CHAPTER 1

SHAPING OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Mulik Raj Anand's life can be divided into three periods: the early years in India from 1905 to 1925, the years abroad, from 1925 to 1945, and the later years in India, from 1946 to the present day. This division is not merely based on Anand's residence but also on his creative output which coincides with each of the above periods. The first twenty years of Anand's life are important because they serve as a chronicle of various environmental situations and family circumstances which have shaped his outlook on life and have directly influenced his work. The next twenty years have been of greater significance because they reveal the ordeals through which Anand has passed to become a writer. Besides, they are the record of his associations with eminent writers of the thirties, his work with the B.B.C., as well as his fight for Indian independence on the one hand and fascism on the other. The years following his return to India from England are equally important; as much light, love and hope have permeated through his writings during this period. His dedication to the cause of the suffering humanity, and his active involvement in the social and cultural life of India, have secured for him an honoured place among the writers of the present, and perhaps, have ensured his future reputation as well.

Anand is at present writing his autobiography in the form of a series of confessional novels, three of which have already
appeared. Until the project is completed, it is difficult to have a full and comprehensive account of his life and works.

However, *Seven Summers*, *Morning Face* and *Confession of a Lover*, the three published volumes, tell us about the early struggles of our author from the age of four to twenty years. Dr. Saros Cowasjee rightly remarks:

'Anand is not merely engaged in a personal odyssey, but is reconstructing an epic of a whole generation of Indian youth at a period of momentous change in their country's history, culture and outlook.'

Born in 1905 at Peshawar, in the North West Frontier of India, Mulk Raj Anand belongs to the traditional coppersmiths and silversmiths of Amritsar. Although, they were born Kashtriyas, the second highest caste, they were considered low because of their profession. His father Lal Chand 'redeemed' this situation to some extent, by matriculating and deserting his hereditary profession. He joined the British Indian Army as a head-clerk in the 38th Dogra regiment. His mother Ishwar Kaur, a deeply religious woman, came from a sturdy peasant stock of village Daska, in the Sialkot district of the Central Punjab. He was the third among the five sons born to them, of whom four survived. A lively portrait of Lalla Lal Chand, (the original of Ram Chand of the confessional novels), appears in *Seven Summers*, as a playful, bluff, hearty and pragmatic man, whose ambition was to amass wealth, and to see his sons pass the examinations and secure some judicial service under the benevolent 'Sarkar'. He was proud of his little learning, and wrote letters for the illiterate
sepoys for a small fee. Ishwar Kaur was well versed in folklore, and had inherited the stubborn hatred for the English from her father Nihal Singh, who had fought against them as a soldier in the Sikh Army. Her religious belief was founded on a blind faith in a kind of pantheism. To her all gods appeared to be one and the same, but the conglomeration of gods as diverse as Krishna and Christ, Guru Nanak and Aga Khan whom she worshipped, often became the butt of the children's ridicule:

'Sometimes when we joked about her assortment of idols, my mother said that there was one god behind all gods and religions; but even her pantheism was vague and untrustworthy.'

The religious faith of his mother did little to influence the young Anand who says: 'I do not think I learnt much about religion from her.'

As the head of the family was in the service of the British Government, and had to move from one place to another, young Anand got an excellent opportunity to see various aspects of Indian life, and also the life and manners of the Tommies, from very close quarters. He also observed the conflicts between the two diverse cultures. He says:

'So I grew up in a hotch-potch world of which I early began to perceive the inconsistencies.'

The secular life Anand's father lived in the British Indian Army, had made him adopt an ambiguous attitude towards religion. Apart from Hinduism, Lal Chand had inherited, a peculiar family devotion to the Ismaili religion, propounded
by the present Aga Khan's grandfather, who claimed a direct
descent from Prophet Muhammad, on the one hand, and the Hindu
Gods Vishnu and Krishna, on the other. But soon, as he lived
away from the brotherhood, he began to question the verity of
the personal godhead of Aga Khan, who was known to be spending
collosal sums on luxurious living in various European Capitals,
and on the Riviera. Reacting against all this, Lal Chand turned
to Arya Samaj, a reformist movement of Hinduism, which soon
tended to be 'a social club for respectable professional and
businessmen'.

Lal Chand became the president of the local branch of the Samaj in 1910, but did not sever his connections with Ismailism until 1913.

Not having much faith in religion, and never disturbed by
the necessity to discover a way of life, 'the Army Code seemed
to have become his (Lal Chand's) Bible and the interpretation
of it, his means of livelihood.'

These contradictions inhibited the growth and development of a firm religious faith
in young Anand.

The British Indian Schools which Anand attended at Nowshera,
Amritsar, and Ludhiana used the rod as a symbol of teaching,
and presented the Indian tradition in a distorted way. By
eulogizing the foreign traditions, and giving importance to
British history, they attempted to show everything relating to
Indian history and tradition as inferior. This adversely affect-
ed Anand, who 'early acquired a bias against all indigenous
customs and grew up hating everything Indian'.

