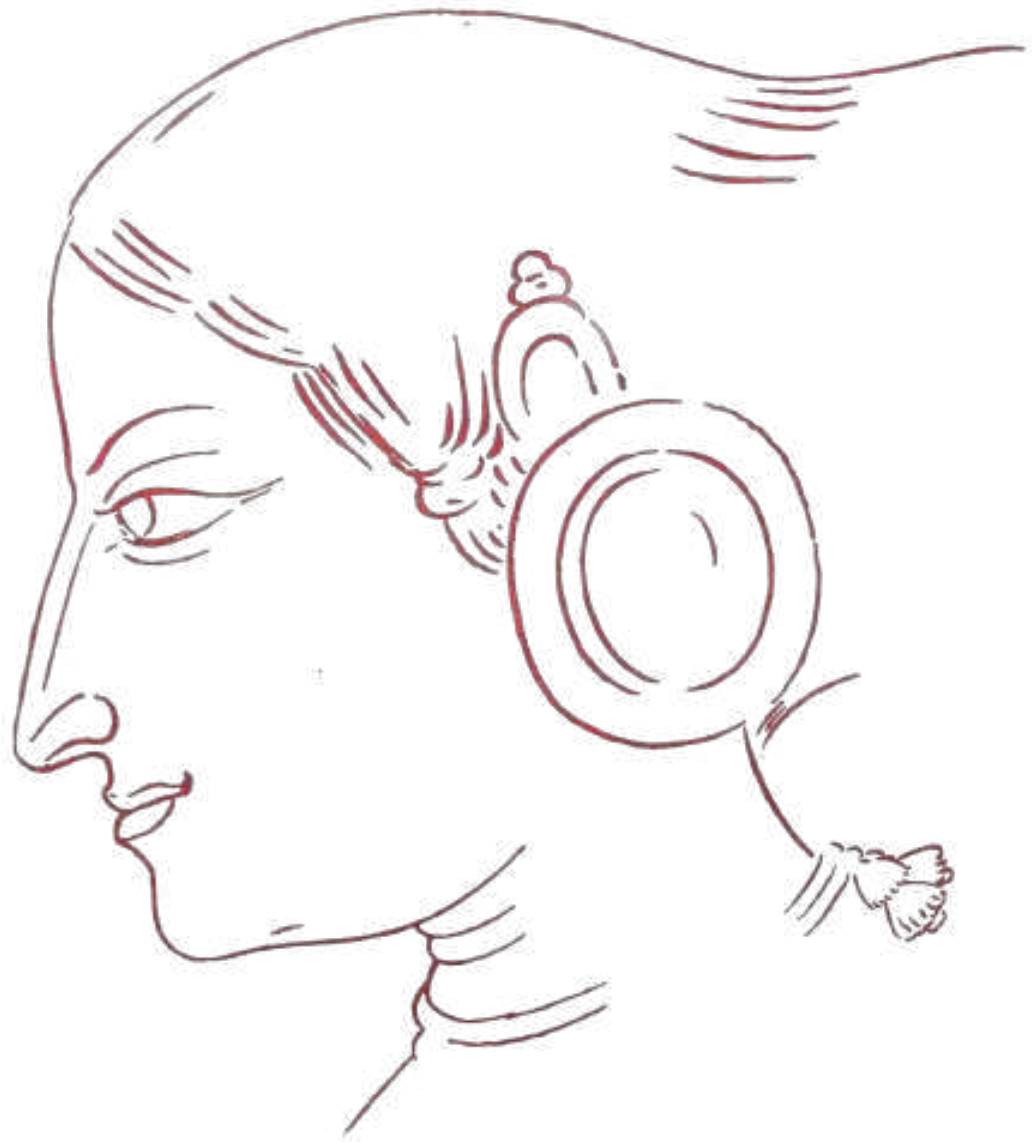
*Sketch by Nandalal Bose
Source: A Golden Book of Tagore*

