

WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI

MADRAS MUSINGS

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FREE ISSUE

August 16-31, 1997

Since Independence, in Tamil Nadu...

Ten events of significance

(By the Editor)

What, someone asked me the other day, have been the events that have had the greatest impact on Madras that is Chennai — and Tamil Nadu — during the fifty years since Independence? Now that's a loaded question, if ever there was one — for any answer is bound to cause heated debate. But it's a question worth thinking over — and so I'm sticking my neck out to offer fodder for the debate. No doubt 'Our Readers Write' will, in the next

few issues, have much comment on my views or the lists of others.

As far as I'm concerned, however, these are the events that have had a major impact on our City — and State — during the last fifty years:

1 The emergence and coming to power of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, thereby giving the man-in-the-street the feeling that he had a place in the sun, a feeling that made

him conscious of his rights but, sadly, not of his responsibilities.

2 The pre-Independence Cinema movement that continued well into the Sixties and enabled the emergence as political leaders of those connected with the film industry, a practice that has continued to this day and led to cultism and populism, not better governance.

3 The birth, together with the DMK coming to power,

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Looking at a Trust to help Chennai

The support for Madras Musings grows. And both your Editor and the Publishers, Lokavani Hall Mark Press Pvt Ltd, are very grateful to SPENCER & CO LTD, HONGKONG BANK and SUNDARAM FINANCE LTD for joining the other sponsors and offering generous support. But what pleases us even more is that the sponsors, now 20-strong, met on July 31st and agreed to go ahead with the Chennai First Trust that Madras Musings has long been asking for.

The Chennai First Trust is expected to be formed within the next three months and supporting Madras Musings, whose aim is to catalyse a better Madras that is Chennai, will be one

of the items on its agenda. Another item will be to take up a single project connected with heritage restoration to demonstrate the earnest of its intentions. And thereafter it will look at a wider spectrum of activities, that it could work with the Municipal and Government authorities on, to help develop a better Chennai.

While surplus sponsorship funds will help the Trust to get experts to develop plans and projects, the Trust will raise the funds needed for specific projects whenever it gets the go-ahead for a project it suggests.

Watch out in these columns for further details of the Chennai First Trust and how YOU can help.

— The Editor

First Asian to win Australian Award

(By A Special Correspondent)

Dr. Dayalan Devanesen of Darwin, Australia, the son of the late Dr. Chandran Devanesen of Madras Christian College and Mrs Devanesen, has just been appointed a Member of the Order of Australia, the first Asian to receive the Award. The Order of Australia is the highest civilian award in Australia and was conferred on him for his work in the area of aboriginal health.

Universally known as DD, Dayalan Devanesen started out as a flying doctor in Alice Springs in 1974 and has stayed on in the Northern Territory ever since. Appalled at the medical system that ignored native medicine and native custom, he has devoted his time as a medical planner to see that an integrated bi-cultural approach was made towards Aboriginal health. He was instrumental in the recruitment of Aboriginal health workers and the use of Aboriginal art to promote health care for the native Australians.



Dr. Dayalan Devanesen

A graduate of CMC, Vellore, Devanesen has since gathered several degrees and fellowships. When asked about the award, he told this correspondent that he was both honoured and humbled by the award. Humbled, because his work in Aboriginal primary health care came about because of the warmth and friendship that the Aboriginal people of the region gave him. In fact, he has been made a member of an Aboriginal tribe, whose Medicine Man "Smoky" showed him the ways of the native Australians.

Devanesen, who looks upon Madras as his second home, tries to touch base here every year and hopes to spend his sabbatical working on rural health care in villages near Madras.

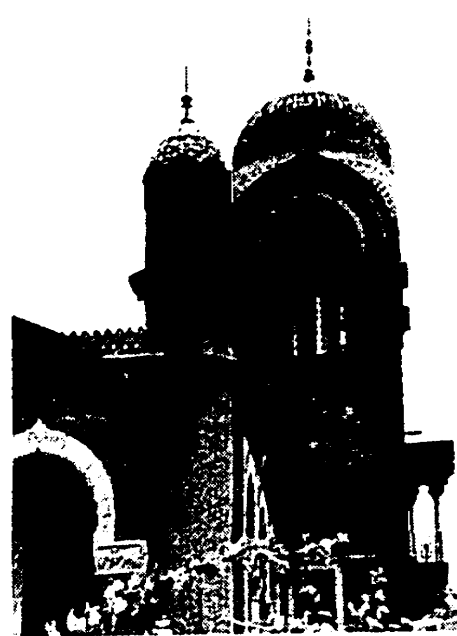
The Award comes at a time when Asian-bashing is at an all-time high in Australia. It is to be hoped that in some way it will create more awareness of the contribution Asians are making as Australia tries to forge a multicultural society which they will have to accept in the years ahead.

WORK TO BEGIN ON SENATE HOUSE

(By Rajind N Christy)

Work is to start soon on the restoration of the University of Madras's Senate House. Five teams, appointed and monitored by the Senate House Conservation Technical Committee, will start work shortly on Chisholm's "work of genius".

P T Krishnan, architect and member of the Technical Committee, told Madras Musings, that consultants had been appointed, viz., M S Venugopal, Structural Engineer, to look into the structural aspects of restoration, Elias Koshy to look into the architecture, stained glass, wood-based work and roofing, Ashit K Gupta, chemical conservationist, to remove the salt deposits in the bricks, M G Chellappillai, a specialist in laying bricks with lime and mortar and in lime plaster work, and Ganapathy Sthapati from Mamallapuram to look into the stone carvings. The University Engineer will act as the coordinator for the project. The schedule of work is being drawn

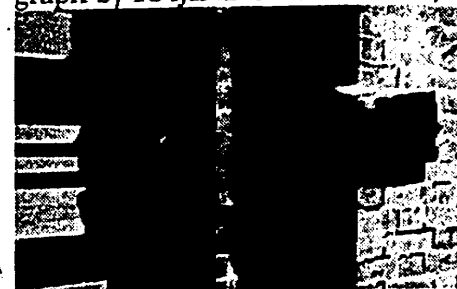


Senate House, awaiting restoration. (Photograph V.S. Raghavan.)

up so that the project will be completed expeditiously.

Koshy, who has a degree in Conservation from the Univer-

Much of Senate House has had its bricks gouged out and wooden slats removed. Every bit will have to be matched during restoration. (Photograph by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)



sity of York, told Madras Musings that experts in the field of woodwork and stained glass will also be consulted. "Conservation is not just a repair or renovation job and attending to other faults; in restoration, the original character of the building must be maintained as close as possible and this is why we look for experts in every aspect," he explained.

The work ahead is by no means easy. It will involve the removal of salt deposits from the bricks, removal of paint coats, plastering of the cracks in the walls with original lime and mortar, restoration of broken drainage pipes and roofs, improving sanitary conditions and electrical systems, restoring damaged wooden flooring and windows, removing the wild growth of plants on the domes and other structures in the building, and replacement of the missing and broken stained glass, among other things.

The Commonwealth Trust, Calicut, pioneers in mechanised

(Continued on Page 2)

If Calcutta can, why can't we?

Been to Calcutta recently? If you have, you'll see why it is now being rated 'The Cleanest City in India'. And the miracle has been worked in less than a couple of years, *The Man From Madras Musings* finds.

When John Major, the then Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and his team of officials and industrialists planned visits to Calcutta in 1996/97 to explore the possibilities of renewing the Anglo-Calcutta links forged when Calcutta was the second commercial capital of the British Empire, it was pointed out to Chief Minister Jyoti Basu that British investors certainly would like to see a clean, orderly Calcutta that reflected its heyday. And Basu and his Ministers caught the point.

Since then, Calcutta has been truly cleaned up. The squatters and the vendors have been removed. The roads are kept clean. The drive from the airport and along Chowringhee and other major roads is a pleasure. Major buildings have been declared heritage buildings and are in the process of being renovated. Calcutta is determined to gleam and present a welcome orderliness to woo the investor from abroad — no matter it prides itself on its Marxist government.

