

The seminar on 'Fifty Years of India's Independence' organized by the Institute from 24 to 27 September 1996 aimed at reflecting and exchanging experiences on the five decades of India's independence so that a systematic understanding of this past could revitalize our vision. To revisit the past, particularly while meditating on the significance of a term as contextual and relative as 'freedom', is a difficult task. To initiate this discourse, the Institute had suggested some broad themes. They included the significance of the metamorphosis of the notion of *swaraj* into the reality of a sovereign state and the implications of freedom for India, particularly in terms of the future and of human civilization.

Papers and Individual Presentations

B. K. Bhattacharya's paper which opened the seminar was an interesting blend of hopes, reflections on the 'Indian Revolution' and a dialogue with past leaders - Gandhi and Lohia. Bhattacharya felt that the Indian revolution remained unfinished, and that in order to find inspiration we need to go back to a proper evaluation of the freedom movement. Taking stock of the past fifty years, Ajit Bhattacharjea, in his 'From White to Brown Elite', found it hard to suppress a sense of 'deep disappointment, of hopes betrayed, of grave anxiety for the future.' Bhattacharjea, however, saw a ray of hope in the initiative of activists who have shown what mobilizing around linking the academic right to information with the practical right to livelihood, does to evoke grassroots consciousness.

Bhupinder Parihar in his 'National Integration in a Pluralistic Society' emphasized the lack of system-building initiatives in free India. For him, 'in the present socio-political existential predicament, the difficult question is how to strike a balance between unity and diversity, between national identity and cultural polarities, between ethnic and linguistic multiplicities.' Addressing the efficacy of the judicial process, particularly in the sphere of human rights, I. P. Massey suggested that since independence, there has been an evolution from civil and political rights to economic, social and cultural rights.

For B. G. Tandon, the appropriate way to describe the Indian condition after fifty years of freedom was 'anarchy'. And the reason was clear. The 'Indian character is a compound of seven deadly sins - irrationality, religiosity, materialism, physical feebleness, conservatism and conceitedness'. Som P. Ranjan suggested that we moved away from the prayer-petition-protest mode to one of self-assertion. C. D. Narasimhaiah's paper, 'Our Universities: A Story of Unredeemed

In a Seminar's Wake

Samir Banerjee reviews the Institute's National Seminar on Fifty Years of India's Independence

Betrayal', scathingly attacked the state of education in independent India. Gopi Chand Narang, in his paper 'Linguistic Identity in North-Central India: The Case of Urdu', emphasized the relationship between cultural identity and language, and drew our attention to the strange predicament of Urdu being termed alien in its own homeland. However, he saw hope for Urdu in the overlap of Urdu and Hindi, thanks to the television, films, and ghazals.

Narendra Mohan in his 'Search for the Meaning of Independence in Literature' began by recalling nostalgically the fond hopes at the dawn of independence. These, however, have remained hopes and the reality is one of tension, crisis, anomalies, curtailing of creative spaces, and a growing hiatus between national and regional identities. T. R. S. Sharma in his 'Translating Literary Texts: A Phenomenological Study' discussed issues of translation from Indian languages to English, and elaborated a theory of translation using Indian aesthetic categories such as *rasa*, *riti*, *alankara* and *dhwani* - aspects of a literary text which the translator has to encounter.

In 'Is a Fresh Look at The Constitution Necessary?' Sandeep Shastri analysed the Indian parliamentary system. Contrary to the expectations that this primary political forum of the country would foster an egalitarian political milieu, it has largely been used for consolidating sectarian aspirations and positions of power. In his 'Foreign Policy and the Discourse of Freedom in India', Bhupinder Brar postulated freedom as a 'condition that is constantly restructured and reappropriated by continually enduring subjects'.

To be able to outline the contours of the debate on intellectuals, Peter De Souza in his paper; 'The Political Responsibility of Intellectuals in India', began by situating them in terms of three locations - within the university system; as part of the cultural context of a post-colonial society; and, lastly, in terms of their class background. While the emergence of a plurality of points of view has led to an oscillation in the quality of the discourse ethics, the emerging importance of executive and political authority has managed to infuse a mix of conformism, scepticism and pedantic notions of social justice.

