Edward Shils

Indian Students

Rather Sadhus than Philistines

YOUR CURIOSITY, idle or ordered, takes you to an Indian university or college. You walk across the dusty sun-struck grounds, or through damp, dark corridors and past malodorous lavatories; and you see clumps of boys, chirruping like birds, an occasional pair walking hand in hand, sometimes a little knot of girls in pigtails. They look extraordinarily childlike, with all the melting tenderness of children, terribly shy, soft-eyed, gentle, fragile, and very quick to smile. Even those with moustaches are only boys—the moustaches can be the products either of the studied cultivation of a frail plant, or of that unevenly feathery condition of the male visage before daily shaving has become an obligatory matutinal discomfort. Their voices are low and soft, their movements light, elastic, lamb-like. If one of them, darting about in the suddenly ignited outburst of a boyish prank, nearly collides with you, he apologises with timorous embarrassment. If you ask one of them where to find a certain professor or the principal of a particular department, he will go far out of his way to lead you to the right place, and you will be impressed by his shyness and deferentiality. When he has delivered you to your destination, and you thank him, he will say something like "Not to mention" and will turn and dash off as light-footedly as a young deer.

A few days later, you might drop into the Student Union to listen for a while to a debate. Torrents of eloquence, not always intelligible, the thundering smoky rumbles of a volcano, sputtering abuse, excited denunciations of authority, will dominate the atmosphere. Your sweet young Virgil will be there. You can see him alight with excitement, tremulous with pleasure when the name or office of some dignitary is spattered with debater's mud. If he is on the platform, you will be surprised by his quacking volubility and the heat of his easily released passions.

AT ALMOST ANY TIME in the past half-decade, you might find, taking up your daily paper, a news report which reads like this one in *The Hindu* of the 14th of May, 1960:

> STUDENTS ASSAULT COLLEGE STAFF, PATNA, May 12.—A mob of about four hundred students to-day made a forced entry into the premises of the Patna Commercial College and assaulted the Principal and four professors of the College, causing grievous injury to one of them.
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> Three of the professors have been admitted to the Patna Medical College.
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> The trouble started following the expulsion of four student examinees from the examination hall for using unfair means during the annual examination in the College. One of them died later.

On another day, you might read that in Mysore the students have stoned buses and cars, have committed arson, and attacked the police who attempted to stop them and, failing, had to resort to using tear-gas against them. On still other days, you could read of the arrest of fifty-nine students in Patiala in the Punjab, for defiance of an order banning processions; of the demonstration of students at the University of Utkal, when the Home Minister visited Cuttack, to impress on him the urgency of attaching the former princely states of Sarai Kela and Kharsawan to their state of Orissa. In Lucknow, the University had to be closed for a long time because of student disturbances. Banaras Hindu University had to be closed, because of student disorders, by action of the President of the Republic. Allahabad University had to be closed by its Vice-Chancellor on similar grounds; at Visvabharati University, an eminent teacher,

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well known in literary London, was assailed by students and nearly blinded. In Delhi, the students of the University, protesting against railway fares, obstructed the movements of the trains and disrupted the schedules. In the Osmania University, the students demanded representation in the University Senate. In Agra, one University student was killed by other University students in connection with elections to the Student Union. In Aligarh, things are always on the boil. And in Calcutta—with its one hundred thousand students at the University and its affiliated colleges—the turbulence of the students is so severe, so difficult to manage, that a temperate observer of life there, speaking of a very recent Calcutta University Convocation, said that the "security measures taken against suspected mischiefs by students... will put to shame those taken during British rule in India;" while the circumspect *Statesman* said that "Though conditions have completely changed since an attempt was made in the early '30s on the life of a British Governor at a Convocation the authorities continue, eleven years after Independence, to enforce the same security measures."

Indiscipline

AND, OF COURSE, every year regularly at Convocation time, and sporadically throughout the rest of the session, whether "plain-clothes police sit among the professors and teachers" or not, you read, till it comes out of your ears, lengthy speeches by Governors, Chief Ministers, Cabinet Ministers of Centre and State, and Vice-Chancellors. They all say the same thing: the "indiscipline" of the students is a terrible thing. The younger generation have lost the spirit of self-sacrifice which their fathers—and the speaker—had when young. They have no seriousness of purpose. They are at University only for vocational reasons, and not for love of learning. Their behaviour is a disgrace to their country; their teachers and elders have let them down. They are the victims of "changing social values"; they have lost faith in the old and found no faith in the new.