Now why can't we do that here? Some small steps have been taken, like clearing the hawkers from some stretches of road. But MMM finds that these stretches are, in terms of cleanliness and orderliness, not very much better than during the Hawkers' Raj. Worse, all we've done is moved the hawkers to other stretches of road and more or less legitimised the chaos they cause by building them semi-permanent booths, which enable them to spread on to the rest of the pavement and beyond. Road cleaning has also improved, but while there are some specially clean stretches, MMM finds several stretches of important roads still filthy in patches. The Marina beach is a mess. And traffic still remains raucous and disorderly.

With the Queen of England due to spend a couple of days here in October and, more significantly, the Confederation of Indian Industry planning a major conference here in January, when three Prime Ministers from abroad, all from cleaner cities than Chennai, will join ours to address various sessions of the Conference, what better opportunity to show off Chennai's best face? The CII, now led by N Kumar from Chennai, is prepared to help. All that's needed is the willingness of both the leaders of the Corporation and the Government to work out with Industry how Chennai can be made a cleaner, better city between NOW and January. Will the Corporation

and Government rise to the occasion?

Sports research

While strife-battered Sri Lanka builds up its sports image despite all odds, we in India are allowing Sport to go to the dogs, *The Man From Madras Musings* notices. Sri Lankan cricket everyday becomes more outstanding, it is producing athletes of world class (a woman silver medalist and a 400m runner who is a 44-second man), and India's premier football centre, Calcutta, is looking for more Sri Lankan strikers after Roshan Perera's contribution to Mohun Bagan. And all around us this is happening; as SAARC and Southeast Asian and West Asian countries progress by leaps and bounds, we improve by at no means the same rate and, in some cases, are even sliding backwards, MMM finds.

What, then, is wrong with Indian Sport? A small group of academicians at the University of Madras would like to find out, and feel that academic studies of

SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

certain aspects of Sport in India might provide some answers. This small group of dons come from curiously diverse fields, Anthropology, Political Science, Social Studies, South and South-east Asian studies, Physical Education, but one thing they have in common and that is that they are passionately fond of Sport, having participated in it or hypothetically watched it.

The only problem that strikes MMM is that they are not very clear about how to proceed further, given that Sport is not a field of study in India, not even as part of another discipline. What should we study, seems the question, and even if we find the subjects, how will the studies help Indian Sport, they wonder. The sports journalists they met with did not have very many more answers. But they did think the idea was worth pursuing with zeal.

MMM, however, has a damper to cast on the proceedings. A few years ago, Indian Olympian and Rhodes Scholar Eric Prabhakar drew up a plan for the Government of Tamil Nadu to improve athletic standards in the State in particular and other sports in general. It was a village level scheme moving outwards to the district headquarters and then beyond. It was a scheme that did not need much investment. It was handed over to a civil servant to implement and, between bureaucracy and lack of Government interest, the scheme has been virtually interrupted. The moral of the story, as

MMM sees it, is that unless there is Government will to provide the facilities and the necessary encouragement and support, all plans for development of sport are doomed. And that goes for making sport compulsory in school and the meeting of minimum sports standards to get a degree. No amount of studies about why a village each in the Punjab, Bihar and Orissa produce hockey champions or why a village near Chennai produces weightlifters will find the answers to the failure of Indian Sport.

Lack of wholehearted Government commitment to all sport and a lop-sided Press coverage — read encouragement — of sport, favouring only a couple of elitist games, are the root causes of the abysmal state of Indian Sport, in MMM's view. And MMM, who in another avatar has had a link with Sport in this part of the world for well nigh 50 years, has been watching this going on almost all those years. It's begun to change in a few countries of the region in the last five years. In India it hasn't changed one whit.

Library restoration

The Man From Madras Musings has just read that restoration of the 100-year-old neo-Gothic building of the 10-year-old J N Petit Institute (library) in Bombay is underway as part of its centenary celebration. We in Chennai, however, paid little or no attention to the 1996 centenary of the Connemara Library, a National Library and one of the country's major ones, and have allowed its splendid building to decay and its wealth to crumble. MMM wonders who the Good Samaritan will be who will make the effort of restoring the Henry Irwin splendour and recatalogue and rescue all the wealth within.

If there is any round table of knights in shining armour around, they might like to take a cue from what's happening at the Petit, a major research institution. A report on the Petit's plans says:

"The restoration will be completed in two phases. The first phase includes cleaning the facade, repairing the roof, plugging leaks, painting the interior, polishing the old furniture and building additional toilets. In the second phase... the library's stained glass will be taken up for expert restoration — possibly by some of those currently working on the stained glass in the Bombay University buildings.

The first phase of restoration will be carried out by ACC, which has a special conservation cell and was instrumental in re-

storing the David Sassoon library at Kala Ghoda some months ago. Although the Tata group is likely to chip in with more funds as the project proceeds, the library administration hopes to also raise additional donations from its 4,300 members and local heritage lovers...

Librarian Adi Khambatta says, "If enough funds flow in, we will extend the conservation programme to cover our 1,20,000-strong book collection; have our rare books restored and micro-filmed; buy a micro-filming projector; air-condition the rooms, especially those holding the rare books; and computerise the indexing system." The books can be restored by local experts such as those working at the BNHS and the Asiatic.

Can the Connemara Library look forward to much of the same before long, wonders MMM.

In brief

★ Safari dinners are the 'in-thing' on Chennai's expat and fellow-travellers' social circuit,

★ When TTK-LIG recently introduced in India the world's largest selling condom, Durex, many a journalist wondered what was news about that. But *The Man From Madras Musings* noted one journalist striking it just right for the times: After Macdonald's Coke and Nike, now Durex!, he pointed out. That's noting how the international brands are now settling in India!

★ Here are two tales out of school that *The Man From Madras Musings* heard on two different occasions in Chennai recently. Illustrating unthoughtful public relations, a senior public relations official pointed to an American company setting up a salt factory not far from where the Dandi March took place! Protests naturally followed. On the other occasion, a recollection of Prohibition in Tamil Nadu led to a story out of America's Prohibition days. When a Congressman was asked by a constituent to explain his attitude towards whisky, he replied: "If you mean the demon drink that poisons the mind, pollutes the body, desecrates family life and inflames sinners, then I am dead against it. But if you mean the elixir of Christmas cheer, the shield against Winter chill, the taxable potion that puts needed funds into public coffers to comfort little crippled children, then I'm for it!"

★ "Lord, you have been merciful to your land," read the lead-in to an invitation to celebrate 'Freedom 50' at St Mary's in the Fort on one recent Sunday. But

had He, *The Man From Madras Musings* couldn't help wondering, looked at the headlines on that Sunday and every other day. MMM is, however, delighted that many think that He has been merciful and kind and that they decided to thank him for it all with prayer and words favoured by Gandhiji, music and song. But like all things Indian, we always try to make too much of a good thing; was 2½ hours really necessary?

Business briefs

★ Ambattur Industrial Estate is one of the busiest parts of the City and a place regularly visited by buyers and sellers from all parts of India and abroad. It has always struck *The Man From Madras Musings* that the Ambattur-Avadi area, which has several major factories besides the Estate, was severely handicapped by the absence of good hotel and restaurant facilities. This gap will soon be filled when Quality Inn Vel Hotel, managed by the international chain Choice Hotels International, U.S., and its Quality Inn Club open in the Estate. The hotel in its first phase will have 50 rooms, MMM hears.

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MMM

Restoration to begin

(Continued from Page 1)

tile- and brick-making, supplied the bricks for the original building and the technical team has ordered an identical supply from them for the restoration.

The estimated cost for the restoration, which is expected to take 18 months, will be Rs.1 crore. Once the building is restored to its old splendour, the University will have to find ways and means to maintain the building by putting it to profitable use. It will also need a dedicated staff to ensure proper maintenance.

The foundation stone for this magnificent building was laid in 1868 and the work was completed in 1874. The building was designed by one of the fathers of the Indo-Saracenic style, Robert F Chisolm. The restoration will be a monument to him.