There is a vivid recollection of the tyranny of Master Budh Singh in
Morning Face, and a naïve anger against God whom he thinks instrumental in bringing about his tragedy. His innocent, childish mind challenges God:

'Go on, have me beaten by Budh Singh again! Let Draupadi despise me even more. Have me butchered, but I don’t think much of you even if you are anywhere about.' 8

Anand had assumed that religion made people accept everything and believe in fate. But when he saw the regimental padres dressed in strange looking gowns, riding on bicycles to the officers’ mess for tiffin, he began to doubt their asceticism:

'I could not think of these well-fed priests as religious men at all. And, because they, like other English Officers, seldom talked to Indians, but lived the superior, expensive life of the sahibs, I did not regard Christianity as a religion at all, but as some mysterious convention of the Sahibs which was observed on Sundays and at which these priests officiated.' 9

Out of sheer curiosity, he crept into the church, once or twice, and listened to the arid, meaningless discourse of the salvation army officers ‘insisting on the unique Good hood of an ugly tortured image on the cross.’ 10 Anand was equally indifferent to the discourses of Hindu, Muslim, or Sikh divines. He even abominated the fasts and long prayers of his mother which made her appear distant, as also her visits to the ‘Jamat Khana’ which usually disturbed the family routine.
But his mother’s recital of songs, tales, myths and epics prepared young Anand’s cultural background. He was deeply influenced by the tales of ‘Raja Rasalu’, the Sikh prayer book, Japji and Waris Shah’s epic Heer Ranjha (which has been extensively quoted by Anand in his novels and short stories).

From uncle Dev Dutta and Dr. Chunnial, Anand learnt about the evils of foreign domination, and the unyielding struggles of the revolutionaries like Lala Lajpat Rai and Lala Hardayal for India’s freedom. The attraction he felt for women in all their moods as ‘Mahalakshmi’, ‘Mahakali’ and ‘Maha Saraswati’, also produced in him a keen sense of sensuous awareness. Mother was to him like, “milk and sugar’, aunt Agqi like ‘the essence of curds’, aunt Devaki was like the perfume of ‘Motia and Malsari’ flowers. As he grew older, he became conscious of the feminine charm of Shakuntala, the wife of Dr. Chunnial and the ‘black velvet’ of Helen’s body.

Anand’s attitude towards his father changed from ‘hero-worship’ to absolute abhorrence, as he began to realise his mercenary attitude, anti-nationalist tendencies, and total dependence on the mercy of the British Government. Anand’s love for English costumes, hockey sticks, cricket bats, and his admiration for the English also underwent a change when he became aware of the values they stood for.

The Britishers never attempted a synthesis of Indian culture and their own. On the other hand, they kept the country divided by professing tolerance of religious beliefs, castes,
creeds, and customs which were festered by old superstitions. Thus, because of the muddle created by the impact of Europe, Anand could not imbibe any faith in religion or belief, in his early life.

Even as a child, Anand, being very sensitive and physically weaker than most of his companions, took a keen interest in the moods and feelings of people. His loneliness engendered in him, a genuine love for the hills and mountains, valleys and rivers, and he often indulged in reveries and dreams. Perhaps it was this factor which made him extremely inquisitive and introspective. As his sense of curiosity sharpened because of his ramblings in the forests, he began to pester his parents with 'whys' and 'wherefores' about everything. His father had taken him for granted, and believed that he would go mad, if he was not already a lunatic.

One or two serious illnesses gave Anand a reflective bent of mind. The desire to be prominent among his fellow students urged him to read voraciously in English and Urdu literatures. At the age of fourteen he was already delving deep into Shakespeare, Dickens and Thackeray, whose works were lent to him by the friendly Captain Schneider, (Captain O'Sullivan of Morning Post). He happened also to lay his hands on George W.M. Reynolds's proscribed book, The Mysteries of the Court of London which fascinated him for the 'cuddling and kissing' in it. He also read Ratan Nath Sarshar's epic novel Fasana-i-Azad and learnt by heart cantos of Waris Shah's epic poem Heer-Ranjha. Furthermore, he became interested in the
Urdu poetry of Ḥalīb, Mār and Hali, as well as in the Persian poetry of Ṯūmī, Ṣādī, Hafiz and Ḳiṣṭāl. The cumulative effect of his broad and intensive reading was to produce in him a genuine curiosity and a speculative habit of mind. The whole world of awareness seemed to confront him and he wanted to unravel it through obstinate questionings and incessant search.

It was in 1916 that the first important crisis stirred the innermost cords of Anand’s consciousness. He himself observes:

"The first shock to my awareness, from which I may date my spiritual beginnings, happened when, at the age of eleven, I saw my lovely cousin Kaushalya, aged nine, die before me. Only a few months before she had been laughing, crying and playing, and casting her charm on all and sundry. She had T.B. and passed away, slowly withered away, as it were, her big eyes smiling at the world, while the sockets had grown blue, and the chest had hallowed out."

