

CHAPTER IX

CHAMPION BLUFFS

The king of all hired American perverters of the truth imported to India at our expense to defame us was Peter Muir, author of "This is India". His wife Frances 'admirably' performed the role of the queen of such perverts.

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No Muslim ever accused the Mahatma of a charge of converting Muslims to Hinduism but this self-advertised 'unbiased' American accuses the Mahatma of 'converting lakhs of Muslims to Hinduism'.

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Post Wheeler, a former American diplomatic official, in his subsidised book, "India Against the Storm" accuses the Emperor Shah Jehan as follows:—"Twenty thousand Indians (who built the Taj) laboured, decimated by an appalling mortality, for seventeen long years. They got no wages, only food and drink, and were flogged to their work, as Hitler's guards of concentration camps flogged the British prisoners of war to their trench-digging."

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Mother India

"Self-government for India will certainly be no democracy and certainly no pleasure for Indians. It will lead to many disasters, therefore, let them have it."—A HIRED AMERICAN JOURNALIST.

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Of the several dozens of anti-Indian publications brought out by the British Information Services and its appendix, the Indian Agency General in Washington, the two published by two Americans, Post Wheeler, a former American diplomat, and Peter Muir, a mercenary American, are the most poisonous.

"India Against The Storm" is the title of Wheeler's book, which is advertised as "well-balanced, always readable, always informative, extremely valuable as a contribution to American understanding of a most important world problem". This book is full of wrong, deliberately mischievous and mean lies in no way inferior to those of the notorious Miss Mayo. Thirty thousand copies of this book were distributed free by the British propaganda authorities in the United States. Wheeler claims to be a friend of India and yet in the very first chapter he starts with the mischievous and mean statement against a great and noble Emperor, Shah Jehan, the builder of the Taj. Which Indian

does not know that to frame the flawless loveliness of the Taj, with its pearly dome tossing back the moonlight over the dust of Shah Jehan's "Darling of the sweetly parted hair," twenty thousand Indians laboured, decimated by an appalling mortality, for seventeen years? They got no wages, only food and drink, and were flogged to their work as Hitler's guards of the concentration camps flogged the British prisoners of war to their trench-digging! Are the Indians any better off now? Of course they are!

PETER THE GREAT

Peter Muir who was engaged by the British during the last war was also invited to India during 1942. He dined and wined with the Viceroy and the Governors, various Maharajas and British authorities in India for fifteen months. His wife was also employed for sending mischievous broadcasts to the United States from the All-India Radio Stations. His book entitled "This Is India" surpasses Miss Mayo's book in several instances. The jacket of his book says, "After fifteen months, during which he travelled fifteen thousand miles—on ponies, in sedan chairs, rickshaws, automobiles, trains, bombers—and listened to every Indian who would talk to him, Peter Muir set down his

direct impressions, realising, as only people who spend a considerable time in India can realise, that no one becomes an 'authority' on that subcontinent.

"Among other things, he learned why his bearer wouldn't wear a green coat ; why Gandhi doesn't really want the British to leave ; why the Viceroy rarely smiles ; why Rajagopalachari pretends to be poor ; why all Sikhs have beards ; why the monsoon is more important to the vast majority of Indians than independence ; why Hindu widows can't wear jewelry ; why a visitor becomes tolerant of the topsyturvy disorder and formlessness ; and why India is a country divided against itself."

"LAKHS OF MUSLIMS CONVERTED"

Here is a typically base and cowardly falsehood propagated in his "unbiased book on India of today written by an unprejudiced American", as is claimed by the publishers (The British Information Services in Washington) on the jacket of the book. On page 168 Peter Muir writes :

"By various tricks and misrepresentations Gandhi has converted lakhs of ignorant Muslims to Hinduism. Among other things he had admonished the students of Aligarh University (Muslim) not to study, as a political protest,

while the students of Benares (Hindu) were not distracted from the pursuit of learning. This technique could not fool all of the Muslims all of the time."

SOURCE OF FALSEHOODS

That this poisonous lie has undoubtedly been supplied to this Un-American author by the Indian Information Bureau in Delhi, can easily be proved from the very language and the term 'lakhs' (which is seldom used by American writers, they think in millions or hundreds of thousands). No Muslim has ever accused Gandhiji of such foolish things. Who then supplied this information to Peter Muir and his wife, who were both paid employees and official guests of the Information Bureau ?