OUR READERS WRITE



College ignored

Many alumni of Madras Christian College, Tambaram, have been surprised and disappointed by the absence of the college in the list of 20 colleges ranked according to various criteria of excellence, as rightly pointed out by MM. According to responsible sources in the college, it appears that MCC was not included at all in the colleges surveyed and that the Principals, whose opinions were asked for, did not include the Principal, MCC.

This, if correct, was insult added to injury to the college by the national magazine responsible for the survey.

K.C. Thomas
25, Annanagar West
Chennai.

Tribal talent

I read with interest "Mahouts wanted", MM, July 16th. It is absolutely true to say that the relationship between Indian mahouts and their charges is legendary. I had occasion as a Forest Officer to study a few such cases in the then South Coimbatore Forest Division (present Wild Life Division at Pollachi) which had about 25 elephants (in the camps at Sungam and Thelikal, now in Kerala, for timber operations, elephant-capturing and dragging thinned poles from teak plantations, beyond Top Slip. Not only did the tribal mahouts take care of the elephants well, but the entire family, consisting of the mahout's wife and children, had a special attachment to his elephant and took care of the elephant like a pet of the family. I remember in 1950 or so, one elephant, 'Meena' (named after the daughter of an earlier DFO, BK Roy IFS) was sent to Hollywood. The mahout, a young tribal, known as 'Meena Karuppan', also went to Hollywood with the elephant and decided to stay there. He never returned to Top Slip and is reported to have done very well in the U.S.

I am sure that it will be possible to find dedicated, young and willing tribals from Tamil Nadu, which indeed has a particularly good record of having a number of elephants in the Forest Departments which are well cared for and utilised. In an elephant camp, there are pensioned elephants, expectant mothers, nursing mothers, baby elephants, and study animals useful for elephant-capturing and timber-hauling. Mahouts were usually known by their elephants, such as Kunju (elephant) Rangan, IG Rangan Gool (named after a Chief Conservator's wife), Mahali Hafiz Mayan and so on.

Recently, an organisation at Coimbatore, Zoo Outreach, 65 Bharati Colony, Peelamedu, Coimbatore - 641 004, conducted a training programme for mahouts. They can easily train the tribals or any mahout to be sent to UK Zoos. Miss Nibha Nambodiri was the trainer.

Language chauvinism seems to take precedence over communication. The government seems to forget the basic premise of communication — one person (the government) wanting to convey something to another (the people). What purpose is served if the communication is not understood or difficult to understand or misunderstood or requires the help of another person?

B. Gautham
122 Wallajah Road
Chennai 600 002

K K Nair, IFS (RETD)
M E S College Road
Calicut 673 0011.

Setting names straight

I have read with interest your article by 'An Octogenarian Egmore' (MM, July 1). May I set the record straight once and for all?

My maiden name, Ramsay Unger, was not an anglicised version of Ramaswami Iyengar. My grandfather's surname was Unger, of Austrian origin. When he started his own business he called it Ramsay & Co. Later he amalgamated his family and business names. Hence Ramsay Unger.

Mrs. J.M. Davies
4 Downsview Road, Sevenoaks,
Kent, TN13 2JT, UK

Let's communicate

Today, many communications from the State Government, such as electricity bills and ration cards, are exclusively in Tamil. Problems arise out of inadvertent errors made by property owners, due to the property tax assessment form being entirely in Tamil. Primary language (as opposed to mother tongue) must be defined as the language in which a person prefers to receive written communication. For most of the better educated, this is likely to be English. It may be unfortunate choosing an 'alien' or 'foreign' language over your own mother tongue, but nonetheless, whether we like it or not, that's the position many find themselves in.

Every ten years, the Government of India conducts a nationwide census which no doubt is a very elaborate exercise. Much information is collected, including mother tongue, languages known and spoken, etc. However, one key question is omitted, viz. "Which language do you prefer for receiving any written communication from the Government?" This is extremely useful information. It would be interesting to see how many people prefer English. Once this question is included and the information compiled, a cut-off percentage may be chosen, say 20 per cent. All government communication should be in all the languages that exceed this percentage. Since the States were created on the basis of language, this will be the most lead to bilingual communication and, in rare cases, trilingual communication. Adopting and following such a policy should not at all be difficult for the various government departments.*

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B. Gautham
122 Wallajah Road
Chennai 600 002

*Editor's Note: This has been the practice in Sri Lanka some 30-plus years now.

A word about elephants

I was intrigued and deeply concerned by your feature on sending elephant mahouts from Madras to the U.K. (MM, July 16) since it is my experience that those who handle temple elephants in this city are no more than common workmen who torment and torture the lovely animals they are in charge of in order to fill their own pockets. Stopping cars, begging from people and shops are examples. It is surely curious that an animal considered sacred should be so degraded and abused.

The first thing to understand is that the Asian elephant is a completely different animal from its African cousin. They may look superficially alike, they both are indeed elephants, but they have descended to us down totally different evolutionary lines (as their scientific names indicate), and there are many profound differences between them apart from their shape, the size of their ears, the tips of their trunks and many other features. Most important is that while the African elephant, *Loxodonta africanus*, is perfectly happy out in the hot shadeless sun of Africa's vast savannah plains, our Asian elephant, *Elephas maximus*, is a creature of cool dark sholas and rain forests, and abhors the direct sun and heat, which are tortures to it.

When I was commissioned by *The National Geographic Magazine* to produce a feature on the Indian elephant and spent months among them in the forests of the Kabini river (now flooded by the dam) I learned a great deal about them from the genuine mahouts who handle them there, extracting teak from the forests, as they have done for many generations. Curiously, the mahouts there are not South Indians at all but originally Bengali Muslims (they would now be Bangla Deshi) brought there in the 19th Century by a famous British forest officer called Sanderson, because he could not find people in the Mysore forests who knew how to handle elephants to his satisfaction.

The Mysore mahouts really understand and love the great animals they are in charge of. No elephant is expected to work at midday, for though the forests are much cooler than the hot plains of Tamil Nadu, it is still considered too hot for elephants. Moreover, their work always ends long before sunset, and when it does the sons of the mahouts take their charges down to the river (or if

there are no rivers, to the nearest tank or any other large body of water), and give them their evening bath. Elephants love water and their young play about in it as human urchins wallow and splash in the sea, swimming pools or even temple tanks, whenever they have the chance. Moreover, elephants are gregarious animals who are

by Harry Miller

never happy unless they have members of their own kind to consort with (exactly as we do) and the keeping of solitary elephants chained in temples, to be taken for walks only when it suits their so-called mahouts to do a daily begging tour, is vicious cruelty of the worse kind. Incidentally, the elephant(s) shown in your pictures are cows. Bull elephants would quickly deal with tormentors who would dare abuse them like that. In passing, may I deplore the journalistic tendency to call elephants 'pachyderms', a term that means simply 'thick-skinned'. I suggest this might more aptly be applied to those who use it.



The Old Black Town Chapel on Popham's Broadway, later known as St Mark's Church, was built in 1799, on land granted by the Nawab of the Carnatic, but its consecration was delayed till 1804, when the service in St Mary's in the Fort was omitted so that the Governor, the Members of the Council and all the principal persons in Fort St George might grace the occasion. The Rev. Richard Hall Kent was responsible for obtaining the land grant and building the church seen in our OLD, after improvements were carried out between 1837 and 1887.

THE OLD... THE NEW

The Church, except for the Sanctuary, was renovated recently and now looks like what is seen in our NEW. The old lime and mortar plastering has given way to cement plastering and the roof to RCC (concrete). The old wooden windows and doors have been replaced by modern wooden panelling and coloured glass. The old wooden gallery has been replaced with a concrete one and its height raised. The cement flooring has been replaced with granite flooring. All this renovation has kept the sound engineers busy, as the church now encounters an 'echo' problem. (Text and photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)



Crying defiance, with bared chests

(Continued from last fortnight)

In 1921, the Prince of Wales visited India. Gandhiji appealed to the people to boycott the visit by "keeping the route desolate". No 'Go Back' slogans or black flags. The Prince arrived in Madras on November 17, 1921. Galleries were put up all along Mount Road for the public. The entire route was empty as the Prince drove past. Justice Party leaders and cadres took shelter in the Cosmopolitan Club and, as the Prince neared, came rushing out to sit in the gallery till the Prince left.