Wanderlust



مسافري

Musafire: The traveller



Sketch by Nandalal Bose
Source: Online

The Underground City of Cappadocia

Ambareen Farid

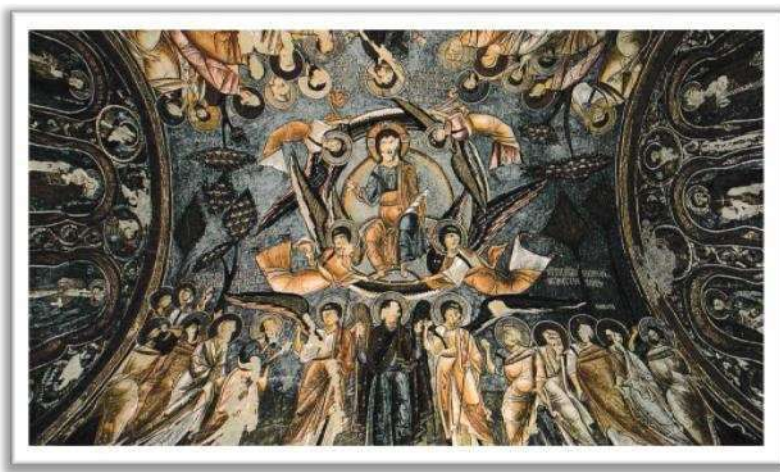
Department of History, Semester V

Cappadocia is a historic region in Central Anatolia, Turkey. In the years it has gained a lot of tourist attractions around the world. People from thousands of miles travel to Cappadocia. Its history dates back thousands of years. The name "Cappadocia" is believed to have originated from the Persian term "Katpatuka," which means "the land of beautiful horses". This name likely reflects the region's historical association with horse breeding and trade. One of the most famous tourist attractions of Cappadocia is the Hot Air Balloon ride flying over the beautiful and unique topography, formed by volcanic eruptions. But, the history student in me, was captivated by the history of this magical part of Turkey.

The history of Cappadocia dates to antiquity, with evidence of human habitation to the Hittite period, around 2000 BC. Over the centuries, the region witnessed the rise and fall of numerous civilizations, including the Phrygians, Persians, and Romans.

Cappadocia holds a significant place in early Christian history. In the 4th century AD, it became a refuge for persecuted Christians, and it was during this period that the region's distinctive cave churches were carved into the rock. These cave churches are adorned with stunning frescoes and represent a unique blend of art, religion, and geology. The cave cities are remarkable underground complexes that have fascinated historians, archaeologists, and tourists alike. These subterranean marvels are a testament to the resourcefulness and ingenuity of the people who once inhabited this region.

The cave cities in Cappadocia were primarily created between the 6th and 9th centuries AD, during a time of significant upheaval and invasion threats. Carved into the soft volcanic rock, these underground cities served as hidden refuges for the local population, protecting them from various external threats, including invading armies and religious persecution. Derinkuyu and Kaymaklı are two of the most well-known cave cities in Cappadocia, featuring multi-level complexes with interconnected



The Cave Church Frescoes were painted with colours of natural pigments on lime plaster. Since plaster adheres to the tuff rock, artists finished the interior of cave churches like regular rock churches.

tunnels, ventilation shafts, living quarters, churches, storage rooms, and even livestock stables. These underground labyrinths were designed to accommodate thousands of people, making them self-sustaining communities.

The inhabitants of Cappadocia's cave cities were able to access fresh water, maintain a stable

temperature throughout the year, and store food supplies, ensuring their survival during extended periods of isolation. The architectural and engineering prowess required to create these underground havens is a testament to the resilience and resourcefulness of the ancient Cappadocians.

The favourite place among the places which I visited that took my breath away was the Goreme open-air museum. The Goreme Open-Air Museum, located in the heart of Cappadocia in central Turkey, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a captivating testament to the region's rich history and unique cultural heritage. This open-air museum is a living repository of rock-cut architecture and Christian religious art that spans over a millennium.

The museum encompasses a cluster of monastic cave complexes, each replete with rock-cut churches, chapels, and living quarters. These cave dwellings and places of worship are carved into the soft tuff rock, and their interiors are adorned with stunning frescoes that narrate biblical stories and depict scenes of religious significance. One of the most



remarkable features of the Göreme Open-Air Museum is its collection of well-preserved churches and chapels, which date back to the 10th and 11th centuries. The architecture and artwork in these churches provide a unique insight into the fusion of Eastern Orthodox and Byzantine Christian traditions, making the museum a significant site for both art history and religious studies.

Fresco depicting the Biblical *Magi* visiting the infant Christ, from the *Dark Church*. The early Cappadocia monasteries lacked human figures; some scholars date such churches to the Iconoclastic period (726–842 AD) when icons were banned. But the Dark Church, in contrast, is lavishly decorated with frescoes.