With her death it seemed that the whole world of beauty had collapsed; Anand could not understand why an innocent little girl should be singled out to die. And what was death? Was there survival after the passing away of the person? If not, then life was the only time for happiness. And yet there was pain and suffering in life. Why was all this? No answer came to my questionings, but I could see the contrast of life and death.

Anand grew up through the first World War, which did not happen in India but happened to India. The Indian liberation movement was gaining momentum, and in a futile attempt to
suppress it, the British resorted to unprecedented brutality. By this time Anand had associated himself with the Gandhian non-violent movement. It was in 1919 that the vicious Rowlatt Act, which was imposed on the Indians, tried to suppress, with brutal force, the protest movement organised by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Anand himself was given seven stripes of cane on his back at Amritsar, for innocently breaking the curfew. There was also the blood-curdling horror of Jallianwala Bagh. All these incidents enraged young Anand who began to consider the need of terroristic violence as a means of achieving national freedom. But he was to admit: 'our attempts were as ludicrous as they were abortive.'

The news of uncle Pratap's death staggered him once again. He could not believe that his beautiful, beloved aunt Devaki had poisoned her own husband with arsenic. He exclaims:

'I could not believe that this beautiful young woman whom I loved, as I loved the perfume of Motia and Molsari flowers, could be a murderer. I had never believed it, even though my mother was obsessed with this thought, perhaps out of jealousy, because my father was inclined, I even then knew, to Devaki's good looks; and the caste brotherhood, could not stand the spectacle of a widow who ate pan, played cards, and spent the money left by my uncle on having a well dug in his name at a religious math rather than give it all to them.'

The third shock came when Devaki, unable to bear her excommunication by the brotherhood, for dining with the family
of Noor, and consorting with his step-mother to invoke the spirit of Mian Mir, committed suicide. These three deaths of his dear ones affected Anand very deeply and urged him to probe into the mysteries of life. He says:

'The three deaths confused me. I could not understand the meaning of death. The elders told me it was inevitable. My teachers rationalized the physical passing away as merging with the air and water and sky. The strangers said it was dust to dust in the world of 'Maya'. But my heart was restless. And I was morbidly obsessed by the silent wall which seemed to me to divide life from death. I was physically so weak in love with life that I could not accept death at all. And the fear of death made me love life all the more, though I remained morbid and sad and dissatisfied with everything.'

The deeply rooted horror of death urged him to seek and find consolation in the love of women:

'I sought consolation from this secret horror in the tenderness of women. Unfortunately, the females I adored were always removed from me by the taboos of society. So love itself became an obsession, as the few glimpses I had of it convinced me that without it, I would die.'

The removal of his 'loves' one by one made him realize that the orthodox ritualistic groups (the brotherhood) were dead at heart, for want of joy in life:

'I saw them taking pain out of each other and me. And I slowly became aware of pain, the cruelty of people to each other, and the sordidness around me as the primordial facts of life.'
In 1921 Anand joined Khalsa College, Amritsar. He actively participated in the non-violent movement of the students against the Chief Khalsa Diwan to reform the holy shrine, and to restore peace in the college, where after a moving speech of Mrs Annie Besant asking students to struggle for Indian liberty, some of the professors were either arrested or transferred. In this struggle many peasants had come from remote villages to voice their grievances; Anand was arrested, and detained for a month, and then released.

In keeping with the taste of the time, and urged by his adolescent love for Yasmin, the sister-in-law of his Muslim college friend Noor Muhammad, Anand started writing amorous Urdu poetry. He visited Dr Muhammad Iqbal, the noted poet and philosopher, at Lahore, for guidance. By this time, partly motivated by his desire to show off his learning and his predilection for continental writers, Anand had already devoured the works of Mazzini, Proudhon, Gorki, Tolstoy and Marx. He delved into the first volume of Das Kapital and talked about it 'because it was fashionable to do so'. Apart from Value, Price and Profit, Anand read the novels of Victor Hugo about the French Revolution, Abbot's Life of Napoleon, Thomas Hardy's Wessex novels, and the works of the romantic poets, Byron, Shelley and Keats, as well as those of Goethe and Heine in translation.

Anand's English Professor Henry, a theosophist, and a follower of Mrs Annie Besant, tried to cheer him up by telling him about the transcendental nature of the soul. But to win the raging war between the life of reason and the life of passion in his
adolescent heart, Anand resorted to the wisdom of the heart in some words of Ghalib, Mir and Iqbal.

Another great influence was L.R.Puri his Professor of Philosophy, and the mystic follower of the holy Radhaswami Math at the Beas. Anand was more interested in the exposition of philosophical problems than in his 'Guru'. The doctrine of 'Bhakti', devotional worship and service of others as a way of living, captured his imagination. Anand's maternal uncle Dayal Singh taught him the divine discontent of Guru Nanak, Kabir, Farid and the tenet of 'Bhakti'. His inward bent of mind was also influenced by one or two novels of Tagore, especially Gora.

These experiences and influences prepared the background of Anand's 'Comprehensive Historical Humanism'. As he himself says:

'I now sought to be sincere to practise kindliness in my relation with others, to be good, to perfect myself, to search after truth, to know, to realize all that there was to understand in the world, and feel all that there was to feel.'

