

MOTHER INDIA

Managing Editor:
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FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW

Editor:
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"GREAT IS TRUTH AND IT SHALL PREVAIL"

ALTERNATE SATURDAYS

JUNE 25, 1949

VOL. I. NO. 10: FOUR ANNAS

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ALLEGATIONS AGAINST SRI AUROBINDO'S ASHRAM

A Refutation by "Synergist"

A number of interesting comments have been made from time to time about Sri Aurobindo, his spiritual teaching and his Ashram. Rabindranath Tagore, Romain Rolland, Sir Francis Younghusband and others have all expressed their great admiration for this most remarkable figure of modern times. Tagore, when he had his interview with Sri Aurobindo, said, "You have the Word; and we are waiting to hear it from you; India will speak through your voice to the world, 'Hearken to me'." Now comes another comment on Sri Aurobindo and his work—this time not from the erudite but from a journalist who has obviously not gone beyond the stage of reading detective stories, and thinking in terms of dark rooms, prisoners, and "the inner circle", and who seems to believe that 'mysticism' and mystery must go together.

In the 12th June issue of the local weekly, *India*, an article entitled "Mystery of Aurobindo's Ashram" was published. This article informs us in somewhat lame English that Sri Aurobindo "is a voluntary prisoner in his own spiritual colony", that he "is at once a great teacher, or the most exploited thinker, according to what you personally are capable of believing", and that "the voice of Sri Aurobindo has become the shrill of bugles in the darkened room of an experienced medium". The author indicates in no uncertain manner that the exploiter and the medium is the lady who is known as the Mother and who works side by side with Sri Aurobindo in his labour of the regeneration and divinisation of man. These are very serious statements to make against such great spiritual figures, especially when there are no arguments to substantiate them. The only thing one can say in the author's favour, the one thing for which such impudence can be excused, is that he is utterly ignorant of what spirituality, yoga or mysticism is; and that only people who are as ignorant as he is will take his criticisms seriously. He is mistaking Spiritualism which has to do with séances, mediums, and making contacts with dead relatives, for spirituality. The author does not seem to realise that Sri Aurobindo is a Master of Yoga and has nothing to do with these things. Also, there is no question about his being a voluntary prisoner staying in a sealed room with closed shutters. I do not know from where the author has got all these ideas. The doors and windows of Sri Aurobindo's room are always open, and some of his old disciples go up to his rooms daily to take advice or instructions about the work. Outwardly it may seem as if only the Mother were in charge of the Ashram, but actually they both govern the destinies of its six hundred residents. Sri Aurobindo is behind everything the Mother does, and supports her work with his own Yogic Force, so that there is a constant identification between her Force and his. No doubt, most of the time he remains alone because it is essential for his Yogic work that he should not be disturbed, but that does not necessarily imply that he is entirely cut off from his disciples. Only recently the well-known musician and author Dilip Kumar Roy had an interview with him, which will be soon published in the new American edition of his book, "Among the Great", and which all those who are interested in Sri Aurobindo can read; and last December Vice-Chancellor C. R. Reddy personally presented Sri Aurobindo with the Andhra University National Prize and had a short interview with him.

Anyone who has even a little knowledge of Yoga knows that what matters most in the relationship between a Guru and his disciple is not the physical contact but the spiritual contact—a contact between consciousness and consciousness—the disciple feeling the presence of the Guru in him or around him, and his Force working in him and through him.

The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo

For the benefit of those who do not know anything about Sri Aurobindo, and whose minds may have been prejudiced by reading this article, I am quoting Sri Aurobindo's own statements about his Yoga—"To find the Divine is indeed the first reason for seeking the spiritual Truth and the spiritual life; it is the one thing indispensable and all the rest is nothing without it. The Divine once found, to manifest Him,—that is, first of all to transform one's own limited consciousness into the Divine Consciousness, to live in the Infinite Peace, Light, Love, Strength, Bliss, to become that in one's essential nature and, as a consequence, to be its vessel, channel, instrument in one's active nature"—"The Sadhana of this Yoga does not proceed through any set mental teaching or prescribed forms of meditation, mantras or others, but by aspiration, by a self-concentration inwards or upwards, by self-opening to an Influence, to the Divine Power above us and its workings, to the Divine Presence in the heart and by the rejection of all that is foreign to these things. It is only by faith, aspiration and surrender that this self-opening can come." Then, in another letter he writes about his own work. "I am seeking to bring some principle of inner Truth, Light, Harmony, Peace into the earth-consciousness. I see it above and know what it is—I feel it ever gleaming down on my consciousness from above and I am seeking to make it possible for it to take up the whole being into its own native power, instead of the nature of man continuing to remain in half-light, half-darkness. I believe the descent of this Truth opening the way to a development of divine consciousness here to be the final sense of the earth evolution."

These lines should give a fair idea of what Sri Aurobindo means by spirituality and Yoga.

Misrepresentation of Ramkrishna

The writer of the article wants to impress upon his readers that the pursuit of God-realisation is futile, and actually brings in Ramkrishna and Vivekananda to support his criticism. Here are his own words: "Ramkrishna advised Vivekananda to accept that he could never be a Realised Being and therefore to turn his energies to alleviating the crushing burdens and sorrows of ordinary men". The author seems to imagine that Ramkrishna was a Positivist who preached Humanism and thought that to hanker after self-realisation was a waste of time and therefore told Vivekananda that he would never be a Realised Being. Ramkrishna did nothing of the sort; the author, in order to misrepresent Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, misrepresents Ramkrishna also. Ramkrishna preached the Advaita Vedanta, and showed by his own example that all spiritual paths finally led to the same Supreme Spiritual goal, and chose Vivekananda to preach this gospel to the world. Vivekananda had his great spiritual experience in 1886, about sixteen years before he died. After he had the experience of the Absolute, Ramkrishna remarked, "Now then, the Mother has shown you everything. Just as a treasure is locked up in a box, so will this realisation you have just had be locked up, and the key shall remain with me... when you will have finished my work, the treasure-box will be unlocked again..." and then remarked to the other disciples, "I have prayed that the Divine Mother may keep this realisation of the Absolute veiled from Naren". I have taken these lines from "The Life of Swami Vivekananda" by his Eastern and Western Disciples. These lines show that there was no question of Ramkrishna telling Vivekananda that "he could never be a Realised Being". It is rather ironical

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that the very person the writer has brought in to support his case turns out to be one of the world's greatest devotees of the Divine Mother, in whose constant Light and Presence he seemed to live; and when a great spiritual person like Ramkrishna was a devotee of the Mother, there is no reason to be surprised if six hundred sadhaks worship one whom they see to be the incarnation of the Divine Mother—the personification of the Supreme Shakti.

The author objects to surrender, both of one's worldly possessions and one's volition and desires. First we shall consider the worldly possessions. Surrender does not mean imposing a compulsory levy on all possessions on Yogic grounds, as the author seems to insinuate; it can also mean and does mean "offerings" freely and willingly given. If a man is accepted as a disciple and stays in the Ashram, in every way he is provided for—he does not have to worry about his boarding, lodging, clothing or any of the necessities of life. In view of this, any fair-minded person would think of offering to the Mother whatever he can, to meet the extra expenses incurred; he would not like to sponge on her. If the spiritual seekers of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram choose to make such "offerings" to her, who is the author to object? All money offered to her is freely and willingly given by people who are firm in their conviction that the money they are offering is for a work which has to be done, and which nobody except Sri Aurobindo and the Mother can do. Coming to the question of surrender of desire, I need only say here that this is a fact of spiritual discipline which has been recognised by Yogis and mystics in all ages, both in the East and the West. Read the Gita or the writings of mystics like St. John of the Cross or Eckhart—surrender of desire and attachments are advocated by all.

