

FROM THE EDITOR

THE MORAL DWARFS

The New Year has been christened the Year of Peace

There are times when the leaders of mankind are required to act in an extraordinary manner. History, however, bears little evidence of their acting that way. Their failure to stand up to the demands of such crucial moments keeps the earth down to a tardy process of progress, not in the material or technological sense, but in terms of man's quest for harmony and higher values of existence.

We are living through such a moment when man is called upon to forestall a catastrophe. This catastrophe is not something that has been inflicted on him by some external agency, nor is he thrown into it accidentally. It is of his own making; he has built up the situation, step by step, fully aware of its sinister import. Hence he is not required to fight some dragon descending from extra-terrestrial regions; he is required to cultivate some courage matching his own propensity for doing mischief.

THE LITTLE BOY AND ITS GIANT OFFSPRING

"The Little Boy," as the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima was code-named, has been surpassed by tens of thousands of times by its giant offspring. It is widely known today how a nuclear war can not only destroy cities and countries bearing its direct impact, but also wreak havoc in the rest of the world through indirect impact, poisoning food, polluting water and air, ruining ecological balance and breeding hitherto unknown ailments. What is not widely realised is, the destructive process is already on; the unexploded bomb has already maimed a vital aspect of humanity—its faith in itself, its faith in its future. The gradual proliferation of the nuclear weapons has bred a cynicism of terrible nature, has bred questions that seem too ominous to be silenced with any logical answer: Of what value are civilisation and culture, creativity and mysticism, literature and philosophy, when a handful of politicians can reduce everything to nought? At this very moment when a poet or a painter is capturing a hidden spark of life, an ornithologist is observing the wonder of a bird, a physician is healing a sufferer, a devotee is chanting a new invocation, a musical prodigy is discovering a new Raga, some of the most brilliant minds, scientists, sold to some irresponsible powers that be, are busy devising yet more gruesome means of death and destruction, and are rapidly succeeding!

The cynicism that pervaded the Western world, specially the minds of the youth of that hemisphere, naturally found expressions in the conduct of all the people and in their literature too. Its mode was subtle. Disillusionment in the leader, once a symbol of virtues, loss of faith in the sanctity of life, became more and more loud. Writers of the younger generation in India and other countries who value the new writing in the West soon imbibed the tone, the lustre of the "realm of gold" is dimmed by the clouds of pessimism. This is a global phenomenon.

SINISTER PRETENTIONS

Arms build-up was the internal matter of a country through the ages. How much and what kind of arms a country should possess was considered its private business, a right which others could not question. The situation has totally changed while such old notions of right and privilege persist. No country can really claim experiments in nuclear bombs as its private right, because the physical and psychological aftermath of the experiments can never remain confined to its soil or its waters or its sky. The big powers racing with one another in manufacturing bombs pretend as if they do not

know this. They pretend to be unawares of the fact that further delay in crying a halt to the race is not their privilege, it is their crime against mankind. They forget that they are required to be a degree better than ordinary quarrelling people, because they are leading their countries at a very special time.

The Geneva Summit of the leaders of the super powers was a failure despite all consolatory phrases their spokesmen dictated to the press. The leaders have continued to measure things in the scale of their pretty ideologies, suspicions and ego, whereas the situation demanded that they be global in their attitude, think of the future that ought to survive them, be visionaries to some extent.

FRATERNITY OF ASSASSINS

They have failed mankind so far. They even instigate a few other countries to make nuclear weapons perhaps so that their own guilt can be distributed. They are yet to realise, though they know it as a fact, that they cannot safeguard, but can only imperil, the lives of their own peoples by producing more and more nuclear weapons; they are yet to understand that the future will look upon them not as those who paved the way for a brighter tomorrow, but as those who did their worst to choke the sunrise with their nuclear clouds—the unfortunate projection of their minds.

The great powers say that they are arming themselves against each other. In the context of nuclear reality, it is a lie. They are arming themselves against an unarmed humanity. They are no longer foes of each other, but together constitute a fraternity of assassins.

There is no extraordinary reason for the leaders behaving in this ordinary way. They are just suspicious of each other. There is no likelihood of mutual trust cropping up in their hearts in the near future. The ideologies of democracy and socialism have not changed their old ideas of world-domination. However, if they care at least for their own people, they can still find a way out of the impasse. All they have to do is accept the intervention of a country like India which has no pretensions to nuclear superiority and which has prudence enough to work for nuclear-weapon-free tomorrow. The price the super-powers have to pay is shedding their superiority complex, hardly a high price when measured against the benefit that will come of it. In today's world even the vanquished does not give two hoots to the victor's superior brute power. Only virtue the present and the future will acknowledge is the good sense of the big powers to let man evolve in his consciousness in a world free from useless contests in vanity.

At the time of going to press two encouraging news attract our attention. One is, the U.S. Department of State has hailed the Indo-Pak accord to refrain from attacking each other's nuclear facilities. Training a country in the craft of bomb-making and then hailing its accord with its neighbour may be old diplomacy, yet we should thank the U.S. for its good words. We shall thank the country more if it jumps at the offer made by the Soviet Union—one of the commendable news of the decade. "We are ready to give up nuclear testing forever if the U.S. did give up the same," Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev has assured the American Cardiologist Bernard Lown, winner of the Nobel Prize.

Why not make this a point to begin?

It is a challenge for humanity. The only hope of its survival is in its collective" assertion of its right to exist. A few leaders with diseased visions and a community of their scientist-henchmen must not be allowed to maim the future of man. Humanity must come out with all that is noble at its command and assert its will-power to stop the luxurious farce of prolonged negotiations? A humanity wallowing in decadent values cannot muster such will-power. Hence it must be a devotee of beauty and truth in a creative sense. Humanity's survival today depends on its improving its quality of culture. It must prove itself greater and nobler than the moral dwarfs who presume to lead it.

It is proposed that we dedicate the year 1986 to peace. Peace, as we all know, is a state of mind and that there can be no peace outside unless it is inside us. THE HERITAGE wishes all its readers the inner peace which alone can ensure peace in the world.