"ARREST OF GANDHI AND CO."

Writing of the repression in India he says :
"Until the war is won, to quote Hindenburg, order must reign. Any form of activity which impedes the United Nations' war effort must be ruthlessly stamped out. Luckily, the British have been able to keep the situation in hand without our help. The least we can do is to give our moral backing to such necessary measures as the arrest of Gandhi and Co."

HOPES OF CIVIL WAR

Peter Muir is confident of a civil war in India. On page 166 he writes :

“Conversation at dinner only strengthened my beliefs and fears. The other guests were of the Islamic faith, and uppermost in their minds seemed to be the threat of Hindu rule in India. One and all agreed that they would fight rather than submit to it, and a tall, fierce-looking fellow, with large moustaches and a fez, stated categorically that ninety million Muslims could and would tackle three times that number of Hindus any day. On the other hand, a Hindu of Mysore, who holds a high position in the State Government, told me that the Hindus would win, ‘because modern warfare depends more on brains than on courage’—an illuminating admission.

“The fact is, however, that both sides discuss the possibility of a civil war openly. I have heard it debated by Indians from the North-West Frontier to Mysore, from Bombay to Calcutta. The thinking people of India realize this great danger, and I believe that many of them, while shouting for liberty, secretly hope that the British Raj will remain.”

THE VISION OF MIRZA

“Major Mirza is proud to be the first Indian

to hold the post of Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar. He said that his ancestors had lost in fair battle to the British, had sworn allegiance to them, and as far as he was concerned, that still held. But there was no question of allegiance to Hindu rule. If that came to pass, and he was alive to see it, he would pack up what belongings he had left and take his family back to Persia, the land of his origin."

Only Major Mirza can state whether he has been faithfully quoted and if he is so much against free India, he can gladly return to the land of his origin—Iran, where he will have a better taste of British overlordship during the war. Such an officer should have no place in the Indian Civil Service if he thinks India a foreign country.

"UNKNOWN GANDHI"

On page 177 his wife Frances, another great American authority on India, makes a real discovery that Gandhi is unknown in the villages of South India. He quotes her broadcast to America as follows:

"I have just driven twelve hundred miles through the villages of the South. *Most villagers with whom I talked had never even heard of Gandhi*". Mrs. Peter Muir does not mention who arranged their tour of South India and

who were the officials who accompanied them and through whom they spoke to the villagers who had never heard of Gandhi.

How stupid would it be on my part to say that during my travels in the rural areas of the United States I found that the majority of people do not know who George Washington was!

SWORN ENEMY OF INDIA

That this Peter Muir, the "Unprejudiced American", so fond of using that title for himself is a sworn enemy of India's freedom, is clear from his mockery of the American sympathy for India's freedom. On page 176 he writes:—

"When the Hindu press featured the report that Americans (supposedly intelligent, patriotic, and of broad knowledge) were meeting and agitating for a free India now, 'as a means of strengthening our fight against the Axis,' I began to wonder about fifth-column activity in the United States".

HIS WIFE'S BROADCAST

On page 177 he proudly mentions his wife's anti-Indian broadcasts. He writes :

"Frances broadcast from Delhi, December 2, 1942, on these interventionist meddlers as follows :

'Quotations from the American press seem to indicate that the indiscriminate shouting about the Indian problem is becoming increasingly organized. We have just learned of a full-page advertisement which appeared recently in a prominent New York paper, advocating an immediate transfer of power to a so-called provisional government, condemning our allies for their present and past policies in India, and blaming the American Government for inertia in the existing impasse. My copy of the advertisement is anonymous, but it is not difficult to guess what body of opinion inspired this latest "solution".

'What qualifies Pearl Buck, simply because she is something of an authority on China, to advise the American people about the problem of returning India to the Indians—which Indians? In the midst of a war? What qualifies Louis Fischer, who came to India with a closed mind and spent a large part of his brief visit sitting at the feet of Gandhi, to speak as a political authority on the true issues involved in India?