To jeer against this, some people gathered near the Wellington Cinema junction.

Some miscreants threw stones and smashed the glass panes of the cinema. Its manager came out with a pistol to shoot them. Fortunately, the cinema owner, a Parsi, rushed out and took the manager inside. A great calamity was averted.

In 1923, E V R was the President of the T.N.C.C. He raised an objection to its treatment of the inmates of the Ashram run by Subramanya Siva. They were differentiated in the dining halls as Brahmins and non-Brahmins. Rajaji passed some remarks on the integrity of EVR. In protest, EVR resigned the presidentship and left the Congress to form his self-respect movement. But he continued to be a habitual wearer of khadi, adhering to the ideals of non-violence and truth till his death.

In 1924, S Srinivasa Iyengar joined the Congress and was elected President of the TNCC. He encouraged candidates to contest the civic polls. In the City Corporation, he routed the Justice Party, leaving it with a handful of members. Sami Venkatachalam Chetty was the first Congress President of the city Corporation. Dr Muthulakshmi Reddy, T Prakasam, Ammu Swaminathan and Yakub Hassan were among the aldermen of the Corporation.

Next came the Madras Legislature and Central Assembly elections. Srinivasa Iyengar, Prakasam, Satyamurti, A Rangaswamy Iyengar and Dr Joseph were among those elected on the Congress ticket. Satyamurti was a terror to the Treasury Benches. Congress refused to accept office under a quasi self-government. Dr P Subbarayan, a nationalist and the leader of the Independent Party, was elected the Chief Minister.

Srinivasa Iyengar invited the All India Congress to hold its sessions at Madras. They were held in 1927 at the maidan behind the Emmore T B Hospital, with a

temporary railway station being established at Chetpet on Poonamallee High Road. I was asked to open a First Aid Station. My Little India Group Scouts, with headquarters at the YMCA, pitched its tent in the north of Railway border.

At the Congress sessions, no police were allowed within the campus. Volunteers controlled the crowds. A day prior to the

● by R.R. Dalavai

open sessions huge crowds gathered across the railway line and became uncontrollable. I was specially asked to manage the traffic by the Railway line, which they had to cross to go to the sessions. From 3 to 7 pm our boys steered the traffic with no water or food. We were rewarded by being put in charge of the water supply inside the Sessions pandal. I was also asked to look after the requirements of the senior leaders. I thus had personal contacts with Gandhiji, Pandit Nehru, Sarojini Naidu, Patel and others.

On the last day, a young Gramani boy was found misbe-

having. He was tied to a post for some time and let off. This aroused the local toddy tappers and vendors. The next day they threatened to attack and destroy the pandal. All the volunteers had by then left. My group was the only one staying on. We were called upon to do bandobust duty for the night. Armed with staves, we spent the night opposite the Commander's office. Near mid-

night a group came towards the campus brandishing sticks. We gave them chase and saved the campus.

In 1928, the Simon Commission arrived in India. No Indian was on it. Gandhiji, therefore, gave the call for its boycott. When it visited Madras city, Christian College students, along with Pachaiappa's and other students came out of classes and gathered opposite the High Court, demanding its closure.

A phosphorus packet was thrown into a car parked in the campus of the court. It happened to be the car of Chief Justice

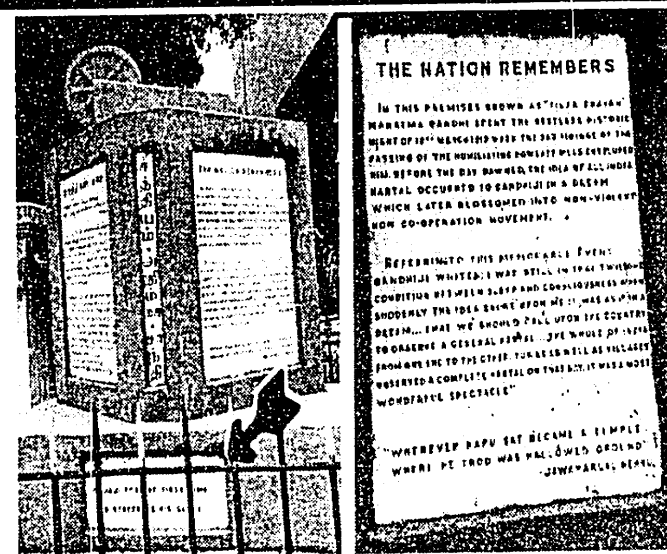
MEMORIES OF INDEPENDENCE — A SPECIAL 2-PART FEATURE

Beasley. It was burnt to ashes. Justice Beasley phoned the Military for protection. Soldiers were sent for and stationed along the boundary wall of the court campus, facing us. They awaited the Magistrate's Order to 'shoot'. Justice Beasley sent for Chief Presidency Magistrate, Pandalay.

I was frightened by the guns and rushed to the *Swarajya* offices in Broadway and sought the help of T Prakasam, its editor. He came to the spot and at the entrance to Armenian Street, he got on to the bonnet of a car and ordered us to keep to one side of the road to allow free flow of traffic. He then bared his chest and asked the military to shoot him first. We instantly obeyed. At this, Pandalay said, "Barrister has brought peace and no order to shoot is necessary" and left. For this, he lost his promotion as Judge of the High Court.

Government took its revenge at the public meeting that evening at Tilak Ghat. As usual I was in charge of organising the Beach public meetings. Tables, chairs and long benches were all lent by Hotelier Krishna Iyer. There was only one gaslight near the dais, hired for one rupee. The meeting was about to begin. Satyamurti and Bulusu Sambamurthi were on the dais. Durga

(Continued on Page 7)



The arrow points to the words that record, "It is here that Gandhiji met Rajaji for the first time and stayed as his guest". The words are at the base of the monument in front of, and tended by, the Chola Sheraton Hotel. The story which Dalavai narrated last fortnight — and clarified below — is recorded on one panel of the monument, as may be seen in the second picture. (Photographs by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

Hindu in 1996, (excerpts below) sets the record straight.

Mahatma Gandhi, said in the chapter 'That wonderful spectacle' (My Experiments with Truth):

"The invitation (to come to Madras in March 1919) had come over the signature of the late Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. But the man behind the invitation, as I subsequently learnt on my way to Madras, was C. Rajagopalachari.

he said to me one day.

And so I did... While these cogitations were still going on news was received that the Rowlett Bill had been published as an Act. That night I fell asleep while thinking over the question. Towards the small hours of the morning I woke up somewhat earlier than usual. I was still in the twilight condition between sleep and consciousness when suddenly the idea broke upon me — it was as if in a dream. Early in the morning I related the whole story to Rajagopalachari. "The idea came to me last night in a dream that we should call upon the country to observe a general hartal. Satyagraha is a process of self-purification, and ours is a sa-

The house where he stayed ...

In MM, Aug 1, I find Sri R Dalavai mentioning that 'Gandhiji was camping in Madras at the time as the guest of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, founder of *The Hindu*, in his guest house on Cathedral Road'. In the first place, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was not the founder of *The Hindu*. It was G Subramania Iyer (who moved the FIRST resolution of the Indian National Congress at its FIRST session in Bombay). S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was also a very great patriot who BOUGHT *The Hindu* from G Subramania Iyer and continued to maintain G. S.'s traditions through that paper. As for Gandhiji being Kasturi Ranga Iyengar's guest at the time, my piece carried by *The*

He had only then left Salem to settle down for legal practice in Madras at the pressing invitation of friends like the late Kasturi Ranga Iyengar... It was with him that we had put up in Madras. This discovery I made only after we had stayed with him for a couple of days. For, since the bungalow that we were staying in belonged to Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, I was under the impression that we were his guests. Mahadev Desai, however, corrected me. He very soon formed a close acquaintance with Rajagopalachari, who, from his innate shyness, kept himself constantly in the background. But Mahadev put me on my guard. 'You should cultivate this man,'

cred fight, and it seems to me to be in the fitness of things that it should be commenced with an act of self-purification. Let all the people of India, therefore, suspend their business on that day and observe the day as one of fasting and prayer..."