Indian convocation oratory, like ceremonial oratory everywhere, is one of the ways which the human mind has found for coming to a complete rest, while words pour forth. Yet, there is something amiss among Indian students. There are undoubtedly some in the better colleges, or in the following of the few outstanding scholars or scientists, who are as interested in their studies and as alert and curious as any undergraduates anywhere. Very many of them, however, are passively bewildered, many of them are angrily in arms against the order ruled by their elders. Not many of them seem to enjoy this stage of life or to accept what it offers, with some pleasure in the present and anticipation of more in the future. Throughout much of Northern and Eastern India, university and college students are frequently in a state of clamorous and often violent "indiscipline." And in the West and South, where matters are a little better, restlessness is great and outbreaks are certainly not rare.

THE INDIAN COLLEGIAN, like so many of his coevals elsewhere, is no zealously self-disciplined seeker after scientific and scholarly truth. Among the nearly one million Indian college and university students, eager-beavers are few, and genuinely aroused and aspiring intellects are very rare. The student's mind does not reach towards his books, and the failing contact is, moreover, not usually masked by a simulated air of respectful interest. Mute submission is the best he can offer, and even that not at all times. The lecture halls attended by Indian undergraduates and aspirants for the M.A. and LL.B. are often scenes of disorder—not always the organised rampageousness which attracts the worried attention of the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, Governors and Chief Ministers of States, journalists, the University Grants Commission, Vice-Chancellors, Gandhian social workers, *et al.*—but the random individual disorder of shuffling feet, audible conversation, note-passing, and gestures of fearful bravado. Outside the lecture hall, but still within the academic compound, there are violently contested campaigns for election to office in the Student Union, tuggings to and fro, breathless denunciations, squabbles, scuffles, and even assassinations. "Student leaders" constantly present memorials to university and college authorities, regarding themselves as rulers of sovereign realms and as entitled to treat as equals or superiors with Deans and Vice-Chancellors. Closer to the public surface, and hence engaging wider attention, are the strikes, the screaming demonstrations, the banner-carrying processions and picketing, the hunger strikes, the physical combats with the police, the de-railing of tramcars and

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overturning of buses, the smashing of furniture in examination halls, the cordons around the residence of the Vice-Chancellor, connivance with revolver journalists and local politicians, the organisation of scandal-mongery against teachers and administrators, and physical assaults on teachers.

These drastic actions are undertaken on behalf of a variety of causes, many of which seem disproportionately slight in comparison with the passion and fashion of their espousal. The size of concessions on cinema or on bus, tram, or railway tickets; the refusal of university authorities to admit an unqualified person or the general admissions policy of the university; particular examination questions or the general severity of examination standards; the behaviour of a college porter or watchman; the alleged sexual conduct of teachers; the quality of food and service in college or university refectories; a statement by a teacher about the quality of an Indian poet; the fees to be paid by students; disciplinary measures taken by college or university authorities against particular students who have infringed a university or college rule; the conduct of the police in dealing with student demonstrations; the once projected Bihar-Bengal merger; the attachment of Bombay to Maharashtra—all and any of these can stir the students into remonstrances, slight or extreme. These are the pretexts for the outpouring of clamour and excitation. What actually makes the Indian student so responsive to these occasions, which are often grounds of reasonable grievance, is another matter. These are matters which lie more deeply in the nature of the present-day Indian university system, and the situation of the young male in present-day Indian society.

London Pattern

THE INDIAN UNIVERSITY system to-day is an adaptation, more than one hundred years old, of the pattern of the University of London. Over seven hundred colleges are attached, by federation or affiliation, to the thirty-nine universities. The colleges which make up a university are often scattered over a wide territory. The universities are the syllabus-setting, examining, and degree-granting authorities. Most of the universities are supported by the provincial governments, but they receive substantial financial "non-recurrent capital grants" from the University Grants Commission, an estimable body modelled on the University Grants Committee of this country and, until very recently, directed by a most learned and imaginative former member of the Indian Civil Service. A small minority of the colleges are "Government colleges" and most of these are fairly respectable in the quality of their teaching staff; some are missionary colleges—these too have a respectable standard; the great majority are "private"—ill-housed, impoverished, miserably equipped, frightfully overcrowded. The latter provide the vast bulk of Indian undergraduate education.