The spirit of the nationalist movement had entered the soul of Anand. He was arrested again for his association with a terrorist group led by Lala Kedarnath, in a bomb explosion case in the Kali temple at Lahore, and was sent to jail for a month. It was the poet Iqbal, who through his personal influence, got him released. This incident widened the rift between the loyal father and his nationalist son. Slapped and abused by his father for tarnishing his image before the Government, and no longer able to bear what his mother was forced to suffer because of his own 'crimes',
Anand ran away to Bombay, where, after some days of truancy in difficult circumstances, he got the patronage of the journalist B.C. Horniman and Syed Abdulla Brelvi, both followers of Mahatma Gandhi. He was initiated into journalism and began writing literary reviews and notes for The Bombay Chronicle. His most important publication of this period was a review article on Iqbal's *Secrets of the Self*. But soon, through the good offices of Horniman, he was reconciled to his father, and he returned to Amritsar to prepare for his bachelor's degree in Arts. At the college he edited a college magazine, The Durbar.

Even before his graduation he had become aware of the utter inadequacy of the British Indian Educational system. His association with L.R. Puri, C.H.S. Harvey, and Lala Man Mohan, his Principal, made him realize: 'If I continued to study in India my search for truth will be lost in the search for position.'

After a further row with his father, and an unsuccessful attempt to become a Christian, Anand went to the poet Iqbal who advised him to go to England and study Philosophy there. He wrote to Professor Nicholson to help Anand, and offered financial assistance. Lala Man Mohan too extended valuable help in cash and kind. Thus with a determined heart, left India in the autumn of 1925, for England: 'I should die or disintegrate if I could not satisfy my curiosity for truth.'

The Years Abroad 1925 - 1945

Having reached England, Anand registered at the university college London for the doctor's degree in Philosophy under a
famous Kantian Scholar and realist, Professor G.Dawes Hicks. Fortunately he was awarded a Silver Wedding Fund Scholarship of £300 a year (ironically for his father's service in the army).

Full of enthusiasm he began to attend the lectures of Professors G.E. Moore, C.D. Broad and S. Radhakrishnan. About the latter he says:

'I had occasion to hear Dr Radhakrishnan and for some time out of patriotic reasons, and the spell of his oratory, I hugged the idealistic Vedanta theory, with its reduction of the world to a series of Novas, illusions. But I also wished to live on the plane of hedonism, the here and the now, in the concrete world. And the contradictions tore my soul, reading Philosophy in British Museum by day and waltzing with whores in Soho during the nights.'

Here he keenly felt the inadequacy of the Philosophical education he had received in India, for he was unable to understand the subtleties of Western Philosophy discussed in the seminars held by Professor Hicks for senior research scholars. He says:

'One evening I realized that I could not follow the subtleties of Hegelian thought because I had not read Hegel's works but only an exposition of his philosophy in Hoffling's history. So I went up to Professor Hicks after the seminar and confessed that I had not been able to follow the discussions at the seminars, and could I be allowed to change over for research from Philosophy to Literature because I had read a good deal more in literature than in metaphysical theory.'

But the kindly assurance from the Professor to see him through his difficulties encouraged him to face the challenge
and he began to grapple with philosophical systems with determination and devotion. At the same time to comfort himself, he began to repeat the line of Ghalib, which poet Iqbal once mentioned to him:

'O! My innocent heart, what has happened to me.'

The generous professor sent Anand to North Wales with a chest full of books for three months, to enable him to make himself up to the mark. Here, Anand stayed with a parson in a small boarding house, on the edge of a creek, in a village called Dolgelly. Urged by the beauty of nature, as also by a sense of responsibility, Anand began to follow the strict routine of reading all day, and writing his essays on Hume during the nights. The deeper he went into his philosophical studies, the greater was his realization that he was being pulled in two different directions--Plato, Hegel, Kant and Bradley on the one side, Hume, Bertrand Russel and Aejigger on the other. And in between were the echoes of Hindu Darshans imbibed from L.R. Puri and through the volumes of Dr. Radhakrishnan. Of this period Anand writes; 'unable to do any social climbing in the village of Dolgelly, I began to do mountain climbing on the Mount Snowdon.'