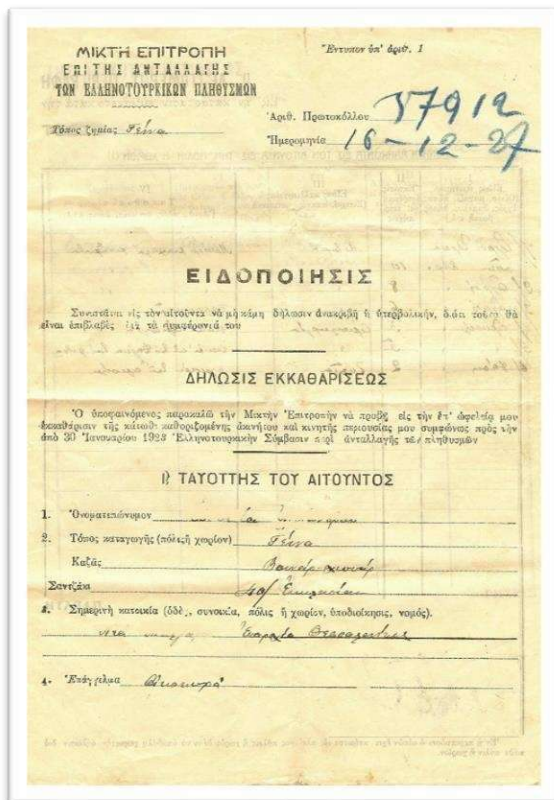
The Dark Church (Karanlık Kilise) is a highlight of the museum, named for the minimal natural light that enters the cave. Its interior is adorned with some of the most exceptional and well-preserved frescoes, showcasing the skill and artistry of the artists who created them. These frescoes depict scenes from the life of Christ, saints, and other biblical narratives with intricate details and vivid colours.

But something caught my eyes as I was touring the caves. The frescoes of the caves were indeed well-preserved but the eyes and the mouth of the Frescos especially that of Christ, were carved or scratched out. As we finished the tour I asked our tour guide, he told me to take a guess first. My first guess was a probable Ottoman, but it was not, as he revealed to me the reason. This led to an era of Turkish history which was not very known by the world.

The Turkish and Greek population exchange, also known as

the Greco-Turkish population exchange or the Lausanne population exchange, was a significant and complex historical event that occurred in the aftermath of World War I and the Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922). The exchange aimed to address the intertwined issues of ethnic and religious minorities living in Turkey and Greece and the territorial boundaries between the two countries. This exchange had profound and lasting impacts on the populations, politics, and cultures of both nations.

The population exchange was formalized through the Treaty of Lausanne, signed in 1923, which marked the end of the Greco-Turkish War and the establishment of the modern borders of Turkey.



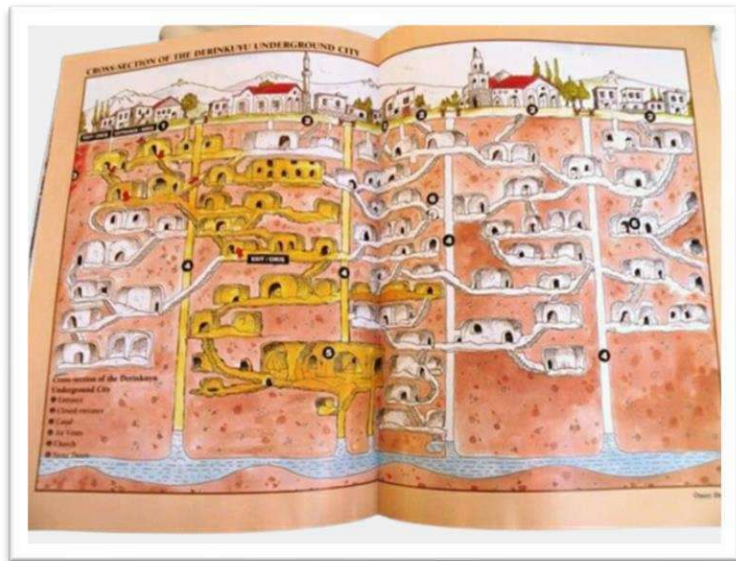
Declaration of Property during the Greco-Turkish Population exchange. This major compulsory population exchange, or agreed mutual expulsion, was a humanitarian disaster.

Under the terms of the agreement, approximately 1.5 million Greeks living in Anatolia and 500,000 Turks living in Greece were forcibly uprooted from their homes and compelled to move to their respective countries. This massive and abrupt exchange was aimed at creating ethnically and religiously homogeneous nation-states, with Turkey becoming predominantly Muslim and Greece primarily Christian.