The colleges are nominally self-governing bodies, although their syllabi and the examinations which their students undergo are university functions. Their policies in recruitment of teaching staff are expected to conform with agreed university standards, but there are many a wink and nod at appointments which fall much below that standard.

Indian universities and colleges, their faculties and departments, are crushingly hierarchical in constitution and in spirit. Practically all the staff teach according to syllabi in which they have had no hand and for examinations they did not share in setting. If they teach in Government colleges —which are among the best—they are treated like any civil servant, shifted about by the will of their superiors, wrapped up in official papers, tied up in red tape. If they are in "private" colleges, as most of them are, they live in congested oppression. Principals hire and harry, and they in turn fear the disapproving scrutiny of their governing bodies, who often have little interest in the quality of intellectual performance of staff and students.

Despite the concentration of authority, Indian colleges and universities boil and bubble with intrigue, in which political partisanship and internal animosities intensify each other and the general turmoil. There are elections to academic councils which provide the personnel of subcommittees, which in turn have at their disposal a certain amount of patronage. Indian teachers are injuriously ill-paid, and ordinarily their salaries must be supplemented by additional earnings from examinerships, supplementary offices, etc. They work long hours on boring tasks, and they seek the alleviations offered by promotion and petty perquisites. The hunger for these meagre indulgences, their general powerlessness, and the absence of serious intellectual and pedagogical interests in the great mass of teachers, enhance their preoccupations with internal university politics and the patron-

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age which victory brings. Factions are formed, from which only a few hardily independent souls can withhold themselves. The chaos is further darkened by the intrusion of party and patronage politics from the lay governing bodies. The entry of outside powers who bring with them the skills and prizes of the political market-place exacerbates the rancour and distrust already so well-nurtured by misery, boredom, and hierarchy. The conflicts, such as that which continues unabatingly at the University of Lucknow, draw in nearly everyone. The proper objects of academic life are lost in the excitement of the unceasing contest for advantage and survival. A veritable bear garden is the result; and the situation of the Hindu University of Banaras, one of the older universities of India, is symbolic if not quite typical. At the time of the deliberations of the Banaras University Enquiry Committee, appointed by the President of the Republic, there were twenty-three litigations before Courts of Justice to which the University of Banaras was a party. Fourteen of these involved teachers or principals of colleges; one concerned appointments to two lectureships in Hindi; another, appointments to readerships in the College of Mining and Technology; another, the appointment of the Treasurer of the University; another, the sale of old newspapers and periodicals from the University Library; and so on.

Remote Teachers

THE READINESS of Indian college and university teachers to turn themselves into academic politicians stands in intimate relation to their characteristic numbness in the presence of intellectual matters. The teaching burden is extremely heavy; the level of teaching is excessively elementary; and the technique of lecturing at "dictation speed" and the unresponsiveness of the students make it almost impossible for teaching to be a pleasure to teacher or taught. The remoteness of the teacher from the student, and, in the more volcanic universities and colleges, actual fear of the students, deprive teaching and study of one of their greatest charms. Classes are extremely large—even a "tutorial" seminar for advanced students might have forty members. Teachers have no rooms in which to meet students or to do any work of their own. Their own homes are usually too crowded; and there is, in any case, no tradition to invite a student home for a meal or tea. Neither teacher nor student would be at ease in such a situation, neither would have pleasure in the other's company.

THE TRADITION of independent research, yielding the pleasures of intellectual curiosity and participation in the wider community of the intellectual concerned, still has no deep roots in India; and those in whom it lives encounter persistent obstacles in the jealousy of older colleagues, the obstructiveness of administrators, and the generally dispiriting atmosphere of the institution. There are men of exceptional fortitude who survive all this and who do admirable work as teachers, scientists, and scholars. Most, however, yield to the forces of demoralisation. College and university teachers hear repeatedly that they have fallen away from the tradition of the *guru* and the high ideals of the 19th and the first part of the present centuries. They believe politicians look on them as clerks and idlers. Not many can survive in this unnourishing environment. The warmth and humanity of the Indian academic man, accordingly, shrivel; his libido finds its gratification outside of teaching and research. And, as so often happens in other universities, academic intrigue, not always even ostensibly on behalf of academic things, fills the time and drowns the conscience of the man in whom still lives some dim if fading awareness of the intellectual obligations of the university teacher.