It was among the Welsh mountains that the Muse inspired Anand to reassess, synthesise and recreate his old cultural heritage and the newly acquired one. Also, a significant turn in Anand's life occurred among these mountains. In order to relax from the strain of his intensive philosophical studies, Anand used to go climbing Mount Snowdon. During the ascent one Sunday, Anand met a boy and a girl. Always susceptible to the charm
of women, he liked the looks of the girl, and to strike up an acquaintance, he began to converse with her. Drawn by the frankness of his talk, the girl invited him home. Anand received a very warm welcome from the parents of the young people. Their father was a scientist-philosopher in a Welsh University. Being a Welsh nationalist, he opposed the British domination of his own people. He took a keen interest in Anand's account of the non-violent freedom movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. But the girl Irene was bored with such talk and desired to know about his personal life, and his adolescent struggles. She had joined the Slade School of Fine Arts in London. Anand's adoration of his mother and other women appealed to her, and she asked him to write down his memories about all the Indian females connected with his life, and read them to her. At her behest Anand started a long narrative about himself, his family and his struggles. He says:

'So I launched, beyond her demands for bits and pieces, on a long confessional, from the crisis which had arisen in me through contradictory philosophical studies, the new interest in science and Tolstoy's books. And I began to read this autobiographical narrative to her. I found myself more fulfilled, writing this than reading systems of philosophy. I even began to reject systems and turned to my own and other people's emotional life with greater absorption. I was confused, restless, impatient to know, but frustrated. I remembered my mother's gossip in the courtyard with the women and wrote as many scenes about my early childhood before the age of three as I could remember.'
Anand's perception of imperceptible emotions is echoed by the following episode he recalled:

'One day I had gone to the fair with her near Amritsar. She had got talking to an old woman, while I wanted to go on the roundabout. I kept pulling at her skirt to come away. Ultimately she came, but she said to me indignantly: 'You naughty boy, didn't you see the dead son of that woman in her eyes? I was abashed and guilty of rudeness. And I felt, even afterwards, that I wanted to acquire her kind of sense of people. So I wrote prose to see if her awareness of metaphor/in me was raised.'

With this pervading intensity of desire to capture the human heart, Anand set out to write his 'bits and pieces' as Irene called them and when they were typed by her they had assumed a form of a big tome of 2000 pages. His confession was modelled on Rousseau's Confessions. Irene even promised to marry him if he could find a publisher for his massive book. As it happened, by the time Anand could find one she was already married to someone else.

The coal miners' strike in 1926, led by Arthur Cook had a profound impact on Anand's life. The miners and their sympathisers openly challenged the Government. Anand was shocked to see that, barring a few, most of the students were acting as blacklegs, sabotaging the general strike. When Anand refused to cooperate with them, he was attacked in a free fight in Gower Street, and received minor injuries. This incident led Anand to the acute realisation that his philosophical quests had taken him completely away from the immediate problems of politics and morality at home. He remarks...
'I had forgotten my position as an Indian.' 26

Anand was shocked to see the English police firing on the English workers. His illusions of the respectable dignified status of workers, and existence of democracy in England, were shattered completely. This crisis convinced Anand that 'the people of Britain, no less than the people of India had yet to win their liberty.' 27

The disillusionment brought about the failure of the strike made him reconsider his position. He began to see a close affinity between the problems of the people of his own country and those of Britain. He observes:

'Somehow, the problem of India seemed to me to be connected with the problem which I had seen fought out with such bitterness in England before my eyes. And in the light of this my own position and that of the other Indian students in England, seemed to me suddenly false and ridiculous.' 28

Irene suggested that he should publish the three allegorical pieces. The Lost Child, The Eternal Way and The Conqueror. These prose-poems had been greatly admired by the Parson and the scientist professor. But when, on her suggestion, he sent them to the Spectator for publication they came back with a rejection slip. Some other weeklies also turned down the 'pieces'. With the money given by her father, Irene took Anand on a continental tour to Paris, Geneva, Rome, Berlin, Vienna and Brussels to revive his spirits. What they saw in Louvre—the Monolisa, with her strange smile, the Sistine chapel and various museums,
as well as their rambles in the mountains -- all added a new
dimension to his creative make-up. In Salsbury he heard Beethoven
played for the first time. In Berlin he succumbed to the night
life. It was during this visit that he discovered James Joyce's
Ulysses (1922), Arthur Rimbaud's Less Illuminations (1972-3),
Balzac's Louis Lambert and Andre Gide's novels. He returned
to London a humbler student, more intensely in love with Irene,
and determined to complete his thesis.

It was during this period that Anand used to frequent the
study circle of Elite Helman, the young communist girl, and
Allen Hutt, the British Trade Unionist and pamphleteer and
studied deeply in Marx and Engels, and their criticism of Hegel.
This helped him in writing his thesis. But the full impact of
Marx was not felt until 1932, when he came upon. Marx's Letters
on India published in New York: Herald Tribune of 1853. About
these letters Andnd Writes:

'I discussed these in detail with my friend Ralph
Fox who had just then written on the colonial
history of British Imperialism. And a whole new
world was opened to me. All the threads of my
past reading, which had got tied up into knots,
seemed suddenly to straighten out, and I began to
see not only the history of India but the whole
history of human society in some sort of inter-
connection. The fact that Marxian dialectic had
casually developed out of Hegel, whom I had read,
added to the zest of my preoccupation with it. And,
of course, the happiest thing was that Marxism was no
dogma of a church militant -- in spite of the
critics who declared it to be only another religion
with Marx as its prophet -- but a scientific and rational method for the study of society, a hypothesis which was leading to new discoveries." 29

