

what happened in Calcutta, Assam, and Uttar Pradesh in answer to cruel and vile deeds in East Bengal.

The matter does not rest entirely with the Government. Whatever the preventive and punitive measures the Government might adopt, if the majority community feel frustrated, the Muslims would have to pay the price for their frustration, and the administration, whether at the top or lower levels, would not be able to save them. The top level may remain unaffected

but the lower levels of administration from which alone minority community can expect protection cannot long remain unaffected by frustration in the majority community. It is therefore essential both from the wider and narrower angle that the Hindus are reasonably satisfied with Governmental policies and are not rubbed the wrong way by any wrong or tactless word or any unnecessarily harsh deed or imposition of restrictions beyond the minimum requirements of the situation.

Indian Music Today

NARAYANA MENON & RAVI SHANKAR

The following is the text of a discussion broadcast from All India Radio, Delhi, a few weeks ago. It was the first of a series of discussions called "The Artist and the Critic". The broadcast included some musical illustrations and the script has been edited very slightly so as to read better.

Narayana Menon: The aim of this series is to bring together artists using different mediums—painters, sculptors, musicians, actors, dancers—to bring together artists and their critics to discuss problems confronting them. To discover—and now I am quoting from the brief I have been given—to discover ways and means of achieving the ideal towards which all artistic activities could be directed and for the regeneration of art and culture in the country. That I think is a tall order; particularly in India today, when the musician has to have half an eye on earning a livelihood and the other half on satisfying the whims and fancies of his audience; not to mention the fact that he has to strive hard to keep his self-respect. To work for the regeneration of art and culture on top of all that is—well...

Ravi Shankar: Yes, that is asking for a great deal—a very great deal indeed. But some of us struggle hard and we do try. But before we go into all that I want to say something,

Rather, ask something. You say this is really an exchange of ideas rather than a formal interview. So I suppose I can ask a question or two.

Narayana Menon: Yes, of course.

Ravi Shankar: I am a little nervous at doing this sort of thing. I am a musician, not a talker. I am not shy of the microphone if I have a sitar in my hands; but this is a new role for me. Talking, specially talking in English, is not easy for me, particularly if I have to talk about myself.

Narayana Menon: Don't worry about that.

Ravi Shankar: I am not very happy about this artist-critic business. How can anyone talk about or criticise an art—music for instance—if he is not a musician himself? I have come across so many self-established text book critics that—

Narayana Menon: That you are a little suspicious of some critics.

Ravi Shankar: Well, yes.

Narayana Menon: I agree. We are, as a whole, an uncritical people and our standards of criticism are, to be perfectly frank, appallingly low. There are various reasons for this. Our finest artists haven't bothered much with criticism; and our so-called critics haven't bothered much with the arts.

Ravi Shankar: I agree.

Narayana Menon: I know I am exaggerating. But that is more or less the truth.

Ravi Shankar: What is it that the critics do? Music-making is done mainly by the musicians. It is they who have to do the work of—what did you say—re-generation.

Narayana Menon: Yes. But let us face facts. We are in a pretty bad mess now.

Ravi Shankar: In what way? Are you one of those people who always harp on the glory that was India?

Narayana Menon: No, by no means.

Ravi Shankar: One gets a little tired of the sort of person for whom everything and everybody of the past are the only things that matter. You should have heard so and so, or so and so. While I do not want to detract from the greatness of our old masters, I think it is, in a way, an attempt to discredit the present generation.

Narayana Menon: I agree. I have no romantic notions of the past. But what I meant by saying that we are in a mess is something quite different. The last hundred years or so have been a period of, shall I say, unloveliness and pridelessness. We had lost our bearings, as it were. We must now rediscover our bearings. The real thread of our development—of the development of our musical tradition—had been lost. We must find that.

Ravi Shankar: Yes, I agree. We must find our true authority. I don't mean we should go back to the past. I mean