An appeasement of conscience, among some of the better elements on these academic battlefields, is rendered easier by the intervention of extra-academic powers and interests into academic life. The State Governments are responsible for the recurrent expenses of all but four Indian universities. The Governor is usually Chancellor, and the Vice-Chancellor is usually chosen by a politician. Politicians on the governing bodies, as well as some who are not, often regard universities as pawns in the games of the political parties and factions. These politicians make themselves into objects of academic suppliance. They move easily in a medium of patron and client, and they are very eager to take advantage of their position to use the universities to enhance their own dignity and to widen the patronage at their disposal. The Universities of Uttar Pradesh are the chief exhibits of this intertwinement of the political and the academic. The closure of the Universities of Allahabad, Lucknow, and Banaras was, in part, a response to the ramifications of politicians' shenanigans.

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The tumult within the staff, aggravated by the intervention from above and outside, does not cease at the line which separates staff from students. In some institutions, staff members of one faction have instigated student action against staff members of the rival faction. Even if there were not such deliberate agitation of the students by staff members, the unseemly goings-on could not be kept from the students. The students learn of the dissensions in the staff from clerical employees, from younger staff members, from post-graduate students. They sense what is happening—especially the delinquents among them, who possess the instinctive perception of trouble which is native to their kind.

The students hear of litigations between staff and university or college authorities. The students are in any case eager, with half their minds, to think ill of their betters, whom their other experiences give them no grounds for respecting; rumours of conflicts within the staff excite the students and give them a sense of being present at something dramatic and challenging. Their own aggressiveness is called forth by their proximity to this sometimes muffled, sometimes open uproar.

INDIAN STUDENTS—no less, perhaps even a little more, than students elsewhere—are responsive to charismatic teachers. They are drawn to teachers who are expansive and enthusiastic, who seem to know what they are about, who are selflessly devoted to something beyond their own private concerns. The Indian readiness to be "devoted to a cause" attracts their rebelliousness! It is scarcely less capable of attracting them to a teacher whose cause is teaching and the intellectual life. But such teachers, rare anywhere, are terribly rare in India, where the mass of college and university teachers have come to feel that they are regarded as a caste of untouchables. The insulted and injured, if they cannot rise to saintliness, can become malicious, distrustful, uninterested, and uninteresting. The student responds in an appropriate manner.

Linguistic Troubles

BEFORE the Second World War, when there were only 125,000 Indian college and university students, they came from relatively comfortably situated middle-class families. Their fathers were educated men, lawyers and doctors or government officials or teachers, or they were fairly prosperous landowners. The sons of clerks, shopkeepers, poor cultivators, did not often go to college. All this has now changed. The middle class, which had its troubles before Independence, has been afflicted by the inflation; and its members' offspring face even more difficult prospects than they faced before. The offspring of the lower middle classes, the sons of peasants, are now much more likely to be found among the nearly one million college and university students than was the case two or three decades ago. Students are beginning to come now from lower castes, although there are still very few from the lowest castes and classes. They come, too, to a greater extent from villages and countryside than their predecessors of a quarter of a century ago. From their rural background, they bring a greater readiness to participate in politics, since in the countryside politicians invoke their aid more frequently than they do in the towns, where large numbers of educated persons are available for the tasks of political campaigns.

These changes mean also that the students come from families with less of the traditional, indigenous, or Westernised respect for learning. They come from families where English has been less spoken—not that it is often the household language of many Indian homes—and less well spoken and understood. Neither modern learning nor English as the language of modern learning has furnished their minds before coming up from secondary school. Their environment has been less sophisticated than their predecessors'. The new type of student is more of a stranger in the collegiate and university environment. He feels less at ease there. His poorer linguistic equipment also places him in a very difficult situation.