Rajagopalachari was at once taken up with my suggestion. I drafted a brief appeal. The date of the hartal was first fixed as the March 30, 191, but was subsequently changed to April 6...

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ONE MAN'S INDEPENDENCE

AT HOME...

(Continued from last fortnight)

In those days there were only two hotels worth the name in Madras, the Connemara, which survives, and Bosotto's, originally Hotel D'Angeli's, which does not. Bosotto's was chosen for me since it was but a short walk to the offices of *The Hindu*. In later years, the hotel was for a short time called the Airlines Hotel and on its corner, facing Round Thana, was and is Bata's shoe shop. The last time I went inside this building I found that the guest rooms had been converted into tiny business premises: a watch repairer, an optician, a travel agent, and in one place a small shop selling and exchanging foreign stamps, presumably finding enough business for prosperity among the city's many philatelists.

The hotel was built on Portuguese/French colonial principles, a small courtyard surrounded by three floors of the hotel rooms, from where you looked down into the cool courtyard, wreathed in bougainvillea and other plants. There was a great deal of fine ornamental wrought iron work used for railings on the verandah edges outside the

rooms and on the stairways. I was not very comfortable there. My colleagues told me there was no need to worry about mosquitoes as long as I slept under a fan. How wrong they were! I was bitten all over, suffered torments of itching, and had to call for a mosquito net. Mosquitoes weren't the only pests, either. My first encounter with the prolific life of the tropics and what has now come to be known as 'biodiversity' concerned another form of life known scientifically as the *Fornicoidea* or more com-

monly, and more familiarly to readers of MM — as ANTS!!

Every night, soon after turning off the bedside light before going to sleep under the mosquito net, I began to feel pricks and stings quite unlike the intolerable itching of mosquito bites. Turning on the light, I discovered little streams of tiny red ants, to which the mosquito net was no obstacle, running at high speed in and out of my bed, presumably attracted by sweat or perhaps blood from the mosquito bites.

Bearers were summoned. Insecticide spray-guns swung into action. After much commotion, all was quiet. Sweating profusely, dead tired, I tried to resume my interrupted sleep — only to be awakened yet again by a renewed assault from those tireless and countless members of the *Fornicoidea* family. This went on for several nights, and I began to despair of ever getting an undisturbed night's sleep in Madras, until a member of the hotel staff had the bright idea of setting the four legs of the bed into little wooden tubs filled with undiluted phenol. Even the most determined red ants couldn't cross those caustic moats.

But readers of this journal will be amused to hear that there was an artefact that gave me far more cause for worry than either mosquitoes or ants: ceiling fans. Remember that this was the first



The British were never "chased out" of India, as many of the modern generation believe. There was a handing over of power, but at the invitation of the Government of India many British remained at their posts long after independence. This picture, taken more than two years after independence, shows the Collector of Coimbatore District in what was then the Madras Province. He and his wife were British. (Photograph: HARRY MILLER.)

time in my life I had ever seen such things and, to lie in bed staring up at those monstrous whirling fans blowing down gusts of cool air, terrified me. What would happen, I wondered, if the bolts or screws or nuts and bolts holding them into the ceiling gave way? The whole heavy machine, I imagined, would come crashing down on my unprotected person causing untold, unimaginable injuries. It took me years to discover that ceiling fans are fixed in place in a way that makes such a calamity virtually impossible, nor has it ever happened, as far as I know. I often wonder whether other newcomers to the Tropics are trauma-

tised by similar terrors. I must remember to ask. After all, there are plenty of new expatriates about again these days.

* * *

On my first morning in Madras I was taken to the head office of *The Hindu*, which was then very much as you see it today. Great changes have, of course, been made, but they are to the equipment inside: the building's facade has not changed. I was taken upstairs and for the first time introduced to my employer, Kasturi Srinivasan, Editor and Proprietor of *The Hindu*.

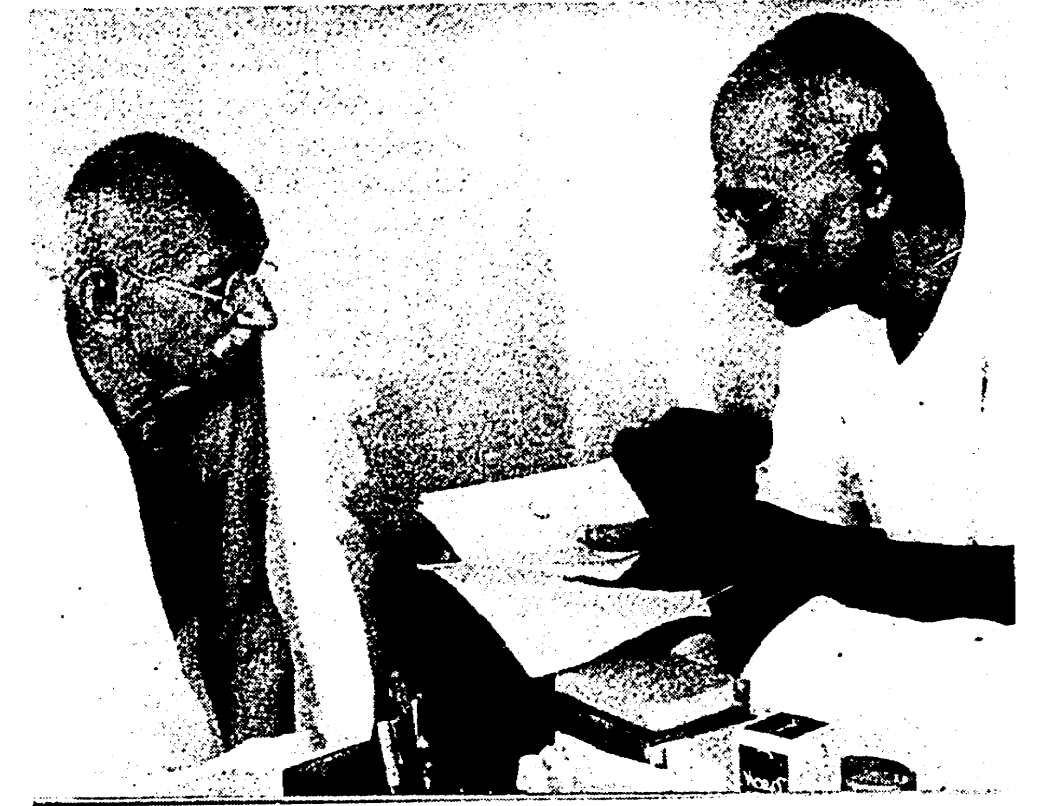
Srinivasan was a delightful,

Freedom at 1 a.m. in Bengal

(Continued from last fortnight)

As August 15 came nearer, Ajoy was overlaid with terrible pain and fear in the hearts of all Indians and soon-to-be Pakistanis; the pain of separation, of abduction, of rape, of murder, and the fear of new cruelties. Minorities in both regions prayed for safety, prepared some defence and wondered whether they would be uprooted. Millions were. And a great many — Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs — were slain. Anguish and shame jostled with gladness in CR's heart as well, but the emotions merited swift expulsion; the problems of governance needed all his thoughts...

Unexpectedly, Patel said to CR: "You should handle Bengal. You are one of the few who can." Patel also reported Nehru's and the Mahatma's concurrence. "Moreover," he added, "Prafulla Ghosh (who would be West Bengal's Chief Minister) wants you." It was a surprise. CR did not like to leave Delhi. Governors in free India would have little power. Was he being eased out because of his ability and in-



Gandhiji with Rajaji, as they try to bring peace in Bengal

dependence, as at least one observer was to suggest? Whether CR thought so is not known; even if he did, there was no question of his saying that he preferred to remain in Delhi. So far he had never asked for a place (or, once invited to the cabinet, for any particular portfolio) and he was not going to sully his record now with a request of that sort. Patel spoke on July 30 about Bengal. CR agreed the same day...

Until 1912, Viceroy and Governor-Generals had ruled India from Calcutta's Government House, the edifice that CR, accompanied by retiring Governor Burrows, entered; it had housed Governors of Bengal from 1912.