A Newspaper Stunt?

The author's object seems to be to show that the Ashram is not a place where one can attain union with the Divine Being and where Yoga is seriously practised, but is a place where only superficial things are encouraged. A number of clever writing devices have been used to make some sort of a case against the Ashram. One device is to bring two facts which have absolutely nothing to do with each other together in such a way that they are taken to be inter-related facts. The author keeps on telling us that the Ashram building is only a stone's throw from the Government House, thereby trying to create an impression in the mind of the reader that the political opinions of the Ashram are being influenced by the French Government. If proximity in physical space between persons is tantamount to identity in thought and feeling, and implies emotional and intellectual sympathy between them, then it means this: that if the author of the above-mentioned article lives in a house which is a stone's throw from a jail, then he must have criminal tendencies and must be in sympathy with crooks. This is not my logic—it is the author's logic. The same device is used again, when it is stated that the Mother is the daughter of a French colonial governor. This time the author takes his stand on a pure falsehood, for the Mother is the daughter of a banker. And what does it matter if she happens to be French by birth? True "Indianness" lies not in indulging in a lot of patriotic platitudes, but in attaining union with the Supreme Divine Purushottama and becoming a manifesting channel of His Love, Light and Bliss in the world. The article is an attempt to implicate the Ashram in politics, but like all such previous attempts, it does not rise above the category of newspaper stunts.

At the end of the article the editor has inserted a small note—it reads, ". . . But the French possessions in India are once more in the news, and the silences of the enigmatic Ashram in Pondicherry make a strange contrast". I would like to draw the attention of the editor to the fact that the Secretary of the Ashram Sjt. Nolini Kanta Gupta issued the following statement to the press on June 4, exactly eight days before this article appeared in India. ". . . I am authorised to issue a categorical denial of this implication (meaning the Ashram's alleged sympathy with the French India Patriot's Association, which supports the union of French India with France). Sri Aurobindo Ashram is not connected with nor does it offer its support to any political party in Pondicherry." Surely the author, if he were really conversant with facts, would not have overlooked this statement which dispels the notion that the Ashram is in any way a pro-French institution. The most recent statement* made by the Secretary of the Ashram goes even further and affirms that the French Settlements should merge in India—but even here there is no direct support to any political party. All political parties involve things to which the Ashram as a spiritual institution cannot subscribe.

Asceticism Is Not Spiritual Attainment

Then the author brings forward a number of irrelevant facts to prove his case. He complains that the Mother wears chiffon sarees, which of course are offered to Her on her birthday or on darshan days. What does one do with these chiffon sarees if not wear them? Perhaps the author really has a strong argument in this complaint which is too subtle for my dense head. Perhaps he is of the opinion that spiritual beings should shrink from chiffon sarees as from nettles. A spiritual person who has truly conquered desire reacts towards all things with Yogic equality. He accepts both poverty and riches, poor clothing and rich clothing, discomfort and comfort with perfect equanimity and inner detachment. The writer, owing to his lack of knowledge about Yoga, does not seem to realise that the goal of Yoga is not to be a perfect ascetic, who can demonstrate before people what wonderful will-power and self-control he has, but to be a God-realised person. Asceticism is only a means to an end; the end is to

realise constant union with the Divine Being and to manifest His will upon earth. When one has learned to do this, what has the practice of asceticism to offer him or her? There is surely no intrinsic virtue in home-spun, and intrinsic vice in chiffon, except for people who turn everything into a fad. Rama was an avatar who wore royal clothes when reigning in Ayodhya with as much spirituality as he wore simple garments when wandering as an exile. Another complaint is, "Soap is manufactured likewise for use of the Ashram alone and their clothes are scientifically washed." Does he expect the Ashram to supply soap to the whole of Madras Province? The Ashram is not a charity institution but a spiritual centre. It makes things like soap in order to help the physical life of spiritual aspirants within the Ashram and is not in a position financially to give them away free. And is it not better to make one's own soap than to import it from foreign countries? And why should one wash clothes unscientifically when one knows how to wash them scientifically? Another remark reads, "But the town of Pondicherry cannot hope to share in any of this" . . . May I ask the author if the town of Pondicherry has a Godward aspiration and wants to practise the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo? If so, those who are spiritually inclined will always be welcome to share in many of the Ashram-activities. As it is, a number of people in Pondicherry come for the darshans regularly. Regarding the author's remark about the exclusiveness of the Ashramites, I would like to mention that they remain within the precincts of the Ashram, especially the women, because often they are molested by the local vagabonds, many of whom are drunk after sunset.

Really, it is very difficult to give a serious reply to this article. The writer has not made out a case substantiated by arguments, but has only strung together a number of nasty suggestions. Hence I have been able only to pick these out and reply to them.

Counter-attack from the Pit

This article strikes one as being what one might call "A Counter-attack from the Pit." Every time a great spiritual figure tries to bring some divine light and power into the world, by himself attaining a high spiritual status and then becoming a radiating centre, there is a corresponding counter-attack from the evil forces. The reason is not difficult to understand. As the working of the light and power of the Divine on earth becomes greater, men become more enlightened spiritually and mentally, attain greater mastery over themselves and try to create the world in the image of the Divine Truth; this naturally tends to loosen the hold of the evil forces on the earth, who consequently fight back through men who are receptive to them, and who can become their instruments. So it is not surprising that prophets have been stoned and crucified. The presence of a highly spiritual man creates such a charged atmosphere around him that beings who are receptive to evil forces at once start becoming antagonistic to him. The reality of evil forces was doubted by the sceptics, but after the last war even strict rationalists like Professor Joad and others became convinced that evil is not merely the negative of good, but is a positive force in itself. Mr. Aldous Huxley also shows in his now book "Ape and Essence" how real the evil force is. Call the force Asuric or Rakshasic, diabolic or Satanic, or of Ahriman, it does exist, and men of God fight it in order to manifest the will of God upon earth and to liberate humanity from its grip. If Sri Aurobindo fights it, so that the world can be a happy place to live in, and a greater race of men—divinised men—can walk on the face of the earth, he is to be admired as a saviour and not made out to be a voice in a séance room. Here is an extract from a letter of Sri Aurobindo's to one of his disciples, "My life has been a battle from its early years and is still a battle; the fact that I wage it now from a room upstairs and by spiritual means as well as others that are external makes no difference to its character. But of course as we have not been shouting about these things, it is natural, I suppose, for others to think that I am living in an august, glamorous lotus-eating dreamland where no hard facts of life or Nature present themselves. But what an illusion all the same!" And then in another letter, he writes, "I have no intention of achieving the Supermind for myself only—I am not doing anything for myself, as I have no personal need of anything, neither of salvation (Moksha) nor supramentalisation. If I am seeking after supramentalisation, it is because it is a thing that has to be done for the earth-consciousness and if it is not done in myself, it cannot be done in others. My supramentalisation is only a key for opening the gates of the Supramental to the earth-consciousness; done for its own sake, it would be perfectly futile."

In the light of all this, it is not very surprising that there are outbursts against Sri Aurobindo and the Mother from time to time.

If the writer of the "Mystery" article seriously wants to undermine Sri Aurobindo's teaching in the eyes of the people of India, I am afraid he will first have to refute Sri Aurobindo's "The Life Divine", as well as the Upanishads and the Gita. Till he can do so, he must refrain from making irresponsible statements about Sri Aurobindo, spirituality, yoga or mysticism.

