

FROM THE EDITOR

THE TRUTH OF THE YOUTH PROBLEM

Man has developed an uncanny knack for losing interest in ideas, maybe because he has too many ideas today. The idea that we should dedicate certain years to certain causes, was applauded at the start. But we have already got into the habit of viewing them as nothing more than a set of phrases. The traditional Chinese perhaps pay more respect to their calendar divided into the Year of the Tiger or the Year of the Rat than what all the rest are doing to the international designation of years.

The current year, the year of the youth, will soon pass, taking in its stride some conferences, seminars and some articles published on the theme of youth. It is doubtful if anything significant would have been accomplished.

In the year of the youth the accent should have been on the grown-up, on those who are scared of the youth, who look upon the youth as the Frankenstein's creature, who are too ignorant or hypocritical to admit that they are the makers of the creature.

The most widely prevailing sickness among the youth is its cynicism. It has a variety of manifestations, from drug-addiction to anarchy. Can the grown-up eradicate it by storing more and more nuclear bombs, making it more and more clear . that the creation can be maimed, civilisation can vanish at the will of a few power-grabbers?

The next in the diagnosis of what ails the youth is vulgarity. Great indeed is our optimism if we expect a civilised generation to emerge from the kind of publications, films and political norms we are re churning out day in and day out.

It is high time we realised that there is nothing as youth problem. The problem is with the grown-up. From vulgarity to pollution, all the curses are conceived, nurtured and perpetrated by elders. Youth, the most vulnerable area of humanity, merely manifests more distinctly the poison which pervades the whole humanity, bred by elders.

Even then, this is not the whole picture. There are elements among the youth ready to fight the gloom created by elders. They are seekers for values radically new. Once in a while their search may lead them along wrong ways, but nobody who does not realise the essential spirit at work in them can dare to captain them towards the right path.

A Perspective for the Youth, by Asther Patel, appearing in this issue focuses on this aspect of the- situation.

ON THE TIDES OF TIME

A DIFFERENT STORY

India's first colour movie had just been released. That was some time in the late forties.

It was a simple story of chivalry, a princess falling in love with a commoner, of their battle against hurdles on the way to their union and their ultimate triumph.

The heroine was a talented, if shy artiste. She was Monica Desai.

A teen-ager, I liked the story and the heroine so much that I saw both the evening and the night shows, consecutively. Years passed and I never saw Monica Desai again.

In 1972, in connection with the making of two documentaries, I went to Bombay. Phani Majum-dar, the ace-director of yesterday (Kapalkundala, Doctor, Mohabbat, Devdasi, Farar, Goonj,

Tamasha, Andolan, Aarti, Oonche Log, Aakash Deep, etc.), received me at the airport. We drove to the residence of the famed producer, Tarachand Barjatya.

As we waited for Mr. Barjatya to join us, Phani-da kept pointing out to me houses at distance and named their occupants in course of which he mentioned Leela Desai,

Suddenly I remembered my old favourite. "Phani-da, did you know one Monica Desai? What happened to her?" I asked.

"I married her," quietly replied Phani-da.

My curiosity made him unfold the story. Those were days when Phani-da was a promising film-maker and Monica was an upcoming artiste. Once Phani-da fell ill. Monica was rushing to see him when a truck smashed her car. She remained in a coma for long. She had been grievously injured.

Phani-da was told the grave truth: Monica can survive her injury, but not her shock at realising that her lustrous career had ended. Only hope lay in someone's love filling up the vacuum that was to be created in her mind by this shocking revelation.

Phani-da took up the challenge. He remained by her side. Monica recovered and reconciled to the reality under Phani-da's loving care. They were married.

This was surely a different story to unfold in the make-believe world of film stories. And publishing Phani-da's adventure in Borneo, the book-feature in this issue, is surely an occasion to remember this episode!