The present generation of students has usually had only four years of English, in contrast with seven years of English of the pre-Independence students. Many more of them have gone to secondary schools where they were instructed through their own local Indian language rather than in English. In most of the higher educational institutions of India, English remains the medium of instruction, particularly above the intermediate level. The Indian student, especially the North Indian student from rustic Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, whose mother tongue is Hindi, has to read English textbooks, work through set books in English, listen to lectures in English, write essays in English, and take his examinations in English—although each of these requirements is being increasingly quali-

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fied. He cannot read rapidly, he cannot speak fluently, he writes painfully. He sees the learning of the world through his fragmentary English. This alone would be enough to put him into a perpetual state of uneasiness and bewilderment and to blur his contact with the objects of his studies. What can be worse for a sensitive, already sufficiently uneasy young person than to force him to carry on his public, intellectual life in a language which he understands with difficulty and in which he expresses himself only with embarrassment and inhibition? Colleges and regions in which students come up from secondary school with a better command of English seem to be less troubled by withdrawal and rebellion than the colleges and universities of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, where the prospective ascendancy of Hindi has led to a premature relaxation of standards of English teaching.

IT IS NO BETTER in those colleges where the decision has been made to conduct instruction in the regional language. Not only are the teachers often hampered in expressing themselves on academic subjects in the language which they use for domestic and convivial purposes; but, for the most part, the required books remain English. The poor student is then caught between the further debilitation of his already weak English, accentuated by the prospect of its demise in India, and the persisting need to master English textbooks. Not much intellectual curiosity can survive these anguishing experiences. The effort to free him from dependence on English textbooks provides no improvement. The vernacular textbooks are usually commissioned to hacks even poorer than the usual writers of textbooks; their products are a hasty patchwork which no one can respect.

From his uninteresting, uncomfortable studies, the student's mind turns more readily to the student community. What a feast awaits his battered spirit there! The Student Union, coffee-houses, political agitation—these offer the heated excitement of conflict, the legitimation of his abstention from attendance at lectures, the opportunity to shout and caper, and to roar out his dissatisfaction with this repulsive world which he never made and of which it is so hard for him to be a happy member.

Student unions are usually alleged to provide a safety-valve for youthful rambunctiousness, a field of harmless exercise in organising talents, and even a training-ground for civil virtues. Of course, this is a stuffy elders' view. They are, in fact, usually the domain of an active minority of ambitious youths, but no harm comes from them and even some pleasure. Still, they do provide some facilities for reading and games. In India, however, the Student Unions are rather extreme in their capacity to ignite cheerlessly burning passions. They provide little opportunity for anything except politics: reading and games rooms are bare of contents; lounges are uncomfortable. But there is room for meetings and agitation. Campaigns for office in the Unions are infected with caste rivalries as well as the cleavages among the student followers of the political parties, particularly the parties of the extreme right and left. Office is highly prized, and much energy and money are expended to attain it. The sources of the funds are mysterious—recently there have been allegations that foreign embassies are among them—but whatever the sources, they are sometimes rather lavish by Indian standards. The introduction into this atmosphere—which would be agitated even if left to itself—of the rancours of dispute within the teaching staff, and the ambitions of political parties, aggravates the situation.

To this unsalubrious scene must be added another element: the students who won't leave the college, either because they have not taken their degrees or because they just like hanging about the college. One comes, from time to time, across these cases reminiscent of 19th-century Russia, of "eternal students:" men in their late twenties and thirties who—because they fear the vengeance of their examiners, or because they fear the outside world, or for worse motives—live on in the university or college hostels, not registered, not studying, having nothing academic about them except their residence and their associates. Older, tougher, more ingenious, often seductively attractive, these "professional" students are often the catalysts who agitate lambs into lions.

The regular students are not simply victims of this odd breed of men. There are always a few of the regular students who are more desperate, more excitable, more daring, more aggressive than most of the rest. It is they who often take the lead in walking out of the examination hall in protest against difficult questions, who attempt to pull the others out with them as they go, who take the initiative in upsetting or breaking benches, and even setting the premises on fire. They are the more

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inflammatory, the first to denounce their teachers, to express grievances against the order prevailing inside and outside their college or university. Their example resounds in many a tender young heart.

Poverty

To trace the predisposition which reaches out to this resonance takes us far beyond the university and the college, far beyond the poor, bedraggled, resentful, and embittered teachers, past the bewilderment of the student who cannot comprehend or is bored and frustrated by what he must study. It takes us in one direction to the wider reaches of present-day Indian society; and, in another, into the centre of the Indian family and of Indian religious traditions.