I shall end this article by giving him a little advice—the advice which Kepler gave to the anti-Copernicans, with a few modifications to suit the occasion—He who is so stupid and thick-headed as not to comprehend spiritual philosophy and Yogic teachings, him I advise that, leaving the study of Yoga and mysticism, and misrepresenting spiritual men at pleasure, he betake himself to his own concerns, and that desisting from further pursuit of these intricate studies, he keep at home and manure his own ground.

* See page 12 of this issue.

WHAT IS BASIC EDUCATION?

Presiding over the fifth All-India Basic Education Conference at Perianaikpalayam, Dr. Zakir Hussain, Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh University said that Basic education, as conceived by Mahatma Gandhi, provides for the full development of the individual, and the removal of the barrier which divides life from education. He observed that Basic education should be made available to the millions of children in the country, and that this could be done only by the Government with all their resources. But searching all the reports of this important All-India Conference, we could not find anywhere a precise definition or description of what Basic education is.

All speakers were eloquent about the national, moral, cultural and spiritual values of Basic education, but no one gave any details how all these purposes would be served by this *nai talim* or new education. Anyhow we had some authoritative pronouncements on Basic education in this Conference. Acharya Vinoba Bhave said that if they worked the Basic education scheme successfully, it was possible to bring about a non-violent revolution. But what is this scheme and what revolution is intended? Mr. J. C. Kumarappa thought that sufficient had been said about Basic education, and he turned to post-Basic education, saying that it was based on truth and non-violence. We are tempted to ask like Pilate, What is Truth? Another speaker said that the Basic education programme was divided into four parts, (1) Adult education, (2) Pre-Basic education, (3) Basic education of children from 7 to 14, (4) Post-Basic education of adolescents who had completed Basic education. Thus 'Basic' is to be the sun of the solar system of education, but what is this blessed thing which is now in the mouth of everybody as the newest slogan?

Nobody has a clear idea of what Basic is, still the Central and Provincial Governments are spending or planning to spend crores of rupees to replace the prevailing system of education by the Basic. The Centre has refused to make educational grants to the provinces unless they adopt the Basic system. But it is apparent that they are not all enthusiastic about it. In some cases there seems to have been a suspicion that Basic education in its purity would spoil rather than educate children, so in the name of Basic education they are doing something else or something not exactly what is required by the basic authorities. Thus Acharya Vinoba Bhave said: "Since the present Government machinery is old, I do not know how far we shall be able to work out the scheme". Acharya J. B. Kripalani, former Congress President, said: "Education is not an end in itself, but a means to establish a new social order. The Government are not enthusiastic about the system, because they are not democratic. They are keeping up the continuity, and not breaking with the past. Democracy cannot be built on the existing caste system". But what has caste system to do with Basic education and how is that education to usher in a new social order?

Is Spinning the Speciality of the Indian Genius?

In spite of all mystification or reservation, to all who care to know, Basic education is a very simple thing; it is a system of primary education in which out of five school hours students will have to work on some handicraft for three hours or more, and spinning is the basic craft *par excellence*, as it can be easily introduced in primary schools, while the other crafts remain mostly in the syllabus, for a primary school cannot be expected to provide for diverse crafts with the necessary equipment and teachers. It is this system which is being eulogised with all sorts of high-sounding words and phrases. Acharya Vinoba Bhave said that if they worked the Basic education scheme successfully, it was possible to bring about a non-violent revolution. No one is satisfied with the present state of things and any cry of a revolution easily evokes a response, and if that revolution be non-violent, it is all the more desirable; but how spinning is going to bring about the revolution is inexplicable. The people of the whole world spun before the industrial age, but no one claims that that world lived in truth and non-violence. Mr. Ariyanayakam, one of the leading exponents of Basic education in the conference, said that no living system of education could remain divorced from the main stream of national history. But handicrafts do not constitute that main stream in India, they were a part of the national life of all countries in the world before large scale machinery came, and there was nothing exceptional in India. The speciality of Indian history was that it placed spiritual values above everything; all social and economic organisation was intended to serve that ultimate end.

In a truly national system of education in India, the first importance should be given to the spiritual basis, so that the school may be a Brahmacharya Ashram in the true sense of the term. And Brahmacharya does not mean simply an austere life and doing some bhajans; the education of the student should be so arranged that he may be put on the path of finding his spiritual Self and realising God within himself. The so-called Basic education, on the other hand, lays stress on the economic aspect of life, and that in a crude form; thus it is altogether divorced from the main stream of India's national history. It is claimed by Dr. Zakir Hussain that Basic education would remove the barrier which divided life from education. As all men and women wear clothes, students by spinning will come into close contact with life—is that the meaning? But in modern life there is no place for the spinning wheel. If you want to produce cloth by spinning, you will have to buy cotton and after you have spun the necessary yarn you will have to pay wages to the weaver. The money you will have thus to spend

is more than sufficient to buy a better piece of mill cloth; then what will you gain by spinning? You may have to pay something out of your pocket for the luxury of wearing khaddar after you have spent many weary hours on spinning the yarn. Basic education will really cut off the student from modern life and take him to a past age which is dead. Let the student learn to observe the world around him intelligently, let him learn to think originally, let him form good habits, have right emotions, do right actions, but where is the necessity or utility of making a particular craft the centre of such an all-round education?

Are There Any Educational Advantages in Spinning?

The student while spinning, it is said, will be told the story of the life of the cotton plant and also of the wood out of which the spinning wheel is made, and in this way a basis will be laid for scientific education. After stating that there were certain defects in the present system of education, Acharya Vinoba Bhave observed that they should develop scientific thinking and investigation, and added that they could follow Western countries in this respect. But which Western country has made a handicraft the centre of scientific education? The excellent primary books on Science that have been produced in the West show how students at a very early age can be initiated into the principles of scientific observation, experiment and reasoning;—why not introduce these things into our primary schools instead of concentrating on a particular craft? The aim of Basic education, it is said, is to make the school self-supporting. In the West education is an expensive affair. Acharya Bhave, however, says: "It is not necessary that we should have large sums of money to run Basic schools. These can be made self-supporting." That was Gandhiji's conception, students should earn something by handicraft work and thus contribute towards the maintenance of the schools. That is why it is required that students should work on a craft for at least three hours. This is carrying the dignity of labour too far. After that exhausting work, there will be little energy left for the students to learn or assimilate anything. The majority of Indian people, specially in the villages, live on some kind of manual labour and their children will naturally learn to do some work at home and it is not at all advisable to chain them to some particular craft in a school at such an early age.

Defending this system, Acharya Vinoba Bhave said: "We should know how to enjoy life spiritually, it is my view that anything that gives happiness to the soul is real happiness". These are noble sentiments, no doubt; but the child is not sufficiently developed for spiritual enjoyment. The one thing he loves most is sports, but in a Basic system hard work is substituted for sports; Gandhiji may find spiritual enjoyment in doing the work of a scavenger, but we cannot expect that of children; yet Basic school children are made to carry moveable trench latrines and buckets full of urine. All this will hamper the development of the child's soul and may give it a wrong turn. Governments in India have a vague idea that this Basic system has been approved by educational experts, so they are accepting it as their educational policy. But it is not a fact that educational experts have approved of it. Perhaps out of respect to the memory of Gandhiji, they are keeping silent. Thus Acharya Vinoba Bhave said in the conference: "Since the present Government machinery is old, I do not know how far we will be able to work out the scheme successfully. It is necessary that experts in education should give expression to their views on Basic education without reservation". We also make the same appeal to experts on education, they should study the scheme carefully and express their views without any personal consideration, as the future of millions of children is involved in this scheme. On our part, we have no doubt that this system should not be accepted on a national scale; those who believe in it can carry on the experiment wherever they find the conditions to be suitable.