The population exchange was a humanitarian disaster, as it entailed the displacement of entire communities who had lived in their respective regions for generations. People faced extreme hardships and often violence during their journeys, which were characterized by overcrowded trains, disease, and other difficulties. Many lost their homes, possessions, and even their lives during the process. This forced migration had profound and long-lasting social, cultural, and economic impacts on both countries. In Greece, the arrival of hundreds of thousands of Greek refugees strained resources and led to significant demographic

changes in the regions where they settled. Similarly, in Turkey, the departing Greek population left behind a legacy of depopulated villages and urban centres. Despite the hardships

faced by the refugees, the exchange arguably helped to stabilize the region in the long term. It allowed for the creation of ethnically homogeneous nation-states and potentially reduced ethnic tensions in both countries. However, the forced displacement and loss of cultural heritage for those affected remain significant sources of pain and



To save themselves from Roman persecution, The Christians had built the beautifully interlinked underground city of Cappadocia.

historical memory to this day. As he was narrating the history it kind of took me back to the year of 1947 of India.

In the decades that followed, both Turkey and Greece took steps to rebuild their societies and integrate the refugee populations. While there were attempts to assimilate these newcomers, their presence also enriched the cultural and economic fabric of their respective nations. The Turkish and Greek population exchange remains a critical and deeply emotional chapter in the histories of both countries. When these Greek people were leaving Anatolia for Greece, they carved out the eyes and mouth from the frescoes of the caves as a memory of their homeland and they believed if they put the eyes on the water and drink it, the water supposedly would gain some healing power.

The exchange continues to shape contemporary issues such as minority rights, historical narratives, and reconciliation efforts between Turkey and Greece. The exchange serves as a stark reminder of the human costs of political and territorial disputes and the complexities of reshaping national identities and borders. Cappadocia is a region filled with history and captivating topography. Visiting it was once in a lifetime opportunity for it being a heaven for a history student.

Polaroids



Nawab Bari (Tomb of Khwaja Anwar)
Purbasha Das, Semester 1



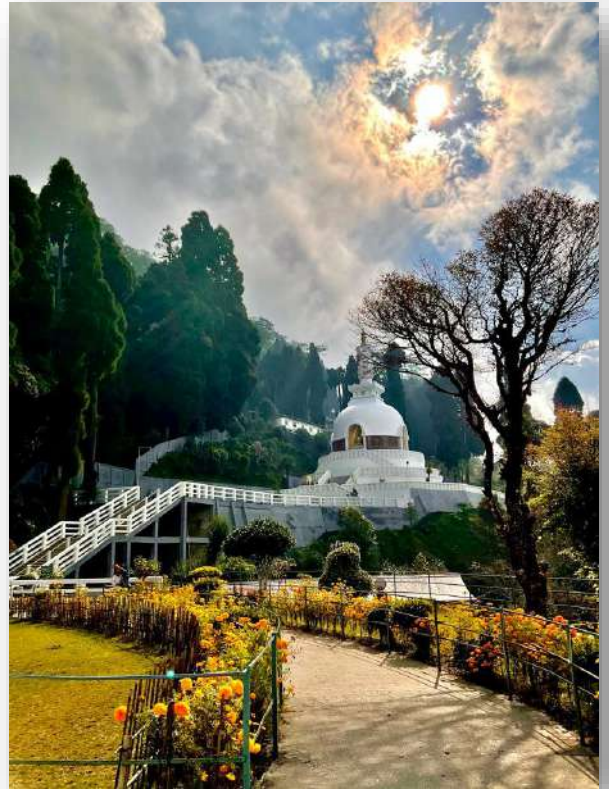
Om Mani Padme Hum
Surangana Datta, Semester 5



Ibadat Khana
Ambareen Farid,
Semester 5



Paws and Tail
Debarati Pan, Semester
1



Eternal Elegance
Samriddha Talukder, Semester 5



An ancient Pallava Tradition
Abhisambuddha Mukherjee, Semester 3



Ganga Arati
Aritrika Gupta, Semester 3

What we lost and won for living free
Mainak Bhattacharya, Semester 5





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Scottish Church College

1 and 3, Urquhart Square, Kolkata- 700006

NAAC Re-accredited grade 'A' Institution (3rd Cycle)

Ranked 100th in NIRF 2023

Under the guidance of eminent historian Prof. Kalidas Nag, the Department of History, Scottish Church College founded a Historical Society in 1915 according to records found. Students including the likes of Nirad C. Chaudhuri presented papers in the Society. Since then, however, the Society had been lost in the pages of history. With the joint initiative from the faculty and the students the Society was revived in 2021-2022. The publication of Clio is a step forward for the Society and the students of the department. This is the first bilingual yearly magazine issue released under the Society's banner for the current session 2023-24.