Through a critical and incisive analysis of the content, conclusions and recommendations of the Kothari Commission Report of 1966, Krishna Kumar argued that in this report one

can see the source of the continued dominance of English, the emergence of an agricultural education to sustain the emerging green revolution, the creation of conditions for American penetration and consolidation over the political economy as a whole, and a systematic replacement of Gandhi's concept of basic education. B. S. Dahiya in his 'Education in Free India: Promises and Pitfalls' suggested liberating education from the stranglehold of bureaucrats and politicians by making it autonomous, and stressed the need for improving the quality of primary education and of selective vocationalization at the middle levels.

In his 'Freedom or Feardom', Vijay S. T. Shankardass suggested that human rights movements had much potential to usher in genuine freedom, but felt that such movements have to 'give up both their state base and their western conceptual legacy.' His analysis, while stressing 'rights' and 'needs', did not explicitly address the issue of 'responsibilities.' L. B. Verma made a presentation on 'Living Fifty Years of Freedom: An Exercise in Oral History.' It was not clear how one could come to grips with the complexities of traditional symbolism, particularly within language. Thomas Pantham, in his provocative paper 'Indian Secularism and Its Critics: Some Reflections', argued that the Gandhian vision of Indian secularism 'entailed a relative autonomy of the political and the religious (*qua* ethical or spiritual or moral) such that they can engage each other in a constructive way.'

Rani D. Shankardass in her, 'The Patelian Tradition of Indian Unity: Origins, Manifestations and Misrepresentations', suggested that Patel, unlike other leaders, was a pragmatist to the core, most comfortable when 'identity or community-interest was visibly dominant'. For him 'national assertion' was not to be confused with 'nationalist feelings', while discipline and unity were interchangeable notions. However, the consideration of discipline and unity as interchangeable can be fraught with contradictions and may, as Shankardass cautions, 'produce unintended effects'.

A glaring absence in the agenda of the seminar was pointed out by U. Vindhya who wondered whether the absence of any discussion of gender issues was a matter of sheer chance or design. In a hurriedly put together, though comprehensive and thoughtful presentation, she listed some steps taken towards the amelioration of

women's status by the government and the NGOs. However, she regretted the wide gap between provisions in the law and their implementation.

Vir Bharat Talwar in his 'Tribals in Free India: Victims of Progress' focused on detrimental processes of assimilation and acculturation, leading to marginalization and alienation of tribal societies. He drew attention to the disturbing fact that much of what tribal societies could teach - particularly in terms of sustainability, sensitivity to the views and practices of others, etc. - was being lost. Shekhar Pathak in his 'Halat-e-Himalay: Fifty Years of Development and Destruction in the Himalayan Mountains', sought to highlight the destruction caused by unsustainable mobilization practices in a fragile eco-system. Giving ample detail on the destruction and the anomalies generated, Pathak showed that while the holding capacity of such eco-systems can be understood through a study of specificities, local histories, sustainability practices, local genius, external linkages, etc., it cannot be made elastic by prising them open in the name of development and progress.

For Shivaji K. Panikkar in his 'Political Significations: Modern Indian Art and Art Criticism', 'art is a historical category, conditioned by the particular political economy'. Panikkar described how different paradigms beginning with the Nehruvian mode, to the interventionist, the solipsistic to the neo-narrative mode guided the Indian artists. While the presentation focused on the artist-elite-critique-dealer hegemony, it left one with a disturbing feeling that aspects such as inspiration and instinct were being reduced to being handmaidens of history.

Krishna Sobhti's 'Aaj aur Kal' was a creative artist's presentation - her effort was to articulate the reflections of an ordinary human being; to present how a simple citizen comprehends the constant exchange with society and its institutions. Peering into different social sections, people, forums, practices, she found a complex of creative responses, regressions and hope. Above all, what impressed her most was the enthusiasm of a yet-to-mature dynamism found among the youth, women and environmental movements.

From the Wake

After fifty years there is no question that we needed a holistic, wide-ranging understanding of actions and events. The seminar had the potential to make a meaningful effort in this direction. Expectations were deep, demanding clarifications, analyses and explanations.