Why did Gandhiji Advocate this System?

But the question of questions is, why did Gandhiji advocate such a system? Dr. Zakir Hussain has given the answer: "Gandhiji wanted to evolve a particular type of society through the development of an educational system. He was anxious to try, through education and through utilising the various channels of constructive activity, to develop a special way of thought and reaction in the minds of children." It is well-known what sort of society Gandhiji wanted. He thought that the evils of modern society were due fundamentally to large-scale production through machinery; he wanted to take humanity back to the age of cottage industries. But with all his efforts, aided by an organisation like the Indian National Congress, Gandhiji failed to revive the charka. So he thought that if the charka mentality could be formed in childhood these new types of men and women would abolish mills and machines and bring back what he regarded as the golden age. Indeed an attempt was made under his inspiration in Madras to restrict textile mills; that attempt led to the fall of the ministry. But Gandhiji never accepted a defeat, and to make sure of the future he conceived the Basic system of education. So young girls and boys are to be moulded into a particular type. But that is against all canons of sound education. Referring to such attempts "to develop a special way

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W. B. YEATS—POET OF TWO PHASES

By K. D. SETHNA

June 13 was memorable as the day on which W. B. Yeats had been born. Much has been written about his poetry which is regarded as the finest produced in England in the last half-century or more. Much can still be written, for Yeats is a subtle many-dimensional poet—and controversy yet continues on the comparative merits of his early work and his later. An approach by an Eastern mind will add, it is hoped, something of special interest towards the final judgment on him.

THROUGHOUT his life W. B. Yeats followed a star high above contemporary standards of poetic brilliance. But he was a writer of two phases and in the one which came later his waggon has often pulled the star to which it had been hitched into the roadways of day-to-day speech and shown how a high purpose could illumine tones and methods which in other hands prove an aesthetic failure. In the initial phase, however, he was at his richest from the viewpoint of poetry proper, for there the inspiration seems to be the most continual.

This inspiration is a distinct type of Symbolism: it is surcharged with an unusual second sight opening on vistas of Celtic mythology, and it moves on a sound-stream which is exquisite incantation. The atmosphere it creates is due in part to a sensuous monotony of key-words. I say sensuous monotony, but there are subtle senses as well as the gross, and Yeats's concrete experience is of a world that shimmers behind the physical consciousness, a world of "odorously twilight" where "dream-dimmed eyes" under "cloud-pale eyelids" watch "flame on flame" guarding some "incorruptible Rose." Such and other key-words he interblends with a changing vividness of phrase to embody the master-passion of his life—love.

Love Aglow With Occult Images

Yeats has remained at every stage of his career a poet of love, but here it is a mood aglow with occult images. It is a poignancy which the spirits behind the veil portion out to man as his greatest blessing; it is a net of fire cast about mortal limbs, making them prisoner to an immortal beauty; through its spells and its tyrannies the clay-born hours partake of an Everlivingness hidden in the depths of the heart. Though the occult perception thrills through Yeats's poems even apart from the cry of love, their finest moments are more often when the hues from secret worlds have mated the heart-tones of this. The pure expression of the former is never so haunting as in those eight lines:

O sweet everlasting Voices, be still;
Go to the guards of the heavenly fold
And bid them wander obeying your will
Flame under flame, till Time be no more;
Have you not heard that our hearts are old,
That you call in birds, in wind on the hill?
O sweet everlasting Voices, be still.

From the love-poems it is difficult to choose, presenting as they do unbroken flawlessness everywhere, but in two or three places delicacy and grandeur go hand in hand. Such seems to me the close of that series of couplets in which the memory of a loveliness the poet feels he has known in previous births mingles with his living passion, lights and shadows from a more enchanted past which ultimately carry his mind beyond themselves to yet profounder intuitions:

For this pale breast and lingering land,
Come from a more dream-heavy land,
A more dream-heavy hour than this;

And when you sigh from kiss to kiss
I hear white Beauty sighing, too,
For hours when all must fade like dew,
But flame on flame, and deep on deep,
Throne over throne where in half sleep,
Their swords upon their iron knees,
Brood her high lonely mysteries.

The Art of Indefinite Suggestion

In both these quotations what is common is an indefinite suggestiveness which is the very soul of Yeats's art, in especial during his early phase which culminated in *Shadowy Waters* where the story of Forgael and Dectora is told in a language mirroring, as it were, strange symbolic silences, for words are packed with image-colour only to suggest the mysterious and the ineffable. But Yeats's most marked triumph is precisely this pervading vagueness—a triumph since it arises not from the sense being diluted or because he errs in verbal craft. His phrases are none save the right necessary ones, to change them would be to spoil his work, and the general impression he makes through them is of something actually visioned and accurately described. So perfect is the stimulus of his poetry that we get the sight and sound and even the subtle touch of some real world: only, it is a domain of mist, an unknown country which lies in a glimmering haze. The vagueness is not a shortcoming, as there is no mental inanity, no lack of sincere emotion, no mere decadent virtuosity, but an appropriate technique interpreting a very genuinely perceived "inscape" and making vagueness itself a positive quality of vision.

Only one contemporary poet can challenge comparison with Yeats in the art of indefinite suggestion by word and rhythm: Walter de la Mare. Their techniques overlap in several respects, mainly in a use of spondees to produce mournful and remote reverberations; but Yeats is a greater musician and his management of broad vowels and harmonious consonants adds a crystalline richness to the slow chant made by his spondees:

Surely thine hour has come, thy great wind blows,
Far off, most secret, and inviolate rose.

Or take his blank verse:

For life moves out of a red flare of dreams
Into a common light of common hours,
Until old age bring the red flare again.

A glide-anapaest is frequent in his

blank verse as an aid to his most artistic effects:

A sweet miraculous terrifying sound,
or,

No, not angelical but of the old gods,
Who wander about the world to waken the heart.

Walter de la Mare is not only noted for spondaic rhythms and for assonances, like

Oh, no man knows
Through what wild centuries
Roves back the rose;

but he practices too a queer magic by syncopation, dropping a syllable and lengthening out its companion in a foot:

Speak not—whisper not—
Here bloweth thyme and bergamot

or,

Beauty vanishes, beauty passes,
However rare—rare it be

or, again,

See the house, how dark it is,
Beneath its vast-boughed trees.

Here also is a haunted language, but mostly de la Mare is the singer of a romantic strangeness and of the superstitious instinct. It is a domain different from Yeats's: even in the faery element, their treatments are unlike, for de la Mare is a poet of the imaginative child, while Yeats goes beyond to a supernatural innocence, a childhood wise with unknown voices. The former evokes a ghost-atmosphere in which the colour is subdued and a delicate solemnity reigns over all: the latter spreads out vistas like melting jewels, his shadows too bear each a quivering aureole, and it is not ghosts that hover round him but Elemental Powers and Masters of Destiny, the old gods—

Caolte tossing his burning hair,
And Niamh calling "Away, come away."