Till the middle of the night he would be the guest of Burrows; then, until his departure at dawn, the Briton would be Rajaji's guest. At 8 a.m. the Union Jack would be lowered and the Indian tricolour, unfurled by CR would fly over the mansion. At 1 a.m. on Friday, August 15 (Bengal at the time was an hour ahead of I.S.T.), in the Throne Room of Government House, he was sworn in. By now, in the darkness outside Government House, large crowds had collected and were shouting 'Jai Hind', 'Vande Mataram' and 'Gandhiji-ki-jai'.

Fireworks lit the night sky. The curfew which for nearly a year had emptied Calcutta's streets in the late hours was completely ignored. From trucks, cars, taxis, bicycles and tram-cars came shouts, hoots or bells of joy. Steam boats turned on their sirens. Students took out a torchlight procession. As dawn broke, a huge throng pressed against the gates of Government House. Soon the gates were flung open and the masses flooded in. Thirty seconds before 8 a.m. by when he had seen Burrows and his wife into a sea-plane, CR mounted a specially erected pavilion in the

Government House lawns. At the first boom of a 17-gun salute fired from Fort William, he unfurled the flag. This was, to quote *The Statesman*, the signal for "a wild outburst of joy which swept Government House and its environs for hours together". At least 200,000 people swarmed into Government House, at last the property of India and Indians, many pushing their way into the rooms, handling the portraits and dancing on the sofas. Hands were held out to British officers; they "responded with ringing cries of Jai Hind".

CR greeted the revellers from the pavilion and later from a window on the building when the crowd gave lusty cries of "Rajaji-ki-jai". Security men trying to dissuade the crowds from entering the mansion were instructed by CR to allow everybody in. "Let them have their joy, for a day," he said. The gates remained open till late in the afternoon.

But the reality of partition was stabbing rejoicing hearts. CR sought to fight it with a wish. In an address to the West Bengal assembly on the day of liberty, he hoped that the bars of division would "ere long melt away" and that "the two free States will come together once again into a wise and lasting union". Would CR be able to befriend Bengal? He would certainly try. "May I pray with you," he said in the address, "that we may enable Bengal once again to take the first place in free India in all respects. If I play a humble part in this work I shall have cause in the evening of my life to be proud."

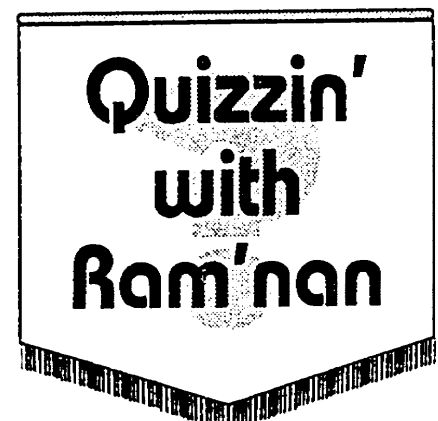
(Excerpts from *The Rajaji Story 1937-1972* by Rajmohan Gandhi and published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.

(Concluded)

Rajmohan Gandhi

...AT LAST

(Continued on Page 7)



Quizmaster V.V. RAMANAN's questions are from the period July 16 to 31. Questions 16 to 31 pertain to Chennai.

- Who has been awarded the prestigious Nehru Award for International Understanding for 1995?
- Who is the UF and Congress' candidate for the Vice-President's post?
- The second Indian to be honoured with the Magsaysay Award this year is...
- What important judgement did the Kerala High Court pass on July 28th, terming an action as 'unconstitutional and illegal'?
- Simple. Who is the new Chief Minister of Bihar?
- What media service did the Government ban on July 16th?
- What global 'crash' occurred for the first time on July 17th?
- Who is the new British Open golf champion?
- After whom is the new medal, instituted by the U.N. Security Council to honour U.N. peace-keepers, named?
- Which two eminent personalities have been awarded the country's highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna, this year?
- Polly, a cloned sheep, is different from the first clone, Dolly. How?
- Capt. Bazlul Huda and Maj. Noor have been accused of the assassination of which global leader?
- Which two trains were involved in a gruesome collision near Faridabad recently?
- What dubious distinction has Telugu film actress Jayapradha achieved?
- Who is acting as the Tamil Nadu Government's emissary to the smuggler and dacoit Veerappan?
- The Chennai Metrowater has hiked the water charges for unmetered supply to residential domestic consumers from Rs. 30 to...
- With which prestigious medical school has the Sri Ramachandra Medical College tied up for collaborative research?
- What finally reached Chennai a little after 3 p.m. on July 16th?
- What public institution has been made a research centre by the University of Madras?
- Which is the first route to be introduced by the recently set up Metropolitan Transport Corporation?

(Answers on Page 8)



August/September : At Dakshina-Chitra — Treasure Hunt: 23rd August 4-5.30 p.m. for children ages between 6-12). Shadow Puppeteer Selvaraj performs Saturday and Sundays on request, 10.00 a.m.-5.30 p.m. Craftsmen at work: Glass blowers, potters, woodturned lacquerware craftsmen.

Craftshop specials : Teak and rosewood furniture from Benny Kuriakose of Kerala, from August 21st until September 1st. Fresh ideas for gift packaging for Deepavali and festivals, from August 15th '97. Pottery designed by Vikram Parchure and crafted by our team under master craftsman Ramu Vellar. In September, DakshinaChitra designed soft stone tablework.

A special 3-day course for volunteer guides at Dakshina-Chitra in early September. The course will be an orientation to the Culture of South India and the homes and crafts at DakshinaChitra. Volunteers would be expected to devote at least two afternoons a month helping to take visitors around the centre.

From August 4: YA TV programmes will be telecast in

India on the Metro Channel starting 4 August 1997. Youth Asia TV was initiated by Worldwide International Foundation, an NGO that has consultative status with the United Nations. It also co-produces programmes with other broadcasters and has production units in several Asian countries. YA TV, headquartered in Sri Lanka, targets the young viewer with programmes that are educative, entertaining and informative. The programmes are relevant to youth in Asia, produced in Asia by the young people themselves, celebrating the diverse cultures of the Continent. Various issues on culture, environment, societal and family structures and values, economic, nature, women and children and overall development are dealt with in an interesting manner to hold the attention of the young people, who form 60% of the total population. (On Monday and Wednesdays, 7.30 p.m.)

August 20, 22 and 25 : A festival of Indian art for the 50th anniversary of Indian Independence. (At the Russian Cultural Centre.)

August 28 — September 9 : An exhibition of paintings. (At the Lalit Kala Akademi.)

August 29 to September 1 : A dance-drama based on the epic Mahabharata. (At Kalakshetra.)

August 30 : A concert of Western classical music by the Madras Philharmonic & Choral Society. (At the Museum Theatre, 6.30 p.m.)



One of the most successful translators in recent times has been A K Ramanujam. A *Flowering Tree* (Viking - Rs. 395) is a posthumous collection of folk tales from his native state of Karnataka. He started collecting these stories from the 50s, and the translations and interpretations of these became his life-long occupation till his death in 1993.

Michael Ridpath took to writing when he lost his wife, and writing has become his passion since then. A bond trader by profession, he shot to fame with his first novel *Free to Trade*, a bestseller. His second novel, *Trading Reality* (Mandarin - UK\$2.95) is about Mark Fairfax and his saga while he attempts to save his brother's virtual reality company from bankruptcy.

Salman Rushdie is back with an anthology of Indian writing, and is again embroiled in controversy. There have been a lot of protests over his dismissal of writing in the vernacular and their translations currently available. Thus, *The Vintage*

Book of Indian Writing (Vintage - UK \$5.60) is mostly a collection of Indian writing in English in the last 50 years. It features authors like R K Narayan and Nirad Chaudhuri as well as the most recent, Shahi Taroor and Arundhati Roy.

Scott Turow's *The Laws of Our Fathers* (Penguin - UK\$3.99) is about a man who arranges his own kidnapping, changes his identity and flees the Viet Nam draft. Turow has been dubbed the pioneer of modern legal crime thrillers, in whose footsteps people like John Grisham and Richard North Patterson have followed. T... is the bestselling author of *Presumed Innocent*.