'China and America are deeply exercised about the status of India, we are told. Are the governments of China and the United States prepared to guarantee that, if the British transfer power to some hypothetical Indian Govern-

ment, that Government will be able to keep the peace in India so that the Allies can prosecute the war against Japan? The mutual hatred between Hindus and Muslims is no myth. I see evidence of it every day. The presence of the British in India at this time is the only guarantee against civil war.' ”

GANDHI WOULD HAVE BEEN SHOT

“The unprejudiced American,” Peter Muir, seems to have a special prejudice against Gandhiji. He writes :

“It is certain that Gandhi had plenty of time to meditate and meditate before he was arrested, and unquestionably he thought matters over very thoroughly before going ahead with his civil disobedience plans. He could never have hoped that they would succeed, and he knew that he would be detained, but he went ahead. Is it not possible that he felt the need of a little martyrdom to jack up his waning power? The British had left him alone for such a long time that his stock was declining. But the authorities were clever enough to take much of the sting of martyrdom out of the arrest by placing him in the Aga Khan's comfortable racing palace at Poona. His personal doctor is in attendance. In an Axis-controlled country he would have been shot long ago. So

would those Indians who walk out of moving-picture houses when 'God Save the King' is played."

And Peter Muir does not mention the fate of those Americans who do not believe in Kings and act like the Indians while "God Save the King" is played.

TRAGEDY PREDICTED

Let me conclude this chapter with a few mad outbursts made in typically Mayoish style by Rushton Coulborn in the *South West Review* for Autumn 1942 in an article (which finds first place on the cover) entitled "The British in India." This writer seems to be mad against us for thinking in terms of independence and as a punishment for our sin of demanding freedom, he is prepared to let us taste the fruit of freedom, since he is sure that it will end in a tragedy for India. He writes :

"Self-government for India will certainly be no democracy and certainly no pleasure for Indians. It will be fraught with appalling dangers and will lead without doubt to many disasters. Therefore let the Indians have it. Do not suppose that India's early future under self-government will be anything like so peaceful or so prosperous as it would be under a continuing British raj. There appear to be many

Indians who think that it will be peaceful and prosperous. It is high time those ignorant men are given the opportunity, denied to them at present, of learning the truth and so reaching an appreciation of political realities.

“It is easy enough to foresee tragedy in the early generations of a self-governing India. There can be small doubt that there will be tragedy. Through it Indians will learn———expensively and bitterly no doubt.”

MAJORITY AGAINST CONGRESS

This ‘cousin’ of Miss Mayo is so ignorant of the position of the Indian National Congress that he thinks the interests of the majority of the people in India are opposed to those of the Congress. He writes :

“To give authority to the Congress Party is inevitably to put the party in a position to further its interests against those of the majority of the Indians”.

What a discovery ! The Congress, the party that swept the polls and ruled eight provinces in India, does not represent the majority of India !

Such deliberate nonsense is preached to the people of America through subsidised books, journals, pamphlets, lectures and cocktail parties.

to defame India, Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress. One wonders why? And one does feel that it is a pity that we should be forced to pay for our own defamation.

The annual budget for Bajpai's Misinformation Office was admitted on the floor of the Legislative Assembly to be eleven lakhs of rupees. But the large amounts lavishly spent on joy-rides for Indian stooges to America, the huge expenditure on printing millions of sheets flown weekly from India and the cost of the foreign publicity office in Delhi put together would come to a formidable sum. The public men and the press of India have recorded loud protests against this rape of the poor finances of India. On such a non-partisan question all the legislators united and censured the Government on the floor of the Central Legislative Assembly, but they have so far not been able to compel the Government to close the Misinformation Office at Washington. Let Bajpai, Hennessey, Raman and other members of the caravan of bluffs be employed more usefully on some job in Germany where the Nazis are to be re-educated after their defeat!

However, the very fact that the British Imperialist Government found it necessary to carry on a desperate campaign of libel against

India and her demand for independence, employing every means they could stoop to, shows more convincingly than any argument we could raise that India is very dear to Britain and her avaricious rulers will do their utmost, be it honourable or not, to hold on to this brightest jewel in the British crown.

Gandhi, World Citizen

By MURIEL LESTER

Miss Muriel Lester knows Gandhiji intimately. She was his hostess in London when he went for the Round Table Conference. She has been his guest several times when she has visited India. And she knows world-opinion and the high place it gives Gandhiji. She is one of the leading members of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation.

Miss Lester has collected her material with great care and used it with discrimination. All through the book the reader will find very interesting and revealing stories about Gandhiji. In the first part of the book she gives an illuminating study of Gandhiji which is both original and fresh. While in the second part she gives a biographical sketch up to the present.

It is an inspiring book written by a world-famous writer and will rank with Romain Rolland's book on Gandhiji. It is illustrated with rare pictures not yet imported into India.

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