Joy and sorrow in Yeats's poetry are alike a keen ecstasy, in fact they are almost one and the same, and whatever delicacy he puts into his art is not solemn but intense: all his flush of triumph is yet passionately wistful and he drinks vague anguish like a nectar. De la Mare stands on the threshold between the waking life and the subconscious: Yeats belongs to some complete inner realm and a full light from there comes through. Unlike the other who sees a spot of light and concentrates on it, trying to discover how it touches and changes the outer vision, he is a secure seer with an eye that ranges over the entire "inscape" of mystery until his outer consciousness is altogether drenched in that translucence.

Change in Style and Psychology

That a poet should discard so thorough a power to voice occult insight seems a grave tragedy. But

life does not follow expected curves of development and the pure critic has no right to complain provided the new curves trace artistic forms as flawless as those that have vanished, different though they be in gesture and expression. Yeats of the second phase is very little of an occultist at the beginning, because the old joy in the fire-mists of an unearthly realm yields to a desire for the clear contours of direct human experience. When he does turn to occult issues, it is mostly with an intellectual semi-Kabalistic penchant: he deals with them in a discursive temper and an abstruse language which to a large measure rob them of poetic vitality. His direct human experience, too, finds as he grows older an accent which, while often powerful or majestic, verges oftener on prose in quality as well as turn of phrase. In more simple moods, he is capable of a lyrical poignancy or a *sévère douceur* but not seldom the utmost he displays is a colloquial vivacity and at the worst there is a lapse into the dull and the insipid. These defects do not condemn his second phase; for it has superlative moments, especially at the outset when to a considerable extent it co-exists with the first, though the gradual drift from the latter is characterised beyond mistake by a certain change in style and psychology.

The change was prepared by Yeats's contribution to the Irish theatre. He began "colloquialising" poetry in order to fit blank verse to an idiom and rhythm which would approximate to naturalness in the mouths of men and women. Not that he wanted a language commonplace or abstract: he wished for a spoken vividness, a stir of the wide-awake mind in the tone to mingle increasingly with chanted dream-splendour. It is, however, doubtful whether in his plays he frequently succeeds when he attempts the new style; the best portions are those where the blank verse is filled with mystic intonations, for, at other times, he is prone to keep away magic and wingedness from the lines without quite making them stride with simple strength. Still, there are instances when he does strike out a movement which admirably anticipates the change to come: the plays on the whole belong to the first phase since the occult imagination is at work in them and by means of Celtic symbols, but lines like

Do you not know
How great a wrong it is to let one's thought
Wander a moment when one is in love?

or,

And while we bore her hither cloudy gusts
Blackened the world, and shook us on our feet;
Draw the great bolt, for no man has beheld
So black, bitter, blinding and sudden a storm,

connect up in style with the second phase in its finer aspects. The other qualities of that later development

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W. B. YEATS—POET OF TWO PHASES

Continued from page 4

grew more from Yeats's dramatic theory than his dramatic practice—a theory which led to a modification in his outlook on the function of all poetry, for he now appeared to believe that a word-music not in contact with the vehement whimsical gusto and variety of actual outer life could not claim the highest class. Indeed, it must not image the cramped superficial gesticulation of men and women enslaved by fear and habit and routine; it must be a less muddled force, expressing passion, personality, action—a force never forgetting that it has behind it an imperishable spirit in touch with unseen magnitudes and powers, nor disdaining to let its imagination be kindled with heroic or romantic colours—but the test is life, more abundant life, and never should the emotions cease responding to flesh as human and the mind fail to move among tangibilities. Yeats could never escape idealism: only, he would not look from beyond the walls of the world, but rather beat against them with a proud courage and use idealism and its light to subserve the actual instead of allowing the actual to dissolve in ideal visions.

The Art of Clear Intensity

The first complete freedom from the old atmosphere is in poems like *Adam's Curse*. A faint intellectual accent also makes itself heard and, though not the intense emotion of the direct kind which is another feature of the second Yeats, a graceful feeling-tone is not absent:

*We sat together at one summer's end,
The beautiful mild woman, your close friend,
And you and I, and talked of poetry.
I said: "A line will take us hours maybe;
Yet if it does not seem a moment's thought,
Our stitching and unstitching has been nought"
That beautiful mild woman for whose sake
There's many a one shall find out all heart-ache
On finding that her voice is sweet and low
Replied: "To be born woman is to know,
Although they do not talk of it at school—
That we must labour to be beautiful"*

For the full perfection of the new style and psychology, two pieces provide excellent examples: they fuse the growing intellectual tone with a direct throb of passion to achieve a clear intensity as contrasted with the indefinite suggestive power of the old lyricism. *The Folly of Being Comforted* leaves an unforgettable vibration in the memory because of its original ideatum which sharpens the impact on our feeling to a sort of delightful stab in the dark:

*One that is ever kind said yesterday;
"Your well-beloved's hair has threads of grey,
And little shadows come about her eyes;
Time can but make it easier to be wise.
Though now it seem impossible, and so
Patience is all that you have need of."
No,
I have not a crumb of comfort, not a grain,
Time can but make her beauty over*

*again:
Because of that great nobleness of hers
The fire that stirs within her when she stirs
Burns but more clearly. O she had not these ways,
When all the wild summer was in her gaze.
O heart! O heart! if she'd but turn her head,
You'd know the folly of being comforted.*

I do not see in what way Yeats is here less a poet and an artist than during his pure Celtic period. The whole music is dissimilar, and the artistry performs its secret office by a method other than the slow sorcery in a poem like *Aedh Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven*—

*Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,
Enwrought with golden and silver light,
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths
Of night and light and the half light,
I would spread the cloths under your feet:
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;
I have spread my dreams under your feet;
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams—*

yet it is a method equally authentic and supports an inspiration as inevitable. For, though there is no spell of a perceptible nature in *The Folly of Being Comforted*, the creative skill by which the effect as of "a moment's thought" is carried to perfection by an alert "stitching and unstitching" are proved by the careful phraseology: the pregnant transitions of syntax, the rhythm modulating itself with most delicate decisive strokes, the repetitive device in the seventh as well as the penultimate line to enforce the emotion. Every detail counts: mark, for instance, that terminal "No", breaking up as it does for the sake of significance the line of which it is metrically a part and giving thereby the argument of that line and its immediate predecessors a kind of check and rebuttal which seems final; nor would it be so definite a stimulus to the reader's zest for the latter half of the poem, if it did not stand thus solitary and suspended. The words "wild summer" have also an inspired *raison d'être*: "summer" is a foot with an inverted stress in the line, and the ordinary justification would be emphasis for the sake of contrast with the peculiar fascination exerted by the well-beloved when the poet is speaking about her; what confers a supreme appositeness on the changed accent is the epithet "wild", for immediately we perceive the impulse behind the summer-charm as one which would most naturally tend to run against rules—here the rule of the iambic metre!

