

FROM THE EDITOR

TWO KINDS OF TERRORISM

There was a time when a journal could wish a happy New Year to its readers without reservation. It is no longer possible to do so without some trepidation of heart. Two kinds of terrorism threaten us over several other problems and dangers. One is the terrorism perpetrated by fanatics; the other is the terrorism by super powers wielding nuclear destructives and their fellow-travellers.

In the January issue of THE HERITAGE, last year, we had discussed the horrendous path the super-powers were following in their nuclear policy. We had said that although the great powers claim that they were arming themselves against each other, in the context of the nuclear reality it was a lie. They were arming themselves against an unarmed humanity. Countries which are busy building nuclear bombs and missiles are no longer foes of one another, but, together, constitute a fraternity of assassins.

Despite the world-wide protests against the nuclear threats, the failure of the summit at Reykjavik during the passing year only too rudely informs us that the situation has not changed.

Whether a nuclear war will occur or not may be a debatable subject; but beyond the scope of any debate is the fact that the Damocles' Sword the super powers have hung on the head of humanity has an alarming effect on its normal existence, promoting cynicism, uncertainty and disillusionment in the very institution of leadership.

As the year came to an end, another disastrous revelation is made about the President of the United States of America. How far he is responsible for the scandalous deals of his confidants, we do not know. But one thing is clear. However reassuring may be the statements of the supreme leader of a powerful country, he stands merely on feet of clay. Just as his political policies can go awry any time, so can his management of his nuclear arsenal.

Let us hope again that the incoming year brings better sense to all, including the promoters of the different brands of terrorism.

A passive hope cannot be of much solace. But there is one ray of inspiration for a hope positive—in the decision of a small number of U.S. scientists who have resolved not to collaborate in any activity in the use of nuclear energy for destructive purposes. We congratulate them and request them to persuade their compatriots to follow their ideal. Those scientists who are consciously active in the destructive pursuits should be exposed to the public. They are to blame more than the politicians; for many of the politicians are just ambitious and short-sighted people always standing on shifting grounds. The scientists are supposed to be intelligent and they follow a steady discipline, standing on a steady ground. They should not allow a gulf to exist between their intelligence and their wisdom.

ON THE TIDES OF TIME

WHERE LIES DECADENCE?

Some intellectuals of West Bengal have taken the Left Front Government of the State to task for its hobnobbing with some film stars. The film stars, they say, represent decadent values and political parties committed to progressive ideas must not pamper them.

Any political party will be eager to make use of any popular entertainer. No considerable danger lies in this kind of eagerness, it lies deeper. The intellectuals need feel concerned not with the Chief Minister receiving a certain film star in his Secretariat cabin, but with what was happening

outside his cabin. The entire Secretariat staff had left their work and were crowding in the balconies and corridors to have a Darshan of the star, like kids rushing for lollipops. The decadence is not in the Chief Minister who is a man of maturity, but in these officials—who are a sample of our educated masses.

The intellectuals ought to reflect on the manifold attack by decadent, reactionary and outright deceptive values on the minds of the masses. Has any group of sociologists studied the impact of the aggressive, western-style advertisement given out by our TV on its newly cultivated suburban and rural audience—its contribution in breeding false needs among the already needy and at least some of them shifting the burden of satisfying their newly stimulated needs to their prospective brides' parents? Has anybody, observed the impact of the couples of ad-starlets hugging each other in cosy beds on the minds of rural audience constituted of grandpa, grandma, father, mother and all the kids?

The TV may signify technological progress, but it is not progress proper. It is only a means of satisfaction. It can be used to satisfy false, lower and base needs, it can also be used to satisfy intellectual, aesthetic and higher needs. Will the intellectuals gird up their loins to protect the means from its misuse by decadent minds?

THE HERITAGE IN 1987

Many readers have suggested, directly or indirectly, that THE HERITAGE should stick to its present format. They are satisfied with its content-pattern and they will not like any major departure from it.

We have no reason to make any departure either. We, however, propose to strive for making the magazine more purposeful and bringing in greater variety.

We propose to present stories or novelettes by India's foremost writers, with reminiscences on them written by their sons or daughters or the nearest ones. This had been launched with Tagore's Last Word and reminiscences by his son, Rathindranath, published in our July '86 issue. This issue carries a major story, as our book feature, by Munshi Premchand, rendered into English by the veteran translator, Shri Jai Ratan. Reminiscences of Premchand are written by his son, Shri Amrit Rai, the renowned litterateur. We are most thankful to Shri Amrit Rai and Shri Jai Ratan for complying with our request and completing their works on time for this issue.

With this issue we launch a new feature: THE WAY OF NATURE — month by month. Which are the flowers through which Nature smiles at us in January? Which are the creatures to attract our attention during the month? To know them is to know our natural environment better. Richard Pearson has promised to guide us in this through the months to come.

In our section on NATURE in general too, we will be more purposeful. With pleasure we announce that we have enrolled the co-operation of one of the country's foremost naturalists and the most outstanding columnist on the subject, Shri M. Krishnan. His first feature appears in this issue.

We have focused on various forms of art over the last two years. We will continue to do so. But we will like to make a systematic review of any one branch of the art over some issues. We begin with the Theatre tradition of India, a series by Jiwan Pani. The introductory article appears in this issue. Subsequent issues will carry one complete article each on one of the theatre forms, with pictures.

The last issue (December 1986) had some speciality. Several thinkers had let us know their observations on aspects of religion as it prevails today. We propose to lay emphasis on certain other important issues of our time during this year, at intervals.

THE HERITAGE is grateful to its readers for the steady support they have extended to it. We hope, they will introduce the publication to more and more of their friends.