

MY LIFE, LAW AND OTHER THINGS. By M.C. Setalvad. [London: Sweet & Maxwell. 1971. xi + 636 pp. Including Index].

This book written by the first Attorney-General of Independent India, and one who occupied that prestigious position for fifteen years, does initiate the reader into many facets of the three topics covered by the title.

The book not only covers matters which took place after Mr. Setalvad took office as Attorney-General, but also deals to a considerable extent with matters preceding that period. Therefore, in a sense, the book is also an “autobiography” of Mr. Setalvad. We are given a good glimpse of his background and personal life as well as his many experiences.

To those interested in law as such, especially Constitutional Law, Mr. Setalvad’s account of the many important cases in which he took part is most instructive. Among the many notable cases dealt with by him are *In Re Delhi Laws Act, 1912* (1951) S.C.R. 747; *State of Bombay v. F.N. Balsara* (1951) S.C.R. 682; *Ram Krishna Dalmia v. Shri Justice S.R. Tendolkar* (1959) S.C.R. 279; *In Re The Kerala Education Bill, 1957* (1959) S.C.R. 995; *In Re The Berabari Union* (1960) 3. S.C.R.

250; *Director of Rationing v. Corporation of Calcutta* (1961) 1. S.C.R. 158; *K.M. Nanavati v. State of Bombay* (1961) 1. S.C.R. 497, and *Naresh Mirajkar v. State of Maharashtra* (1966) 3. S.C.R. 744.

The value in reading about these cases as dealt with by him, is that they sometimes bring out or illuminate points which cannot be found by reading the law reports. The case of *Nanavati (supra)* is a good example. Most students of criminal law are aware of that case in which *Nanavati*, a Commander in the Indian Navy, killed the lover of his British wife. It is one of the modern cases decided by the Indian Supreme Court on the law relating to provocation. But few would be cognisant of the constitutional aspects of the *Nanavati* case, especially the intervention by the executive on behalf of the unfortunate Commander. Mr. Setalvad gives us a good and reliable account of these aspects.

To the student of International law, Mr. Setalvad's treatment of International Organs and International Conferences, should be a source of some delight and instruction. In particular, his account of the various "Afro-Asian" Conferences on International law, gives us an idea of the workings of those conferences, as Mr. Setalvad was most closely associated with them. His account of his experience with the International Court of Justice with regard to the Goa issue, is also most interesting. We are let into a little secret about the Court, namely that a speech in the French language carries great weight in that Court. Thus, India had to engage a French lawyer, although she already had the services of not only Mr. Setalvad, but also that of Sir Frank Soskice, a former British Attorney-General, and who according to Mr. Setalvad was "silver tongued".

Finally the book gives us glimpses of certain well known personalities on the Indian scene like Pandit Nehru, Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. Krishna Menon. One feels sorry to read about the misunderstanding between Mr. Nehru and Mr. Setalvad, which probably had something to do with the resignation of Mr. Setalvad as Attorney-General.

All in all, Mr. Setalvad's book is not only instructive to the student of law in many respects, but also constitutes delightful reading as well. It should also commend itself to those members of the legal profession who are still interested in picking up a little more law, particularly Constitutional law and International law.