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Hume on Religion:

Lectures by Edward Craig

Prof. Edward Craig, Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge was a Visiting Professor at the Institute in August and September 1996. He delivered a series of three lectures on David Hume's views on issues of religious belief. The lectures, insightful, witty and lucid, spanning a large variety of Hume's texts, appealed to both the philosophers and non-philosophers in the audience alike.

In his first lecture, Prof. Craig addressed the larger questions in Hume's philosophical writings in terms of which his arguments about religion can be understood. Against a conception of human beings as sharing in the nature of god, Hume presented an alternative picture which portrayed them as fully natural components of nature, continuous with the animal kingdom. 'Hume fought with the weapons of philosophy', suggested Prof. Craig, 'the same battle as Darwin was to fight with biological ammunition a century later.'

An aspect of the image-of-God doctrine was the belief that human knowledge, although infinitesimal compared to the infinity of divine knowledge, possessed the same qualities of infallibility and certainty as the latter in two areas: logic and mathematics on the one hand, and the present states of our minds on the other. Hume argued that hardly any such reliable knowledge was available, and that the faculties that gave us that degree of insight into the truth of our beliefs - reason and the senses - played a small and marginal role.

Prof. Craig remarked that unlike Hume's scepticism, which is well-known, his carefully maintained agnosticism with respect to metaphysical questions was not widely appreciated. Hume's arguments centred on suggesting that the metaphysical beliefs he addressed could not have arisen from reason or the senses. This negative phase of the argument is usually followed by a positive phase, where Hume presented his alternative account - secular and naturalistic, based on psychology - of the origin of such beliefs.

In the second lecture, Prof. Craig

discussed Hume's arguments on the rationality of religious belief, and started with the traditional distinction between revelation and natural theology. What gave rational assurance that a revelation is genuine, for Hume's contemporaries, was the occurrence of miracles. Therefore, Hume's discussion of revelation as the ground of religious belief took the form of a discussion of the credibility of miracles and, as testimony is often the basis of belief in miracles, of the credibility of testimony. Now, testimony is credible to the extent that the probability of it being false is lower than that of the event it reports. As miracles are events that go against the law of nature, even the strongest testimony will not override the claims for not believing in miracles.

The move to found religious belief on natural theology does not fair any better before Hume. Hume contended that natural theology does not have any consequence other than those which could equally well be drawn by rational atheists from their experience of the world and life on it.

Now, even when these arguments are rejected, there is still the possibility of justifying religious belief on the grounds of faith and pragmatic considerations related to morality. Hume's responses to these arguments can be found in his *Natural History of Religion*, and it is to this text that Prof. Craig turned in his third and last lecture. Hume had a bleak view of the effects of religious beliefs, and saw intolerance and despair there. Prof. Craig argued that Hume's remarks referred to a particularly harsh version of predestination, strongly associated in Hume's times with Calvinism. He suggested that Hume's reluctance to admit that religious belief may have good effects should be seen as a 'striking example of the principle that in the neighbourhood of our prejudices nearly all of us tend to drop our intellectual standards.' 'Hume's standards', Prof. Craig concluded, 'are normally so high that the disparity is particularly obvious.' All the three lectures generated considerable discussion.

Sociolinguistics in India: Retrospect and Prospects

In recent years, there has been an increasing recognition of the need to assess the work done so far in sociolinguistics in India, as well as to identify priorities for future research. It was with this in mind that a Research Seminar-cum-Study Week was organized from 7 to 12 October 1996 at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla under the aegis of the Inter-University Centre for Humanities and Social Sciences.

The seminar was inaugurated by Prof. D. P. Pattanayak, eminent linguist and former director of the Central Institute of Indian Languages. Prof. Pattanayak exhorted Indian scholars to free themselves from the unitary, mono-model conception of language which is a gift of the predominantly monolingual western world, and to develop an alternative multi-model approach in order to deal meaningfully with the infinitely diverse and complex Indian sociolinguistic reality. This was followed by a paper by Prof. Udaya Narayana Singh which provided a critique of the sociolinguistic enterprise in India thus far, as well as a programme and agenda for future research. He stressed the need to distinguish between the discourse emerging from underprivileged speech communities and the discourse on language that has come from centres of cultural power in the past.