This is the most ecstatic praise Anand ever gave to Marx in his long association with socialism. Although he angrily denounces capitalism, he is usually reticent about his own political creed. In reply to his denigrators' charge that he was a Marxist Propagandist, and also to disassociate himself from the Marxist dogma, he clarifies his stand:

'As I did not join the communit party, (because I honestly believed that I would never, as an intellectual, be able to accept the almost religious discipline demanded by a group of people who evolved changing tactics around a minimum manifesto with maximum sanctions ), I was somewhat saved from the blind acceptance of all Marx's strategic actions and the dogmas propounded in his name by many of the verbal jugglers among his orthodox party-line followers. Besides I had come to socialism through Tolstoy, Ruskin, Morris, and Gandhi, imbued with a sense of this doctrine as the embodiment of an ethical creed, in so far as it was a protest against misery, ugliness, and inequality.' 30

In one of his recent letters Anand has made himself quite clear regarding his stand on Marx. He writes:

'I believe in Marx, but not in Marxists, with all their fixed ideas. I think while he was a prophet of the new world, there had been other prophets and more will come.' 31

Anand denounces both capitalism and communism, while arousing the intellectuals towards national freedom and socialism .
The capitalist order still hangs on to the illusions of the nineteenth century, and the communist world on the defensive, denies to people the very liberties and human rights for which the revolutions were fought. 32

Although Anand burst into prominence only with the publication of *Untouchable* in 1935, he had already started getting into print in England in 1929. It was in 1925 that he first met Bonamy Dobree in the British Museum - a place where eminent literary figures of the time gathered. And Bonamy Dobree soon patronized Anand and helped and inspired him more than any other British writer, including Forster. He introduced him to T.S. Eliot, for whose *Criterion* Anand began writing short notes. It is difficult to say how much writing Anand did for T.S. Eliot, but from the four surviving letters, as Cowasjee says, 'it is evident that the two never became friends and kept a cool professional distance from each other'. 33

In contrast to this attitude to Eliot, Anand felt much closer to Herbert Read, on whose recommendation Faber and Faber published his *Persian Painting* in 1930. It is a survey of the history of Persian painting from 200 A.D. to the present time. It is important, for it traces the influence of Sufism on the great painter Bihzad. In 1932 appeared *Curries and other Indian Dishes*. The year 1933 saw the publication of two important books: *The Hindu View of Art*, written at the suggestion of Dr. S. Radhakrishan, and *The Golden Breath: Studies in Five Poets of New India*. In 1934 appeared Anand's the three
exquisite prose-poems, *The Lost Child*, *The Eternal Way* and *The Conqueror*. Eric Gill, the sculptor who befriended Anand in 1929 came to his rescue when the stories were rejected by *The Spectator* and other magazines, and printed *The Lost Child* in 200 copies on his hand press at Pigotts. Later, the little story was included in *The Great Short Stories of the World*, much to the surprise and elation of its creator. Anand says:

'This book is dear to me as my first published work in fiction for its tentativeness, its assimilation of my revolt against religion, its longing for new experience, its emotional discontent and the lyricism of my mother's folktales heightened by the love of Rabindranath Tagore's poems and stories.'

Irene joined the Irish National Army. And Anand decided to return to India, going straight to meet Gandhiji at the Sabermati Ashram, in 1929. Here he wrote *Untouchable* which he had drafted already as a charged narrative under the influence of James Joyce. 'The Story of My Experiment with a White Lie' narrates in detail his experiences with the Mahatma.

The rejection of *Untouchable* by nineteen publishers so frustrated Anand that he contemplated suicide, but was saved by the young British poet Oswell Blakeston.

Although Anand had published five books in four years, he came to be recognized as a novelist of distinction only with the publication of *Untouchable* in 1935. Incidentally R.K.Narayan's *Swami and Friends* also appeared in the same year.

Anand wrote *Coolie* in three months and published it in 1936.
In March 1937, he went to Spain and joined the International Brigade in the University Trenches, perhaps moved by Ludwig Renn’s words that 'the contemporary writers’ role was no longer to make stories but make history’. He had been in the trenches for a fortnight when the communist party, shaken by the death of its intellectuals, Ralph Fox, Charles Donnelly, John Cornford and Christopher Caudwell, withdrew Anand and other writers from the fighting line and gave them journalistic assignments. He had been in Spain for three months reporting the war for the republicans and prophesying certain victory for them. His writing during this period cannot be properly estimated because the news releases were unsigned. However, during this period he wrote Homage to Spain and The Invincible Will to Live. In the year 1938, he returned to India and stayed for some days with Mahatma Gandhi at the Sevagram Ashram. He attended the Tripura Congress where Subhas Bose was dethroned from the Presidentship of the Congress Party and met M.N.Roy. He toured various parts of the country working in the student movement, the Kisan Sabha, and the National Movement. With Sajjad Zaheer and Ali Sardar Jafri, and others he organized the 2nd All India Progressive Writers Conference in Calcutta. He stayed for some time at Shanti Niketan with the poet Tagore. He also met Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose during his convalescence from a long illness and attended the Tripura Congress Session. And he lived for some months in Kalakankar in the house of Kanwar Brajesh Singh, who was organizing the peasants of Oudh.