The poverty of India is no less present in the colleges than elsewhere. Many of the students live in a state of anxiety-ridden poverty, unable to pay the modest charges for their hostel rooms or digs, unable, regularly, to raise the price of simple meals. The Indian student is infinitely worse off than the British students, who thrive complainingly on relatively generous grants by public bodies, or than the American student, who goes nearly feelessly to a state university or who enjoys scholarships to private colleges and universities, and who can so frequently find remunerative part-time employment to maintain a car and a flat. The Indian student, when he is hard-pressed financially, must worry about where he can cadge or borrow; he must avoid the bursar's accusing eye; he must lower his already sparse standard of living, and then worry again. All this anxiety has no surcease. The Indian student, in so far as he thinks about the future, has no relief in prospect. Plain unemployment among graduates in the first few years after the receipt of the degree, and malemployment thereafter, are widespread enough to attenuate the already sufficiently tenuous sense of vocation of the young Indian male, and to cause him to turn his worried mind towards the immediate delights of denunciation and resistance against his elders.

India is not the home of a vocational ethic such as Max Weber discerned in the Protestant sects of Europe and America. There is no great devotion to a vocational task, little love and honour for achievement in a task. Whatever the source of this—it derives some sustenance from the unattachedness to the empirical world of which articulate Indians so often speak as "our specifically Indian form of non-attachment"—it is surely accentuated by the scarcity of vocational opportunities which offer rewards of income and status and which permit the satisfaction of achievement. India's economy cannot provide enough administrative and intellectual posts for the rapidly swelling body of degree-holders. It could not do so before the Second World War; and since then the number of college and university students has increased eightfold. No economy in the world has expanded rapidly enough to accommodate such an increase in an already excessively large number of aspirants for professional, technical, and administrative posts. Nor is the situation made any easier by the fact that the majority of every year's output of graduates has passed through arts and law courses which have few effective claims on prospective employers. It should be pointed out, however, that technologists and scientists are also un- and mal-employed.

This characteristic unbalance of the Indian social structure—of an educational output incommensurate with the absorptive capacity of the economy—is paralleled by another unbalance which seems equally contributory to the restiveness and indiscipline of the Indian college and university student. This is the inarticulation between certain changes in marriage customs in India and the relatively unchanged relations of the sexes in the middle class. In India, the age of marriage of middle-class males has risen in the present century, and the great mass of students are unmarried. This change in the customary age of marriage has not been attended by a corresponding change in the relations between unmarried males and females in the period left vacant by the risen age of marriage. When the age of marriage was earlier, the young Indian male was able to have sexual intercourse under conditions provided by convention and custom. The Indian student nowadays ordinarily has no opportunity for legitimate sexual intercourse; his own residential conditions and the security control exercised over young women in colleges block his way, even if he wished to have it illegitimately. Furthermore, he has nearly as little opportunity for the erotic gratifications of holding hands, caressing, kissing, or the mere presence of young women. Young Indian women are still carefully guarded by their parents and wardens; and, although the sons are permitted sufficient freedom to be able to prowl

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about, and, in the titillating atmosphere of the big city, even to whistle at girls, the young women are kept under lock and key. They are too shy; and, even if they were not, the young men are too uncertain of themselves.

The gap between pubescence and marriage has not been successfully filled in any society; but in the West, certain traditions and institutions have arisen which provide, in at least a sublimated form, a modicum of sexual gratification—to say nothing of the now moderately widespread practice of occasional pre-marital sexual intercourse. India has developed practically nothing of these. Pre-marital sexual intercourse is probably still very infrequent, and the various types of erotic conviviality have still to find their form. The sexual dispositions are certainly alive, but they must work in a "sexual vacuum." There are no objects to which they can attach themselves. There is a little homosexuality but probably not very much. There are no "girl friends," and, unlike the case of their coevals of fifty years ago, there is no wife to whom to feel the pressure of obligation, if not, at first, of affection. There is so little to bind the youth into a pleasing or compelling routine.

His family situation is not much different. The Indian family still remains very hierarchical; but the college or university student lives outside its sphere. Either he is away from home, living in a hostel, or, even if he spends the nights at home, most of the day and evening are spent out of it—at college, at the Union, in a coffee-house, or wandering about the town. The burdensomeness of the authority of father, uncle, and elder brother is evaded, and a silent protest thereby registered.