When Babur marched to wards Hindustan and entered Punjab, he did not think of establishing a dynasty. But this dynasty turned out to be the greatest one to rule India. In *The Last Spring* (Viking - Rs. 750), Abraham Eraly traces the lives and times of some of the greatest kings who sat on the throne of Delhi — Jehangir, Akbar, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. Eraly has enthusiastically reclaimed the right to set down history as a chronicle of people of flesh and blood.

Gautam Padmanabhan

Ten events of significance

(Continued from Page 1)

of a greater consciousness of the need for greater states' rights and a more federal consciousness. One day, the country will certainly have to take another look at the Constitution.

4 A city with a population of about 700,000 in 1941, more than doubled its population by 1951 and has kept growing ever since, without infrastructure keeping pace. Chennai just does not have the infrastructure for the present population of 4 million and their possessions. There has been similar growth in every other urban centre in Tamil Nadu, affecting the quality of life in every town and city in the State. The urban migration, flocking to industrial employment, is leaving rural areas, particularly agricultural areas, stretched for manpower, while consumerism grows apace fuelled by industrial and administration wages.

5 The tremendous improvement in healthcare facilities that has led to a bigger, healthier population that is doing better in such activities as sport. The first State to introduce the noon meal scheme, this has also contributed to sturdier children and, eventually, healthier families. Fortunately, a positive re-

sponse to family planning measures (one of the best responses in the country) has kept population growth under control and made its own contribution to healthier families.

6 The major role women have begun to play in the workplace, even in smaller towns and rural areas. We still may be a State that places some restrictions on women, but few States have a society where women can move about more freely or play a more active role in society, even in rural areas.

7 The phenomenal growth in educational facilities, no matter that a mediocre standard prevails. The focus on technical and professional education may have resulted in the downgrading of the humanities and created a society that does not appreciate the values or the basic contributions the humanities make, but it has created perhaps the country's largest technical and professional pool, a pool of talent that is attractive for investors in the State as well as for the developed countries. The latter, in turn, may be a brain drain, but it does bring into the State the means to create more affluent families than in the past. All this has resulted in Tamil Nadu being among the

leading consumer product markets in the country.

8 A textiles industry that thrived in Coimbatore, a fast expanding leather industry in and around Chennai with its roots in the East India Company trade and an automobile components industry that had its genesis in the TVS bus services long ago has begun to boom again. The first big industrial estate in the country had also set an example for the State and beyond. And so, the State has become a favoured destination for investment, what with its industrial ethos, trained manpower and a solid work ethic based on a strong religious and cultural background.

9 The Hindu has long shown the country the way to technical excellence in printing and management excellence in such fields as distribution. With newspapers in English and Tamil following this lead, with several publishers finding a willing audience here, bookshops and the reading habit are still alive and well, despite a television viewership that is being offered the biggest language array in the country.

10 Sticking like a sore thumb in the midst of historical Fort St George, re-

ducing to rubble *Bentinck's Building* and pulling down a 300-year-old flagmast are symbols of the lack of attention paid to heritage everywhere in the State these last fifty years. The indifference to heritage buildings, religious, historical or temporal — resulting in little appreciation of a historic past or a willingness to learn from it — is a sorry contrast to the attention paid to cultural activities like song and dance over the years. But even they are losing out to the crassness of television. In this situation, what price heritage and culture!

Indeed, Chennai that was Madras and Tamil Nadu that was the core of the Madras Province have progressed far in the 50 years since Independence. But I can't help feeling that so much that we did right, so much that promised so much for the future, all got neglected at some time or another over the years, as the individual's greed and the pampering of it supplanted the service necessary for the common good. Somewhere along the way we blew it. To return to the right track on which we made such a promising beginning should be what we should dedicate ourselves to as we enter the 51st year of our Independence.

Revealing drawing as an art form

Even before languages were invented, Man was expressing his feelings and ideas. And his vehicle was the lines he drew on the walls of caves. This urge for self-expression was the beginning of a great art form, Drawing, and, eventually, Painting. Line and, thus, drawing is the basis of art forms like painting, sculpture and architecture.

The College of Arts and Crafts, Chennai, has produced some outstanding artists who excelled in drawing, and line/linearism has been their strong point; in fact, Chennai has long been identified with this trend.

One of the best exponents of drawing to come from the Chennai College has been K.M. Adimoolam, who was attracted

to drawing than academics even when he was in school in his native village near Tiruchi. The murals in the village temples, the artisans working in the temple chariot and its carvings, the metal *kavachas* of the deities and their *vahanas*,

and the terracotta figures of animals and gods in the Ayyanar temples had irresistibly pulled the young man. They eventually, led him to Madras and the School (College) of Arts.

As a student, even while his fellow-students were engaged in painting portraits of a model, he would sketch the same model

from various angles; he also indulged in a lot of life-sketching of nature. Over the years Adimoolam assimilated the positive aspects of the works of many world masters, like Picasso, Duffy and Henry Moore, as well as those of his teachers, like Dhanapal, Santanaraj and Munuswamy, and of his contemporaries, to evolve a style of his own.

He has done over a hundred drawings of Gandhi and several sketches of national leaders and also modern Tamil writers with whom he has been associated for over thirty years. He has an empathetic relationship with his subjects that enables him to bring out the character of the person in his drawings, even if he does not know them or see



Gandhiji as seen by Adimoolam.

them personally. This is evident in his drawings of the Mahatma. The same empathy is evident in his drawings of the Rajput kings who were the vassals of the British rulers.

In his 'Sketchbook Series' he has demonstrated to the young aspirants that they need not go around looking for subjects anywhere; anything around them

could become the subject. Thus, a flowerpot, a clock, a table lamp, a family member or the cows around the temples have been his subjects and each seems to have achieved an individuality of its own.

A simple, friendly and unassuming man, Adimoolam treats young and old with the same respect and courtesy. He is humble enough to acknowledge candidly all those who have influenced and inspired his work as an artist. In turn, he magnanimously renders all help and encouragement to young artists who want to develop in their chosen fields.

Known in recent times more for his abstract paintings as Adimoolam is, the recent exhibition of his drawings at the Values Arts Foundation was a revelation to many people. A book on his drawings done over the past three decades — ... between the lines ... was also recently released with both English (Lakshmi Venkatraman) and Tamil (Sanathanan) texts.

Gandhiji set out on the Dandi March with his chosen volunteers on March 12, 1930. I was not allowed to join and was ordered to go back home and organise the movement there.

I went to various districts and met Muthuranga Mudaliar, Omandur, Somasundara Iyer, Theerthagiri Mudaliar, Supri, Yegneswara Sarma, Sailappa Pillai, Muthuswamy, Chidambaram Bharathi, Col. Sastry, Srinivasa Iyer and Prakasam. Prakasam inaugurated the movement at Tilak Ghat. At all the sea coast areas salt was gathered. When the movement was in full swing and many Congressmen were arrested, Rajaji decided to join the movement. He selected Vedaranyam and planned his march for March 30th from Trichy. Ramadurai of Trichengode Ashram and his colleagues joined him. Rajaji made history.

Gandhiji initiated two national movements, one the Swadeshi movement, the others for the social welfare of the weaker sections, whose wives and children, were harassed and their small earnings looted. Picketing of foreign cloth shop was ordered. In Madras, M/s. Chellaram Gianchand's shop in Rattan Bazaar (now housing Co-optex) was chosen. Daily a small number of Satyagrahis, say four to six, would picket the shop, without obstructing sales or customer's entry or exit. With folded hands they would plead with the customers not to purchase foreign cloth. This soon affected the sales.

The Madras Government, with Sir Mohamed Oosman as Home Minister, invented the

lathi to beat the picketers brutally. This treatment continued, daily. One day, Ramu, Khasa Subbarao (editor *Swarajya*), and Ramachandra Venkatappa (Telugu journalist) came to picket. Ramu was conducting the movement. The latter two were writing about the brutal acts of police. Angered by this, the Dorai ordered them to be beaten. They were kicked senseless and thrown into a lorry. This attracted Gandhiji's attention and he wrote about it in *Young India*. Government immediately sent the Dorai (was his name Carr or Curry?) back home.