Anand returned to London the same year intending to come
back to India, but the outbreak of the war changed his plans.

He had met Kathleen Van Gelder, a charming actress, sister of G. Stuart Gelder, a News Chronicle Journalist. Her parents disapproved of their match and sent her on a six months' tour of Europe so that she may forget Anand. On her return she went straight to Anand's room where he was chopping onions. Looking at her he said, 'I knew you would come back'. They got married in 1938. Anand left his Bloomsbury bedsitter and went to live in Chinnor, Oxfordshire. The war broke out, and he and his wife returned to occupy a News Flat in North London, where a daughter Rajni was born in 1942. But Anand had opted to be a conscientious objector and the financial crises and the ill-matched temperaments of the couple, created difficulties in their married life.

In London he joined V. K. Krishna Menon who was already working tirelessly for India's freedom. Between them they did more to influence the English opinion than any other Indian residing in Britain. Anand by his writings, and Menon by his direct approach to the labour movement.

From 1939 Anand spoke and wrote vigorously on Indian independence and the problems of poverty, exploitation, and British oppressions. 'The Place of India' a passionate plea for Indian independence, delivered at the XVIII International P.E.N. London, and published in Writers in Freedom (1942). Other articles on India were published in Fortnightly Review, Reynolds Illustrated News, Tribune, The Listener, The New Statesman and Nation, Life and Letters, Labour Monthly and in some other liberal papers.
In *Letters on India*, Anand vehemently attacked British misrule in India. Cowasjee says, 'It is Anand's habit to exaggerate and let his emotions get the better part of his reason.' But most of the observations in *Letters on India* are sharp and exact.

His journalistic writings are an index of his love for the people of India and her freedom. Anand's attacks on imperialism did not in any way diminish the force of his attacks on the cruelty and hypocrisy of feudalism, against castes and creeds, dead habits and customs which enslave the Indian masses. He is also sarcastic about Indian pseudo-spiritualism.

By the year 1942 all the three volumes of Indian peasant life entitled *The Village*, *(1939)*, *Across the Black Waters* *(1940)*, and *The Sword and the Sickle* *(1942)*, had appeared. From 1939 to 1942 Anand had a regular appointment as a Lecturer in Philosophy and Literature with the London County Council Adult Education Schools and the Workers Educational Associations. Otherwise, he lived on royalties, advances from Publishers on his books and by writing articles and reviewing books. This very year he was awarded the Leverhulme Fellowship worth £500 a year for two years to do research on 'Landmarks in Urdu Literature'. After Hitler's drive to the East, Anand gave up his post and worked for the B.B.C. Eastern Service from 1941 until his departure for India in 1945. George Orwell, who had also joined the Eastern Service of the B.B.C., persuaded Anand to help fight fascism. Anand's first two broadcasts on H.G. Wells and Bernard Shaw, in February 1942 were part of a series and...
reinforced his interest in the Fabians. In March and April he gave five talks in a series called 'New Weapons of War'. This was followed by a series of nine talks entitled 'Meet my Friends', in which he interviewed people from almost every walk of life. Anand's friends and acquaintances of the 'pink decade include such eminent writers as, E.M. Forster, Herbert Read, Bonamy Dobree, T.S. Eliot, Laurence Binyon, Aldous Huxley, Middleton Murray, Sir Francis Younghusband, Stephen Spender, V.S. Pritchett, Victor Gollancz, Louis MacNeice, John Strachey, Leonard and Virginia Woolf, George Orwell, Cyril Conolly, Edward Thompson, Maurice Browne, Walter Allen, John Cornford, C. Day Lewis, Ralph Fox, Dylan Thomas, Naomi Mitchison, Louis Dickinson, Lawrence Durrell, Edgell Rickword, Andre Malraux, Ernst Toller, Henry Miller, Dorothy Richardson, Jack Lindsay and H.G. Wells.

Before he finally left England for home, Anand published Barbar's Trade Union and Other Stories in 1944, and The Big Heart in 1945.

The Years in India - 1946 to date:

Anand came back to India in 1946, and after a few months in the Punjab settled in Bombay.

With the help of Anil de Silva, a clever and talented woman, he started an art magazine Marq which is even to this day a leading journal on art and painting.

The year 1947 marked the publication of the Tractor and the Corn Goddess, a collection of short stories. It was also
the year of Indian independence, and the partition was followed by riots and bloodshed in the Punjab. Anand returned to England in 1948 to seek divorce from Kathleen so that he could marry Anil de Silva. Kathleen reluctantly agreed. But Anil wrote to Anand that she had met a Frenchman in Bombay and was going away with him. Anand went to Paris to meet her, but failed to persuade her to come back. He returned to Bombay and suffered a nervous breakdown. He was nursed by a Greek dancer, Melpo, who advised him to write the anguish out of his system. The result was *Private Life of an Indian Prince*. But it was not published until 1953. *Seven Summers*, the first in the series of autobiographical novels, appeared in 1951.