THE INDIAN STUDENT, who lives in a dense culture, renowned for its authoritativeness, is like youth everywhere: a rebel at heart. He is no Prometheus, no solitary rebel. He is not a Byron or a deRozio. The mass of the students would never come forward into the arena of agitation unless there were a few who showed that it could be done with impunity. Once the example is there, then aggressiveness, otherwise freely floating and objectless, takes definite form.

There is enough in Indian society—or in any society, for that matter—to generate aggressive impulses. The family system, with its preponderance of the elders; the choicelessness of the major spheres of life (*i.e.*, marriage and vocation); the hierarchical educational system—all engender hidden resistances which remain suppressed as long as the authorities against whom they are directed remain firmly authoritative.

This, however, is not the case in much of India to-day. In the South, the traditional patterns of family life, belief, and authority have survived more fully. In the rest of India, authority to-day is not so severely hierarchical as it would have to be in order to command submission. It cannot be. Whatever its awkwardness in mood, it is deeply permeated by liberalism. Those at the very top of the universities can no longer be completely oligarchical, even when they behave oligarchically. They are inhibited psychologically and culturally from within, and hindered constitutionally from without. They are still hierarchical; but they are not so unchallengedly, and they are not in a position to suppress their student challengers. Indeed, they are sometimes actually afraid of them.

Authority, which—out of either principled liberalism, internal division, fear, or incompetence, or a mixture of all of these—is unable or unwilling to impose itself, appears to the Indian student as weak authority. A weak authority exercised by the hesitant, the divided, the corrupt, the derogated, and the unworthy is no curb on the rebelliousness in the heart of the Indian student. The hesitation of university and college authorities to respond to often legitimate student desires, and their sometimes cowardly alacrity to yield when threatened with open indiscipline, further discredit these authorities. The remoteness of this weak authority, its bureaucratic impersonality, its lack of conviction as to its own validity, do not satisfy the need of the Indian youth for a unitary, immediately present, integral, and morally pure authority. Where, as in the South, the authority of the older generation has retained some of its traditional qualities, and the youth has not been given the opportunity to escape from its ascendancy, indiscipline has not been so common as elsewhere in the country.

IT IS OFTEN SAID in India, by those who comment on the academic scene, that the present generation of college and university teachers are a poor lot. They are contrasted wholly unfavourably with the *gurus* of the past, who took their students to themselves, guided their lives, enveloped them wholly and securely in their authority, which was at once personal and transcendent. This disparagement expresses

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the inarticulate feelings of the Indian student about those who rule him.

Jesuit institutions in India are notoriously strictly governed, and they practically never have troubles with discipline. The selfless devotion of their ordained teachers does as much to establish their moral ascendancy as their swift repressiveness. The Indian student will respond positively to the stern and determined authority which knows its own mind and is morally self-confident. He will respond to solicitous authority of self-evident moral integrity. He will not accept authority which discredits itself by indifference, remoteness, uncertainty, and moral spottiness. That, unfortunately, appears to the Indian student—and not by any means incorrectly—to be the outlook of his teachers, their academic superiors, and the politicians who govern the country and mix in their affairs in the same style. Very few colleges are successful in implanting a sense of impersonal corporate loyalty in their students. The few which do—like St. Stephen's in Delhi, Elphinstone in Bombay, Madras Presidency and Christian Colleges, and some others—do so because of the selfless devotion and the obvious probity of their teaching staffs and senior administrators.