In the sessions that followed, it became patently obvious that most of the participants shared the views and concerns expressed in the opening session. The presentation by Kailash Aggarwal provided a critique of the concept of ethno-linguistic vitality with reference to the prevailing sociolinguistic discourse, and showed how, being a typological construct, it suffers from a lack of integration of its constituent parts. Dr. H. R. Dua and Prof. H. C. Narang, in their papers, dealt in considerable detail with the politics of language and the complex problems of language planning in the heteroglossic Indian context. Their viewpoint was reinforced by the presentation of Prof. R. P. Saxena. These papers raised serious questions about the politics that lay behind several policy decisions, and argued that a flawed approach to language planning and development could often be seen in them.

The papers focused on the critical issues of the hegemony of one language over others, the devalorization of a host of Indian languages and the marginalization of several speech communities.

Prof. L. M. Khubchandani dwelt at length on the dynamics of language as an institution while highlighting such characteristics of natural languages as their openness and overlapping fluid boundaries which meet the demands of fuzzy reality. He made out a strong case for a new paradigm of language development that treats speech as an ongoing process of becoming rather than a well-defined and enclosed structure of being. Prof. Aditi Mukherji, addressing the issue of linguistic standards, expressed serious misgivings about normative perspectives which smacked of hegemonic arrogance, and argued for an approach which focused more on negotiated standards and was more relevant to our multilingual and multidialectal reality. Sadhana Saxena's presentation also highlighted the need to rid ourselves of a mindset that equates language education and literacy with the teaching, imposition and propagation of a predetermined linguistic standard. Dealing with related issues, Profs. J. Suresh and Hemaprabha cited their experiences in Tamil Nadu.

Focusing on language contact and convergence, Dr. Anvita Abbi and Prof. B. N. Patnaik provided rich data in order to speculate as to what language-external factors could possibly tilt the balance in favour of one or the other linguistic item or structure. Their presentations served to show how linguistic theory on its own cannot account for the persistence or disappearance of certain linguistic features in language-contact situations. From language contact and convergence to contact across languages was a logical step. Thus translation - another core area within sociolinguistics - came up for discussion next. The lead here was provided by Prof. Suresh Kumar who gave an elaborate account of the linguistic and socio-semiotic functions of interlingual translation. The discussion on translation was considerably enriched by the presentation of Dr. R. Gargesh who dwelt on the notion of equivalence

in translation, and focused on the pragmatic and affective considerations that often determine translational strategies.

The proceedings of the seminar were rounded off with the brief but lively presentations by Selvyn Jussy, A. R. Fatih and Sudhir Bhan. Jussy addressed the construction of 'nation' and 'community', while Fatih spoke of his work on language use in the print media in terms of Gricean maxims, and Sudhir Bhan reported on his work with bilingual aphasics which has yielded some extremely interesting results.

Several sessions of the seminar-cum-study week were marked by lively interventions and animated discussion. Two things became very clear during the deliberations. First, sociolinguistic discourse in India is undergoing a sea-change, breaking away from old modes and moving towards a 'concerned' mode. This movement is indicative of a growing realization on the part of sociolinguists that meaningful work on language in society cannot be done by merely working on people, but by combining working for people and working with people, and by letting the feedback from real communities of language users inform and modulate the concepts, frameworks, and methodology of the researcher. A critique of earlier work is an essential part of this change, but what is perhaps more important is the gradual but sure emergence of a dialogic and negotiatory mode of sociolinguistic research. The seminar-cum-study week served to highlight this movement.

R. S. GUPTA

In a Seminar's Wake

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We must accept we fell short. Was it because we were constrained by an indulgence in value-relativism? Or was it due to a truncated capacity to appreciate the significance of social differences and to translate apparent anomalies and contradictions into meaningful enterprise? Maybe the cause was an 'independence-lag' sustained courtesy globalization. It must be conceded, in the wake of the seminar, as the ripples smoothen, that my feelings remain mixed. Perhaps this is what the contradictory location of the intellectual is all about.

SAMIR BANERJEE is a Fellow of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla.

A three-day Seminar on the 'Dynamics of Identity and Intergroup Relations in North-East India' was organized from 12 to 14 November at the Institute. The basic purpose of the seminar was to present the problems of the North-East for an in-depth and dispassionate discussion.

