PREFACE

The dawn of the twentieth century witnessed the emergence of new values in the field of social, political, economic and literary life as a result of a new scientific outlook. Besides, the present century is the age of common man who, as the kingpin of the democratic set-up, has come into his own. Consequently, the modern writers instead of dealing with the times of king Arthur and the Middle Ages, have concentrated upon the problems of their own times. Quite often they have employed their creative writing for social and political purposes, particularly for reforming the sores and maladies of contemporary social and political life and Shaw is the most distinguished among such creative writers.

Shaw, who occupies of distinctive place in the history of British drama, focuses attention on the socio-political problems of his time and makes drama an instrument of social and political change. He uses the theatre as a means of bringing about reforms in the social and political life of his times. The Shavian play dramatizes the conflict of ideas and social attitudes and upholds the principles of equality, justice, work and brotherhood. Shaw maintains a realistic attitude in his plays. Consequently, as a playwright he does not make excursions into the realism of fancy and romance, but deals with the actual facts and conditions of the contemporary socio-political life.
Though Shaw's dramas have been studied from various points of view for the last so many years, no scholar has dealt with Shaw as the critic with special references to his prefaces elaborately and coherently. His socio-political ideas need to be examined thoroughly. It is with this end in view that I propose to take up for detailed study of his subject of my doctoral thesis. The detailed analysis and description of ideas in his dramas have not been made by any other writer on the lines that I have taken here. This integrated study of all his dramas and their prefaces reflects evidently that the purpose of his entire ideological output is to establish a sound, clean, rational and refined socialistic society the society of supermen founded on universal brotherhood and clean politics. He deemed it essential not only for the establishment of a commonwealth of World community, world family and world harmony but for the betterment of human race. Indeed all his ends are the means to renovate mankind and that is what I have attempted to show herein. Thus, the present study is primarily a thematic survey of Shaw's prefaces vis-a-vis his social-political ideas rather than a discussion of his dramatic art and style. It is an attempt at relating Shaw the teacher to Shaw, the dramatist.

Chapter I comprises of introduction which reveals the multifarious comments on Shaw, the dramatist and the citations of scholars. Chapter II unravels the complex of formative and informative influences on Shaw. The personal, social, political and literary influences on the dramatist have been minutely analysed in an attempt to reveal the factors and forces that were
primarily responsible for his fascination to add socio-political perspective to his plays. Chapter III undertakes a brief survey of his early phase, the plots and prefaces of his plays in two groups the one which dominantly projects his social views and the other which explicitly represents his political views. Chapter IV forms the core of the present thesis. It aims at an interpretative of his middle phase and the central theme of Shaw's dramas and prefaces. It projects the basic elements of his social philosophy, comprising Shaw's theories of Life Force and Creative Evolution, his critical assessment of social associations and institutions, the evolution of Man into Superman, Eugenics as the means to reach the stage of perfection etc. Chapter V present a most glaring panorama of his Political views on the whole Gamut of his favorite subjects like Capitalism, Communism, Fascism, Democracy, Plutocracy and Bureaucracy ending with Shaw's dream of an Ideal State. Chapter VI concludes the different aspects of Shaw's mind and thought as revealed through his mystic projection and gospels contained in the text of his plays and the authentic comments by Shaw, the critic.

This study claims for him the status not only of the first great critic of social and political ideas of the last and present centuries but also that of a great cosmopolitan of all times. It should appeal not only to those interested in Shaw, the critic of ideas, but also to those who are interested in a general sociological and philosophical study of Shavian dramatics.
I am grateful to my supervisor Prof. Arun Kumar, C.C.S. University, Meerut, who initiated me with the written critical material and the text books of great dramatist George Barnard Shaw. I am thankful to Dr. Pratibha Tyagi, Reader and Head in the Department of English C.C.S. University, Meerut. I am thankful to Dr. Ravinder Kumar, lecturer in the same department.

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Place: Sd/-

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