Sadhus without a Cause

INDIA, IN THE DEEPEST SENSE, is not a wholly modern society. The educated youth of India face difficulties in living in a modern society, corporately organised, within which the individual chooses friends and spouse and occupation or profession, and lives in a diversified network of personal and corporate relationships. The boring life of adulthood does not attract lively, tender-spirited youths anywhere in the world—even in Britain, where they settle down, in time, like nowhere else. In India, too, adolescence and youth resist the machinery which makes dull, tough adults out of soft youths—and in India, they come up to college and university earlier than in the West. The resistance is all the greater in Indian youths because the life of the householder—the second *asrama*—has been the most transformed in the partial modernisation of Indian society. That is not a stage which he wishes to enter, as R. K. Narayan has shown so often and so well in his affectionate books on Indian youth (and above all in *The Bachelor of Arts*). The path of the *sadhu* is still trodden by a few, but its traces beckon to many minds. The path of the resistant to British rule was a variant of the *sadhu's* path, and it was trodden by many and for a long time; in the decade from 1907 to 1917, of 186 persons arrested for revolutionary actions, 68 were students. Now that the British no longer rule, the same impulses still move in the young men, but without the great "cause" which justified their "self-sacrificial" withdrawal from routine preparation for a life of adult responsibility. (Indiscipline is much rarer —but not by any means unknown—in medical and technological colleges, which, unlike the arts and law faculties, draw young persons with a little more than average vocational aspiration and a little more confidence that their aspirations will find a place for realisation in a modern Indian social structure. Also important is the fact that classes are smaller, equipment is more adequate, and supervision is closer in these "professional schools.")

The college and the university are the first way-stations on the road to this modern world, so uninviting, so unrewarding, so unprotecting. They are encountered when the aspirations towards individual existence are in most tender embryo, when the fears of harshness and coldness are most timorous, and when resistance to the impositions of authority is most strenuous. A mind which cannot attach itself to intellectual objects, a libido which is prevented from attaching itself to sexual objects, a spirit which resents the burden of familial discipline and resists incorporation into modern impersonal adult institutions—what direction can it take except rebellion, blind, causeless rebellion?

The turbulence of the Indian student is not the product of the tradition of the Civil Disobedience movement in which Indian students played such a great part in the first years of the twenties, the thirties, and the forties of the present century. Rather, the reverse is true. The participation of the Indian student in the Civil Disobedience movement was a product of the disposition to refuse to be involved in the world of impersonal bureaucratic rule. It was a sort of truancy which manifested a deeper discomfiture. That discomfiture was the early product of India's movement from a primordial traditional condition into a modern large-scale civil order. It is against this that the Indian student is protesting; and the end of the protest is not in sight.

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Karl Jaspers

Our German Trouble

Some Critical (and Self-critical) Remarks of a German Philosopher

If it is freedom and peace that we seek then we must meet on a ground of truth that is beyond all factions and standpoints, all our determinations and decisions. If it is free and truthful that we become then we return permanently to this common ground, for it is there that we remain linked together even when we are opponents. Truthfulness does not lie principally in content but rather in the form in which it is conceived, in the manner of its exhibition and discussion: in the intellectual style of reason. Such truthfulness ceases with the isolation of obstinate minds, or where there is spiritual blindness and mental deafness, where there is a breakdown of communication. This, alas, is to be observed daily.

Throughout the whole of the politically free world, our greatest danger is untruth. Of course, I do not mean to say that the so-called free world is really free to-day; faced with total domination it has no more than a privileged chance of becoming free, and it will only survive if it seizes this opportunity in real earnest. The idea of democracy, and its republican mode of government, threatens to disappear when popular institutions tend to become merely formal, and degenerate into instruments for manipulation by politicians and economic interests. Nor do I mean to suggest that the economics of the free world are quite satisfactory. Our contemporary economic order, still in an expanding phase, will surely have to alter fundamentally both its structure and its ethos, once this process of expansion touches the narrowing frontiers of our present global divisions.

To many this seems an insoluble problem. Temporary palliative measures—piece-meal planning, governmental interventions, special techniques of credit and finance—are serving "only to delay" the breakdown. Marxism anticipates unemployment and hunger, and nothing is to remain but a total, terroristic planned economy. As a protection against this, the dishonesty of thoughtless optimism offers no help at all, as if boom-days will go on and on, as if consumption can be infinitely raised. Such a process of production and consumption is beginning to run wild; it is no longer creating a world in which man can feel at home; it does not really allow for any real ownership of genuine things. Since 1945, after the almost complete destruction of Germany, this process was able (with the well-known efficiency and will-to-work of this people) to restore things as quickly and effectively as if nothing at all had happened.

But the basis for this kind of drive is human beings whose existence becomes absorbed in the spiral of production and consumption; with lives caught between pleasureless work and empty leisure, distinguished only by the prestige of ever new acquisitions. In demand are radios, television, automobiles, tourism, elegant clothes,

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