Dr. Kailash S. Aggarwal, in his introduction to the seminar, argued that it was through a political-moral paradigm that we could negotiate prevalent and emergent crises and conflicts, emphasizing shared goals and interdependence with a view to optimizing the value of life for each individual, group and community.

Dr. Sujit Chaudhury, in his paper 'The North-East: A Concept Re-examined', showed how North-East India could not be taken as an undifferentiated region as it was marked by significant internal variations and socio-cultural pluralities. Dr. B. S. Mipun and Dr. D. K. Nayak, in their paper 'A Geographical Background to the Peopling of North-East India', analysed the specific geo-demographic features of the peoples in the North-East in a historical perspective. The authors argued that the tremendous diversity, small population size and high degree of concentration of communities made it a distinctive geo-ethnic region.

Dr. K. Suresh Singh, presenting a good deal of data on North-East communities from his *People of India* project as well as from his four decades of experience in working with indigenous and tribal groups in India, emphasized the sense of justice and fairness of the people and communities in the region. Examining the issues of insurgency, inter-group conflicts, cultural and environmental degradation, destabilization and dehistoricization of the people in the North-East, Dr. Singh argued that the tendency to view each problem as State vs. militancy had led to a simplistic and polarized approach.

Prof. M. N. Karna, in a paper entitled 'Socio-Economic Aspects of Ethnic Identity in North-East India', regretted that in most debates and discussions on the North-East, the basic issues and ground realities were either ignored or camouflaged. Prof. Karna further emphasized that the journalistic focus on social evils like drug-addiction, AIDS and insurgency had led to a diminished awareness of the progressive potential of traditional institutions of governance in the region. Dr. Morning Lyngdoh, in her paper

Dynamics of Identity and Intergroup Relations in North-East India

'Ethnicity, Religion and Language: A Case Study of the Khasis of Meghalaya', examined a number of issues related to ethnicity, religion and language.

Dr. Kamal Mitra Chenoy, in his paper 'Militarism, Civil Society and Intergroup Relations in North-East India' examined the impact of a high degree of militarization on day-to-day life in the North-East. Dr. Chenoy was critical of the human rights violations in the region in counter-insurgency operations under the cover of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. Dr. Lima Imchen's paper, 'Politics of Tribal Identity and Interpretative Monopolies', argued that a number of North-Eastern tribes, including the Nagas, should be considered indigenous peoples, and their traditional social and political institutions strengthened. Dr. Imchen stressed that these institutions constituted the basis of popular self-government among the Nagas in the past, and that they must form the basis for the development of contemporary principles so that the indigenous people could decide the form and content of their political, economic and cultural institutions for themselves. Dr. V. K. Nuh, in his paper 'Dynamics of Identity and Intergroup Relations in North-East India' said that though external colonialism had come to an end with the departure of the British, a form of internal colonialism had got legitimated in the name of development and modernization. Dr. Nuh proposed that Naga identity be defined in terms of their land and forest since the natural environment not only provided the basic source of life for them, but it also determined their culture, social systems, political structure, economy and religion.

Dr. Monirul Hussain, presenting a paper titled 'Fear of being Killed, Violated and Displaced: An Incomplete Dossier of Terrorism in Post-Colonial Assam', focused on the human rights violations by underground and private groups, especially in Assam. Dr. Hussain pleaded for working out better human and democratic alternatives to deterrorize the society in Assam. Prof. Udayon Misra, in his paper 'Identity Transformations and the Assamese Community: Some Posers', looked at the ethnically

heterogeneous Assamese society in a historical perspective. Prof. Misra critically examined the changes in the cultural content of communities in Assam, particularly emphasizing the alienation of tribal content in Assamese middle class.

Prof. L. B. Verma's paper, 'Indians in North-East India: Misfit Mayangs in Manipur', raised some intriguing questions about the role of Mayangs, vaguely defined as non-Mongoloid. Prof. Lal Dena, in a paper titled 'The Kuki-Naga Conflict: Juxtaposed in the Colonial Context' viewed the genesis of the ethnic conflict in Manipur over the issue of a Kuki homeland, as the direct outcome of a clash of interests over the control of land and resources, a clash deeply rooted in the colonial policy of 'divide and rule'. Mr. Pradeep Phanjoubam, in his paper 'Ethnic Identity and Community Relationship in the North-East' carefully examined the dynamics of ethnic identity in Manipuri society, with a critical appraisal of the notions of 'mainstream' and 'sidestreams'. Rejecting the idea that the North-East agenda had come to a dead end, Mr. Phanjoubam explored some of the possibilities of peace within a pluralistic framework wherein the mainstream becomes resilient enough to democratically accommodate the sidestreams.