The poem entitled *No Second Troy* differs from *The Folly* in that its emotional element is more implicit than the latter's and the intellectual rises to the front. The emotion is not lost, it constantly supplies fuel to the intellectual glow in the language, or, to take another metaphor, provides the living edge to the tempered swordlike strength and dignity of each line:

*Why should I blame her that she filled my days
With misery, or that she would of late
Have taught to ignorant men most violent ways,*

*Or hurled the little streets upon the great,
Had they but courage equal to desire?
What could have made her peaceful with a mind
That nobleness made simple as a fire,
With beauty like a tightened bow, a kind
That is not natural in an age like this,
Being high and solitary and most stern?
Why, what could she have done being what she is?
Was there another Troy for her to burn?*

This, too, can stand on aesthetic grounds a safe comparison with anything in the old genre, even the deepest music possible there:

*Who dreamed that Beauty passes like a dream?
For these red lips with all their mournful pride,
Mournful that no new wonder may betide,
Troy passed away in one high funeral gleam,
And Usna's children died.*

*We and the labouring world are passing by:
Amid men's souls, that waver and give place,
Like the pale waters in their wintry race,
Under the passing stars, foam of the sky,
Lives on this lonely face.*

*Bow down, archangels, in your dim abode:
Before you were, or any heart to beat,
Weary and kind one lingered by His seat;
He made the world to be a grassy road
Before her wandering feet.*

Both poems show the master-hand, both are as gifts from the gods; but the gods send their gifts through various channels in man's being, and it is only in face of this fact that criticism can permit itself a regret on viewing Yeats's total achievement. For Yeats of the Celtic phase was a *rara avis*, while the gradual change he underwent produced poems which, though original in detail, were of a type not absolutely novel; much fine work has been done in the latter kind by others, but the rich mysticism and intonation brought by his early verse, the enchanted "mouthfuls of sweet air" laden with symbolism of "Red Rose, proud Rose, sad Rose of all my days" were such as no one before had breathed on the world's ear.

Was the Early Yeats Decadent?

It is most superficial to see, as Yeats himself did in his old age and some apostles of modernism do, an anaemic decadence in that verse. No doubt the languid aestheticism of the 'Nineties creeps into it here and there; a weakening and blurring influence is at times caught from writers who divorced art from life and set it within a moated grange or worshipped it in an archaic temple for the mere melodic and jewelled charm words were capable of. But the art of Yeats in its charmed moments was not barren word-culture: and if there was any remoteness about it, the remoteness was of a new reality demanding a special approach through unusual states of consciousness and not a phantom languishing in some vacuum between matter-of-fact and magic. The work of the Decadents was generally in that vacuum—it

had not the clear contour of earth nor the subtle shape of the occult, it was just ambiguous and world-weary, drained of healthy Nature without being filled with Supernature's sight and sound and touch. Hanging midway in an uncertain fever, it was an imitation of the true wizardry which withdraws from the light of common life into a strangeness that is as living but with forms and forces washed in an unknown air. All poetry in fact is such a withdrawal—but there is a difference between the imaginative profound and the imaginative occult. Most great poetry is of the profound order, the wakeful mind of thought super-sensitising itself and catching hidden worlds in its mirror; occult poetry keeps only a nominal hold on the wakeful mind and receives its inspiration of the hidden worlds by a faculty which itself is half-hidden. This poetry can be of two sorts: it can either bring forth extraordinary symbols with a dynamic full-figured concreteness or set flowing an iridescent wave with unearthly limbs emerging from it. Yeats practices both sorts, the second much more frequently and with larger success. The decadent aesthetes thought they could reach and reveal Art's secret places by getting as isolated as possible from normal things and wrapping in rich cloths the thin bodies of far-fetched desires. They had considerable skill but not creative clairvoyant power: their inspiration was at its best a decorative inventor. Yeats wrote several poems in early youth which are indistinct and sentimental rather than artistically vague with occult emblems and the emotion of the Unknown. These deserve to be weeded out, but just because a poem lacks what he later called "manful energy" and "athletic joy" moulding "clear outlines", it does not become a painted miasma which settles nowhere and misleads the wakeful will and intellect. Perhaps his stern judgment upon his early creation was due to an incomplete liaison between his waking mind and the occult: he could not live like a practising mystic, an all-time seer. That, however, was the shortcoming of the man and did not vitiate the poetry, whose particular species of seerhood was absolutely authentic. Yeats's Celtic verse was both true and new.

The Marvellous Might-Have-Been

Blake had walked with spirits, Coleridge had known an eerie darkness, Shelley had been touched by "nurselings of immortality" but none had opened the door of which Yeats discovered the key; they had won no access to the heart whose pulse followed the foot-fall of wizard presences. A hitherto unexplored dimension of conscious activity lay before him; he was granted an instinctive knowledge of all its delicate laybrinths and each dusk-lit reverie through which he glided could be echoed by him in a word-rhythm unique for spell-binding overtones of imagination. If he could have continued his delight in that strange paradise we might have had with the growth of his mind some comprehensive disclosure of it, not magic glimpses as at present but a glimmering cosmology. Even if a result so opulent had been denied us since Yeats has not shown anywhere the architectural sweep of the greatest creators, there would have been a sufficient mass of work in an entirely original field to render his voice and his vision an assured extension of the human consciousness. By one-pointed and organic consistency of aim, Wordsworth stamped on his own time and the generations

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THE WORLD CRISIS AND INDIA BY "Synergist"

IX. VALUES AND SANCTIONS

(b) THE FAILURE OF THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY

In the last essay we examined the rise of materialism in the 19th century and the failure of a world-view based upon the findings of physics, biology and psychology to provide sanction for ethical and spiritual values. Biology, by accepting the non-finalistic and non-teleological Darwinian idea, that the evolutionary force is a blind and unconscious one which has neither any purpose behind it, nor an ultimate end before it towards which it is proceeding, helped perhaps the most to deprive higher values of their ultimate sanction. But the greatest blow to a theo-centric interpretation of existence, which alone can give a real sanction to ethical and spiritual values, was dealt by Auguste Comte. Taking his stand on the philosophical position of Kant's* that the scope of human knowledge is limited to phenomena, and that "things-in-themselves" (noumena) can never be known by the human mind, he declared that philosophers should give up the search for the knowledge of Reality or God because It or He can never be known, and instead of making metaphysical systems, they should devote their time to the systematisation of the Sciences. Philosophy should give up the quest of the Ultimate Reality and Religion should cease to seek God and learn to serve Humanity—the Collective Man was to be the Great Being—the Godhead to be worshipped. Comte's Positivism with its emphasis on the great earthly future for humanity was a necessary corrective to the other-worldly attitude of the Church which only believed in salvation after death and which tended to minimise the importance of life upon earth, but he went to the other extreme—forgetting that he was only a scribe and therefore could not speak with authority, he proclaimed, "The whole effect of Positivist worship will be to make men feel clearly how far superior in every respect is the synthesis founded on the Love of Humanity to that founded on the Love of God." With the advent of Positivism, a 'God-centred' world view was discarded and a 'man-centred' one was put in its place. Comte and the Positivists did not realise that a philosophy of life which either denied the reality of God or which made Him to be an entity who was unconnected with the Universe—an absent God—would finally destroy the real sanction behind higher values, and instead of creating a brotherhood of men would one day pit man against man in a struggle whose result might well be the end of civilization.

Positivism was the natural reaction against Church Religion which, instead of giving men a spiritual discipline and showing them the way to attain union with the Divine Being, became a barrier in their search for truth, and persecuted people for not following its creeds the real spiritual significance of which it was itself incapable of explaining. Unable to understand the mystical element in Christ's teaching, it came to the conclusion like the lay mind, that Christ was essentially a moralist and that his real message was "Love thy neighbour as thyself" whilst you are in the world, and real salvation can only be attained after death in heaven." It did not know that every religion has an esoteric as well as an exoteric aspect. The exoteric is its outer aspect which concerns itself with beliefs in creeds and dogmas, with externals popular known as "religious ceremonies", and with moral practice; the esoteric is concerned with an inner seeking to look behind the outer symbol, creed or dogma into the heart of the spiritual realisation which forms the bedrock of that particular religion, and makes this realisation its ultimate aim.