The Bombay group of Progressive Writers' Association, dominated by Communist writers declared him a decadent chiefly for not portraying in his books, such characters as the party line demanded. Anand never forgave them, and refused to serve on the organizing committee of the Sixth All India Progressive Writers' Conference. To add to his troubles, Morarji Desai, the present Prime Minister of India, and the then Chief Minister of Maharashtra, deprived Anand of his passport on the eve of his departure to attend the Paris Peace Conference in 1948. But Jawaharlal Nehru came to his rescue. He issued him another passport, valid for all the countries of the world.

In October 1948, Anand visited Russia and became so famous that his name was put on the list of 'Welcome Visitors'. His books were profusely translated into Russian and East European languages. Since 1948, he must have visited Russia
a score of times. Anand was so influenced that he remarks:

"I tell them that if they can combine communism with freedom of speech, they would usher in a utopia." 36

Anand was awarded the International Peace Prize of the World Peace Council, for promoting understanding among nations, through his creative works. He visited China in 1952 and extensively toured the U.S.S.R., Japan, Australia, South Africa and European countries, organizing writers' conferences and participating in the peace movement.

In 1960 Rajni came home, and there was a family re-union. The Old Woman and the Cow appeared in 1962.

Anand was appointed Tagore Professor of Art and Literature in the University of Punjab, in 1963.

Morning Face, the second in the Seven Ages of Man series appeared in 1968. He won the Sahitya Akademi Award for Morning Face in 1972. Confession of a Lover was published in 1976 and he has recently got E.M. Forster Literary Award for it. He is still busy writing the remaining four volumes of his confessional novels. The Bubble, the fourth in the series is to appear shortly.

With his inexhaustible store of energy, Anand has set for himself the task of alleviating the misery of the suffering humanity and of building a new consciousness among the youth of India. Anand is, as he himself says, 'busy transforming MARG into greater splendour and permanence.' 37 Apart from writing for MARG and editing it, he actively supports numerous cultural associations such as the...
associations such as the World Peace Council, Afro-Asian
Writer's Association, The Sahitya Akademi of Letters, The Lalit
Kala Akademi of Arts, the Sangeet Akademi of Music and Dance,
the National Book Trust, the Indian Council of Cultural Relations,
the U N E S C O Dialogues of East and West and University
seminars and conferences in India and abroad, As judge, jury
or plain participant he travels extensively.

When Anand's eldest brother died, recently he wrote to
the present writer:

'At the same time I had a telegram from Amritsar
informing me of the passing away at the age of 85,
of my eldest brother, Captain Hans Raj, the original
of Harish, in the book you have written about ... He
was in great pain and emaciated towards end ... He
wished himself to death by refusing medicine or
food -- The family must also have breathed the
sighs of relief, though our natural human sentiments
do not allow of mercy killing.' 38 (a)

This personal loss may have stirred the sensibility of the
creative mind to grasp the meaning of death and present it in
his forthcoming work. Anand adds:

'... I found that, though I had a rational explanation
for death and accepted my brother's passing away at 85
all last night I had a disturbed sleep because the
inner rhythms had been stirred by sympathies,
anti-pathies, and all kinds of fantastic dreams that
followed. And these are important to show in my
novel in order to present my total idea of human
life.'  (b)
Mulk Raj Anand's 'Life Force' has not diminished though he is well past 70. His sense of humour and his dedication to the cause of the poor, and the weak, give him an effective armour to withstand the vicious criticism usually done by the fanatics and the 'Brown Sahibs,' (to use his own words).

Anand now resides in Bombay at 25 Cuffe Parade, at a seaside house overshadowed by tall green trees, and constantly refreshed by the cool-wind from the Arabian sea. A true Indian himself, he loves to keep his house also Indian in its atmosphere. He is married to Shrin Vajifdar, a famous dancer and a dance critic. He has the child's open minded view of the world around him and even taking a meal becomes a creative pleasure.

From Tuesday to Thursday he is in Bombay immersed in various literary and social activities, and from Friday to Monday he is in Khandalla (a small hill station 80 miles from Bombay), pre-occupied with creative writing and social service. He has given up his property to Sarvodaya and his cottage here, is the centre of Adivasi Craftsmen from the neighbouring villages.

Notwithstanding the varying views of critics about Anand's achievement in the field of fiction, he is internationally acknowledged as one of the foremost Indian Writers in English. To quote Tennyson, Anand is still charged with the desire to 'drink life to the lees' not for satisfying his own ego but to expiate his 'burning conscience'.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


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7. Ibid., pp. 12-13
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10. Ibid., pp. 13-14
13. Apology for Heroism, p. 17
15. Ibid., p. 27
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26. *Apology for Heroism*, p. 33
27. Ibid., p. 35.
28. Ibid., p. 35
29. Ibid., pp. 67-68
30. Ibid., p. 129
32. *Apology for Heroism* p. 142
33. *So Many Freedoms*, p. 15
34. *Indian Literature*, p. 32
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