Dr. Mohammed Asif presented a paper on 'Development Initiatives and the Concomitant Issues of Displacement and Impoverishment in the North-Eastern States', arguing that the problems of displaced indigenous peoples in the North-East were a consequence of ill-conceived and mal-implemented 'development' projects in the region and the long-standing heavy military presence in the region. Dr. Asif further argued that the government's failure to respond to the negation of the adverse effects of development often led to disastrous social consequences.

The last session of the seminar was in the form of a panel discussion, followed by a general discussion among all the participants. Prof. Mrinal Miri chaired the session and the panelists were Dr. K. S. Singh, Prof. Sujata Miri, Prof. L. B. Verma, Prof. M. N. Karna, Prof. Udayon Misra and Dr. Kamal Mitra Chenoy.

KAILASH S. AGGARWAL

Forthcoming Events at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study

ORGANIZATION-BUILDING AND EMPOWERMENT: REFLECTIONS ON SOME GANDHIAN IDEAS, PRACTICES AND EXPERIENCES

In recent years, the emerging discourse on social action that addresses issues of empowerment and ethics has looked to the Gandhian legacy for inspiration and guidance. Gandhian movements in independent India, such as *bhoodan*, *gram vikas*, *gramdan* and *gram swaraj* may have much to contribute to a clarification of the locus of social action in contemporary India. The following questions form the principal co-ordinates of the seminar: What can one learn from the Gandhian heritage regarding organization-building and empowerment, especially at the grassroots level? Can these insights help us in achieving a harmonious balance between our political, economic, cognitive and environmental practices? Do the experience of Gandhian movements indicate that the articulation of meaningful social alternatives depend on a recognition of and involvement in the political dimension of society?

This seminar has been conceived as part of the Institute's ongoing project on Gandhi, and it will take place at the Institute from 25 to 27 March 1997. Dr Samir Banerjee, Fellow of the Institute, is the convenor of the seminar.

THE QUESTION OF SECULARISM

In recent years, there has been considerable debate on the problem of secularism and indeed on the correct articulation of the problem of secularism. The series of articles which appeared some time ago in the *Economic and Political Weekly* on the issues relating to secularism have generated a great deal of discussion within the intellectual community of the country. The Inter-University Centre at the Institute proposes to hold a Study Week on *The Question of Secularism* under the convenorship of Dr. Rajeev Bhargava of Jawaharlal Nehru University. Some of the participants will be Prof. Partha Chatterjee, Prof. Sumit Sarkar, Dr. Tanika Sarkar, Prof. Imtiaz Ahmed, Prof. Javed Alam, Prof. Alok Roy, Prof. Joya Chatterjee, Mr. Achin Vinayak and Ms. Urvashi Butalia. The Study Week will be held in May 1997 at the Institute.

DECLARATION

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I, N.K. Maini, son of Hem Raj Maini, declare that I am the printer and publisher of newspaper entitled Summerhill-IIAS Review and that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Sd/- N.K. Maini

VISITING PROFESSORS

DR. L. M. KHUBCHANDANI, Director of the Centre for Communications Studies, Pune will be a Visiting Professor at the Institute in April-May 1997, and will deliver a series of three lectures on LANGUAGE: ENVIRONMENT AND TRADITION. The lectures will specifically address issues specifically germane to the Indian plurilingual milieu. Prof. Khubchandani's publications include *Tribal Identity: A Language and Communication Perspective* (1992), *Language, Culture and Nation-Building* and *Plural Languages, Popular Cultures* (1983).

PROF. Y. B. DAMLE, Professor Emeritus, Poona University will spend three weeks at the Institute in April 1997 as a Visiting Professor. Prof. Damle is a distinguished sociologist known for his contributions to theoretical sociology. His works include *Caste, Religion and Politics in India* (1982) and *Bureaucracy and Agricultural Development* (1972). During his stay in Shimla, Prof. Damle will deliver a series of three lectures on ALTERNATIVE PATHS - MODALITIES OF DEVELOPMENT.