Amidst such conditions, it is not surprising that Comte was not opposed, and his Religion of Humanity became popular. Bentham with his Hedonism and his 'greatest happiness of the greatest number', Mill with his Utilitarianism and Herbert Spencer with his evolutionary synthesis helped to establish a man-centred philosophy of life. The result of this was that God was eliminated from man's life as something with which he was not directly connected. Worship of the Spirit gave place to worship of life and of material progress. With its head swimming with the victories of physical science, the West declared: What shall it profit a man, if he save his soul and lose the whole world? So, seek ye first the kingdom of worldly goods, and the kingdom of the Spirit will be added unto you, if it exists."

The World Is A Nicodemus

The world is a Nicodemus, especially the Western world; it finds it difficult to comprehend the message of a God-realised mystic—one born of the Spirit. Its difficulty is the same as that of the Pharisee Nicodemus. When Christ told him: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," he was aghast—he replied, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" Christ continued to speak about the "Spiritual Rebirth" and when Nicodemus could not believe that such a "Rebirth" was possible, Christ finally exclaimed, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" The same question may be justly asked of all the Religionists who have turned God-worship into a thing of mere creed, dogma and

ritual instead of making it the path that ultimately leads to God-realisation. But just because religion became a mere worship of outer forms and lost its essential spiritual power, and stood in the path of human progress, it was not logical to discard God-worship and encourage God-denial. The Church should have met the Positivist challenge by an appeal to the validity of direct spiritual experience, and given its followers a system of spiritual discipline, instead of insisting on the externals of religious worship; but unfortunately the Churchmen were like the old masters of Israel—they could not understand the spiritual and mystical side of the teaching of Christ and were unable to show to the Positivists how a God-centred philosophy of life was infinitely superior to a man-centred one. According to some, Tolstoy is supposed to have explained the teaching of Christ, but he too could not get beyond the brotherhood of men and "peace of all men one with another"; his difficulty was also that of Nicodemus. "Spiritual Rebirth" means being born into a new consciousness—a spiritual consciousness in which one attains union with the Divine Being. When a man ceases to identify himself with his outer mental-vital-physical personality that he calls 'I', and by withdrawing into the deeper ranges of his consciousness, awakens to the inner reality of his being, and learns to act no longer from his outer mind but from an inner centre, or from a higher and more luminous consciousness, he is said to be born of the Spirit. Except for a few mystics and saints, Christ has not been understood in the West, and that is the reason why Christianity became "Churchianity," and religion a Sunday ceremonial, and Positivism triumphed with its Religion of Humanity.

"The Religion of Humanity" and the Sanatana Dharma

But the Religion of Humanity was doomed to failure, because it was not even an ersatz religion—it was no religion at all. It ignored the fundamental truth of a man's life—his seeking for the Infinite behind the finite, the timeless Eternal behind the temporal, and his aspiration to attain union with the Supreme Source of all existence and realise a divine life upon earth. We have religion on the one hand—God-worship culminating in God-realisation—and Humanism on the other, which is concerned with social, political and economic aims; to speak of a Religion of Humanity is to mix up aims, ideals and ends. A religion which is not based on God-realisation and which does not culminate in God-realisation, and which does not encourage worship of God and love of God, is no religion. But if we stated only this and no more, it would ultimately mean drawing a sharp distinction between things celestial and terrestrial, between Spirit and Matter, between God and man, as if they were utterly disparate realities. But this is not so. The world is an emanatory manifestation of the Divine Reality, and not a phenomenal super-imposition upon a Formless Absolute, which alone is real. All is Brahman, and therefore this world is Brahman too, but all is not Brahman to the same degree. Reality is one, but there are various orders and modes of Reality. Spirit and Matter are essentially the same, but in the dynamics of the Divine Reality, they are its higher and lower poles; all is involved in the Spirit and proceeds downward to the other end, Matter; and all that is involved in Matter evolves upwards to the Spirit. In between, there is a hierarchy of planes of existence—different levels of organised existence in an ascending-descending series. Man to-day stands on the mental-vital-physical level of organised existence. It was stated in the fifth essay, "Struggle for Existence"—"The history of evolution is the history of the growth of consciousness from its first emergence out of the nescience of Matter into plants, then into animals and finally into man as he is to-day; now its full flowering has to take place in a new type—a spiritually transformed man. The first organised level of terrestrial existence is the material; when the life-principle emerges, it vitalises and animates matter and a material-vital organised existence is created—a world of living physical beings, first the plants and later the animals; when the third principle mind emerges, it mentalises the existing vitalised matter and a material-vital-mental organised existence is created—a world of thinking and living physical beings." Now, with the emergence of the Spiritual Truth-Principle, the re-orientation of terrestrial existence should become possible, as also the creation of a race of divinised beings—men whose mind, life and even body will be radically transformed into their divine archetypal truth forms.

And this can only be done if man is in his essential nature same as the Divine—if man was made of the very stuff of Divinity, not only as a soul being, a direct emanation of the Divine, but also as a nature-organism, a centre of Universal Nature. Prakriti, Universal Nature—*natura naturans** as well as *natura naturata*—is a reality separate from the Purusha only in the terrestrial formula; as we have seen, on the summits of the Spirit, Conscious Soul and Executive Force of Nature are a single Reality, Force

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* It should be noted here that Kant's philosophy can lead to other conclusions also, as shown by Hinton and Ouspensky.

* *Natura naturans*—The Divine Being as the Creative Force of Nature.
Natura naturata—the created cosmic totality of all existence and all individual existencies.

LIGHTS ON LIFE-PROBLEMS

(10)

One of our chief aims will be to provide authentic guidance in regard to the many perplexing questions with which the common man is faced in his daily life. This cannot be better done than by considering these questions in the light of Sri Aurobindo's writings, because Sri Aurobindo is not merely a Master of Yoga in possession of the Eternal Spiritual Truths, but also a Guide and Helper of mankind in the many trying situations that arise in the course of its day-to-day existence. To bring home the light of this guidance and to make it directly applicable to the concrete problems of life, a series of questions of common interest along with precise answers based on Sri Aurobindo's writings will regularly appear in these columns.

Q.: 1. One of the most persistent problems of mankind throughout the ages has been the problem of good and evil or the ethical problem. It has been viewed in different ways at different times. Some ancient religions tried to fix an absolute code of conduct based upon supreme laws of good and evil revealed by God through a prophet and having authority at all times and at all places. The Ten Commandments of the ancient Hebrews are an example of this tendency. Is there any truth in the "divine origin" of these codes and do they possess the eternal validity ascribed to them? What is the difference between the nature of the true divine law and these inflexible codes?

A.: These codes are for the most part no more than idealistic glorifications of the moral principles sanctified by religious emotion with the label of a superhuman origin. Some, like the extreme Christian ethic, are rejected by human nature because they insist unworkably on an impracticable absolute rule. Others prove in the end to be evolutionary compromises and become obsolete in the march of Time. The true divine law, unlike these mental counterfeits, cannot be a system of rigid ethical determinations that press into their cast-iron moulds all our life-movements. The Law divine is truth of life and truth of the spirit and must take up with a free living plasticity and inspire with the direct touch of its eternal light each step of our action and all the complexities of our life-issues. It must act not as a rule and formula but as an enveloping and penetrating conscious presence that determines all our thoughts, activities, feelings, impulses of will by its infallible power and knowledge.