Later, in Triplicane, General Stores, run by a South Indian was picketed. Abbu Iyer who ran a meals 'hotel' nearby, fed the picketers. His hotel licence was cancelled. His family suffered bankruptcy.

Similar picketing went on in all parts of the State.

Toddy shop picketing too was organised. In the city, there was a toddy shop at Lloyd's Road (now occupied by N K T School) run in a large open space by one Shanmugasundara Gramani. He was a terror in the city. His shop was picketed. He took out his pistol and threatened to shoot the picketers, of whom I was one. As I stepped forward (our family were a respected one in the locality, being the original Trustees of the Sri Parthasarathy Temple), he saw me and shouted "Ramu, you are picketing my shop". At the same time a constable, Parasuraman, jumped and caught hold of the pistol. He was promoted Head Constable. The situation was saved.

(Concluded)



Dalavi looks back...

(Continued from Page 4)

At home... at last

(Continued from Page 4)

Many of them told me, too, how lucky I was to have been able to come to India from Britain and to be able to go back there again if I wished. Their parents, I was told, could not afford to send them abroad. They were taken aback and amazed when I asked, if they really wanted to go to Britain, why they didn't put a bag on their backs and start walking.

Sometimes, alone in the evenings at Bosotto's, I would stroll out into the streets near the hotel, and to the area I know now as Triplicane. Timidly at first, unescorted, untrodden by all except the inevitable two or three rickshawmen begging me to patronise their hand-drawn vehicles. It was impossible to convince them that the purpose of my walk was to get a little exercise and to see the city I had so often tried to imagine. Madras was everything I had hoped it would be: soft, warm, hospitable, welcoming.

Nothing about Madras troubled me after my first few days here. Bugs, mosquitoes, ceiling fans, ants that both bit and stung, beggars, rickshaw opportunists, heat and humidity, occasional heavy rain (remember it was September), strange fruit on sale everywhere, coconut trees silhouetted against the evening sky, the lovely beach, the clear bright stars, the quiet peacefulness, and above all the friendliness of

everyone of all classes and occupations wherever I went. There was always that flashing, dazzlingly white Tamil smile. In those days Madras even smelled nice. I mean this in the nicest possible way, and have so often told friends: it had a sort of warm, friendly, mother-like odour that reminded me, if I tried to analyse it, of my childhood when my mother cuddled and comforted me in times of troubled childish stress. Oh, I knew or guessed that there was a dark side of it too and, years later, as a columnist, I was to use a great deal of newspaper space lashing out at every conceivable aspect of Madras life I found fault with. Amazingly, my Indian friends always welcomed those tirades, though elsewhere a foreigner like me would certainly have been told to shut up.

But those were experiences that lay in the future. I had just arrived in Madras, I can't explain it any better than that, but I knew then, as I've said ever since, that somehow, after travelling over a great deal of the globe, I had at last come home. With one long break, Madras that is Chennai has been my home. It still is, and will continue to be for whatever time I may still have ahead. It's not far off, but I have every intention of still being around in my adopted home to welcome in the New Millennium.

(Concluded)

Rajaji stuck to his views.

The Anglers' Club — alive and well

When you enter the long, dimly lit workshop called "Allcool" on Driver's Street, Egmore, the last thing you expect to emerge out of a corner is a Swedish fishing rod. But with Trevor Ranson, who is as much an institution as his favourite one, the Angler's Club, you should only expect to be surprised. Holding the Abu rod lovingly, almost reverently, he explains with pride that the rod is one of the finest in the world. "Good fishing rods are hard to come by in India," he says, "we have to ask friends to bring them from abroad".

The Angler's Club, still alive and fishing, was started some time in the 1940s when the "good old boys" used to fish for rohu in the Chetpet lake. "Bob Sutton, Bob Green, Percy Smith" the names of Englishmen from the past roll off Trevor's tongue like honey, as he recites them with the Anglo-Indian's love of lilting sounds. These were the anglers of old, who went to Krishnapatnam, Markanam and Pondicherry, or

wherever the fish were good and fell prey to the huge prawns used as bait, for which "they wouldn't even have paid 30 paise in those days".

To become an angler in Chennai is not easy. There is a long list of people waiting to

● by Kavita Milner

join, but licences are very hard to come by. There are about 140 people who hold licences issued by the Port Trust, which permit them to fish in the harbour, but, as Ranson points out, there are only 25 active anglers. What, indeed, are the remaining doing with these much-coveted licences?

The few who retain a genuine love of angling will tell you that the best time to fish is between October and March. After that, the water turns warm and muddy and the fish stay away from the shore. During the season, there are "lovely fish" in the harbour, including salmon, crevalle, groupers and

snappers. And, of course, shark and barracuda, both capable of nasty attacks. But the shark, says Ranson consolingly, is not a vicious fish ... unless you are bleeding or showing signs of panic! The barracuda, on the other hand, will attack without provocation, as has happened more than once in the harbour.

The chief lament of the anglers of Chennai is the pollution of the water. The Cooum and the Buckingham Canal pour filth into the sea continuously, and nothing is done to prevent this. "Go to the Iron Bridge," say the anglers, bitterly, "and look at the water. It's black! And fishermen catch fish which are choking to death in this water. But nobody seems to be moved by any number of complaints."

"Other countries are doing so much to promote fishing and watersports," points out Ranson, "so why can't we?" He says that Karnataka is doing a fairly good job of promoting angling in the Kaveri basin, and holding tournaments which are attended by people from all over the world. No one has yet beaten Jim Corbett's record catch, which weighed 145 lbs, or even come close to second place, held by one of the Van Ingen brothers of Mysore.

The lesson to be learnt from the Karnataka anglers is one of conservation. At the Kaveri Basin Camp, fish are caught, weighed, put back in the water, revived and set free. "There's nothing like the last slap in the tummy the fellow gives you with his tail," laughs Ranson. Good revenue is being earned, but not



Trevor Ranson and his favourite fishing rod. (Photograph by RAJIND N CHRISTY.)

at the expense of the environment.

Trevor Ranson and his friends agree wholeheartedly with this philosophy of "live and let live". "If you're not going to eat it, throw the poor thing back," is their simple rule. Yet there are those who are unmindful of this and other rules. There is an international ban on the use of stainless steel hooks, since they do not corrode, but a barracuda was caught in the harbour with a large steel hook in its stomach.

Angling, then, is a gentleman's sport, one which calls for respect on the angler's part of the fish and the water in which

it lives. And for a love of the sun and the surf. "Plenty of accidents," laughs Ranson. "People fall 15, 20 feet of rocks, break a few ribs, there's lots of blood. But that's fun, that's what life is. Give me fishing three or four times a week!"

As I bid him goodbye and step out of his Dickensian shop, Ranson shows me his antediluvian motorcycle, corroded beyond repair. "Harbour cancer", says its owner, chuckling to himself.

I can't help thinking that Ranson, for all his knowledge and expertise, is quite mistaken about one thing — the "good old boys" haven't all departed.

Answers to Quiz

1. President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; 2. The Governor of A.P., Krishna Kant; 3. Mahasweta Devi; 4. Organising bandhs; 5. Rabri Devi, wife of Laloo Yadav; 6. The Direct to Home (DTH) television service; 7. All the E-mails sent on that day were returned; 8. Justin Leonard; 9. Dag Hammarskjöld; 10. Gulzari Lal Nanda and Aruna Asaf Ali; 11. It has a human gene capable of producing a protein which can help thalassemia victims; 12. Sheik Mujibur Rehman, the

founding father of Bangladesh, on August 15, 1975; 13. Himsagar Express and Karnataka Express; 14. highest IT arrears, Rs. 1.13 crore, among film stars; 15. R.R. Gopal, the editor of *Nakkeeran*.

* * *

16. Rs. 40; 17. Harvard Medical School; 18. The much awaited Krishna water; 19. The Chennai Museum; 20. Route 18C between Moovarasapuram and Parry's.

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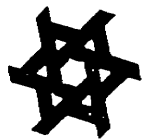
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