LITERARY AND CULTURAL CRITICISM: MODERN INDIAN PERSPECTIVES

In the last few decades, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of interdisciplinary and co-operative intellectual efforts in humanities and social sciences. One area of concern that cuts across these disciplines is what may be called 'criticism' - a term which subsumes the specifically literary work of scholars and critics working on literature and allied arts, but also extends to thinking on interpretation, textuality, culture, communications theory and so on in other areas and disciplines. In India too, criticism in this broad sense has been central to our intellectual endeavours since the beginning of the nineteenth century. It can be argued that, despite the availability of this rich tradition, contemporary literary criticism in India is yet to make substantive use of it. The aim of the seminar is to redress this to some extent, by bringing together an intellectually stimulating group of writers, literary critics and scholars from a variety of disciplines and positions, in order to construct a modern Indian tradition in literary and cultural criticism. The seminar will comprise keynote and plenary papers that set the agenda of discussion, presentations on specific seminal texts and major critics and aestheticians, translations of key texts from Indian languages, and panel discussions. The seminar as well as its proceedings, it is hoped, will constitute an original contribution to knowledge, especially since no comparable record of modern Indian critical tradition exists.

The seminar will take place at the Institute from 23 to 25 September 1997. Dr Makarand Paranjape, Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi is the convenor of the seminar.

Seminars at the IIAS by Fellows and Visiting Scholars

July to November 1996

Dr. Sucheta Mahajan	India Partitioned: Imperfect <i>Ahimsa</i>
Dr. Nirmalangshu Mukherjee	Language and Music: Philosophical and Linguistic Reflections
Shri Chaturvedi Badrinath	<i>The Mahabharata</i> : The Enquiry into the Human Condition
Dr. Vir Bharat Talwar	<i>Satyarth Prakash</i> and the Question of Rationality
Dr. Shekhar Pathak	Understanding Uttarakhand Movement
Prof. D.D. Pant	Reality and Physics
Shri Jai Sen	Narmada Movements
Prof. D. D. Pant	Ecology and Culture
Tridip Suvrud	Consumption as <i>Dharma</i> : Govardhram Tripathi and the Dissolution of the Self
Dr. Chris Sinha	Signifying Subjects: Vygotsky, Piaget and Cognitive Linguistics
Dr. Nasir Tyabji	Technology, History and the Dialectic
Prof. R. Sundara Rajan	Beyond the Crisis of the European Sciences: An Overview of the Project
Dr. G. Arunima	Writing Culture? <i>Indulekha</i> , <i>Padmavati</i> and the Nayar Self
Dr. Dilip Menon	Engaging Modernity Reading <i>Saraswati Vijayam</i> (1893)
Dr. O. C. Handa	Lakhamandal: An Archeological Case Study of a Temple Village in Jaunsar-Bawer Area in Uttar Pradesh
Dr. S. K. Acharya	The Transitional Numeral Communities
Dr. Kumkum Yadav	Imaging Peripheral Communities in First-Person Narratives

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EDITOR

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Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis: A Biography

Ashok Rudra

Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis (1893–1972) pioneered the use of statistics in India. He was the founder of the Indian Statistical Institute, the Central Statistical Organization and the National Sample Survey. Besides building the statistical database of the Indian economy, Professor Mahalanobis was the architect of India's Second Five Year Plan. He also inspired research in quantitative economics. His interests were however much wider and encompassed disciplines like anthropology, demography, psychology and education. He was a close associate of Rabindranath Tagore and served the Visva Bharati as Secretary in its formative years.

Using old letters, diaries, and published material along with interviews of his associates, Rudra constructs an all-round, warts-and-all account of Mahalanobis' life. He describes his scientific work, his great talent at building institutions and his connections with the literary world.

Besides statisticians, this book will appeal to those interested in the evolution of India's planning framework as well as the general reader.

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by Vijaya Ramaswamy

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Among others, the contributors include Indu Banga, Meenakshi Mukherjee, Aparna Basu, F. Delvoeye 'Nalini', G. Haragopal, B. N. Goswamy, J. S. Grewal and Javed Alam.

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by D. D. Mahulkar

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