Q.: 2. Some other older religions erected complex **Shastras** like the codes of Manu and Confucius and proclaimed them as the expression of everlasting verities, **sanatan dharma**. Is the claim of these **Shastras** to be the expression of supreme and eternal truths of conduct valid? Do they serve the highest ethical aspiration of our nature?

A.: The **Shashtra** is a combination in some kind of uniting amalgam of three principles—the social rule, the moral law and certain principles of our highest nature. The first two principles are evolutionary and valid for a time, mental constructions, human readings of the will of the Eternal; the third, attached and subdued to certain social and moral formulas, had to share the fortunes of its forms. Either the **Shashtra** grows obsolete and has to be progressively changed or finally cast away or else it stands as a rigid barrier to the self-development of the individual and the race. The **Shashtra** erects a collective and external standard; it ignores the inner nature of the individual, the indeterminable elements of a secret spiritual force within him. But the nature of the individual will not be ignored; its demand is inexorable. The unrestrained indulgence of his outer impulses leads to anarchy and dissolution, but the suppression and coercion of his soul's freedom by a fixed and mechanical rule spells stagnation or an inner death. Not this coercion or determination from outside, but the free discovery of his highest spirit and the truth of an eternal movement is the supreme thing that he has to effectuate.

Q.: 3. The ethical idealist looks for the sure criterion of his conduct not in any superhuman or divine agency but in his own moral reason. Kant, for example, maintains that the moral law is inherent in human reason itself; it is **a priori**, before experience, innate in the very nature of human mind, a categorical imperative, an unfailing determinant of right and wrong. Has human reason this inherent and categorical moral sense?

A.: The rational ethical idealist has tried to reduce the ethical life like all the rest to a matter of reason, to determine its nature, its law, its practical action by some principle of reason, by some law of reason. He has never really succeeded and he never can really succeed; his appearances of success are mere pretences of the intellect making elegant constructions with words and ideas, mere conventions of logic and vamped-up synthesis, in sum pretentious failures which break down at the first strenuous touch of reality. Our moral ideals are themselves for the most part ill-evolved, ignorant and arbitrary mental constructions rather than transcriptions of the eternal truths of the spirit. Authoritative and dogmatic, they assert certain absolute standards in theory, but in practice every existing system of ethics either proves in application unworkable or is in fact a constant coming short of the absolute standard to which the ideal pretends. Moreover, these absolute standards themselves become conflicting principles in their present application by an imperfect humanity.

Justice often demands what love abhors. Right reason dispassionately considering the facts of nature and human relations in search of a satisfying norm or rule is unable to admit without modification either any reign of absolute justice or any reign of absolute love. And in fact man's absolute justice easily turns out to be in practice a sovereign injustice; for his mind, one-sided and rigid in its constructions, puts forward a one-sided partial and rigorous scheme or figure and claims for it totality and absoluteness and an application that ignores the subtler truth of things and the plasticity of life. All our standards turned into action either waver on a flux of compromises or err by this partiality and unelastic structure.

Q.: 4. But is it not a fact that in spite of its basic limitation the ethical idealist's cult of absolute moral standards and categorical imperatives of an ideal moral law has been a great force for the moral improvement and growth of humanity?

A.: There is, no doubt, something here that helps us to rise beyond limitation by the physical and vital man in us, an insistence that overpasses the individual and collective needs and desires of a humanity still bound to the living mud of Matter in which it took its roots, an aspiration that helps to develop the mental and moral being in us: this new sublimating element has been therefore an acquisition of great importance; its workings have marked a considerable step forward in the difficult evolution of terrestrial Nature. And behind the inadequacy of these ethical conceptions something too is concealed that does attach to a supreme Truth; there is here the glimmer of a light and power that are part of a yet unreached divine Nature. But the mental idea of these things is not that light and the moral formulation of them is not that power. These are only representative constructions of the mind that cannot embody the divine spirit which they vainly endeavour to imprison in their categorical formulas. Our inner nature is the progressive expression of the eternal Spirit and too complex a power to be tied by any mental or moral principle. Beyond the mental and moral being in us is a greater divine being that is spiritual and supramental. Only the supramental consciousness can reveal to the differing and conflicting forces of our nature their spiritual truth and harmonise their divergences.

Q.: 5. Recent thinkers have treated the ethical problem more as a practical question of social relationship rather than that of ideal or divine absolute laws. Thus the utilitarian school of the nineteenth century of which Mill was the chief representative laid down the dictum of "the greatest good of the greatest number" as the sole criterion of all ethical conduct. Can this principle of utility be considered the true standard of ethical goodness and evil?

A.: Utility is a fundamental principle of existence and all fundamental principles of existence are in the end one; therefore it is true that the highest good is also the highest utility. It is true also that not any balance of the greatest good of the greatest number, but simply the good of others and most widely the good of all is the ideal aim of outgoing ethical practice; it is that which the ethical man would like to effect, if he could only find the way and be always sure what is the real good of all. But this does not help to regulate our ethical practice, nor does it supply us with its inner principle whether of being or of action, but only produces one of the many considerations, by which we may feel our way along the road which is so difficult to travel. Good, not utility, must be the principle and standard of good; otherwise we fall into the hands of that dangerous pretender expediency, whose whole method is alien to the ethical. Moreover, the standard of utility, the judgment of utility, its spirit, its form, its application must vary with the individual nature, the habit of mind, the outlook on the world. Here there can be no reliable general law to which all can subscribe, no set of large governing principles such as is supplied to our conduct by true ethics. Nor can ethics at all or ever be a matter of calculation. There is only one safe rule for the ethical man, to stick to his principle of good, his instinct for good, his vision of good, his intuition of good and to govern by that his conduct. He may err, but he will be on his right road in spite of all stumblings, because he will be faithful to the law of his nature. The saying of the Gita is always true: better is the law of one's own nature though ill-performed, dangerous is an alien law however speciously superior it may seem to our reason. But the law of nature of the ethical being is the pursuit of good; it can never be the pursuit of utility.

K. G.

What Wilt Thou Sacrifice?

Priestess, what wilt thou sacrifice?
The altar of the dawn's afire,
The gods stoop from their paradise
To taste the ash of thy desire.

What canst thou offer save a dream?
This body is but dust of earth,
And life's a purple passion-stream,
And mind a moon of airy birth.

Within the Fire offer fire,
Thy silent heart's pure lonely flame;
What hast thou lovelier or higher
To burn before His beauteous Name?

O Priestess-soul, before He call,
The Sun-God of the mystics dance,
Gather thy strength and lay thy all
Upon the dawn's red altar-trance.

Then He, the Lord of sacrifice,
Will open His gold-gates of grace,
And lay upon thy new-born eyes
The lustrous vision of His face.

—TEHMI

All

You have plucked my heart away.
How can I go with this hollow bleeding gap?
Parting is a revolt that rends my body—
My entrails are caught in a most cherished trap.

I am always in a wordless wonder
At the flooding endless peace You pour,
And like a tortured lake that is depth-dry
I drink in but thirst for more and more.

The magic circle at Your feet
Is everything in heaven to me;
I sit drawn inward to an intense point,
A point that is inexhaustible as the sea.

Your eyes are two chameleons—
When I am happy they throb like gold stars;
When, clutched by black despair, I search them
They fall like a healing balm on my scars.

Your hand on my burning head is life-reviving snow;
Your feet to me reveal every summer hue;
Why should I roam when all the glorious seasons
And all my rivers and hills are merged in You?

—MINNIE N. CANTEENWALLA.

W. B. YEATS— POET OF TWO PHASES

Continued from page 5

after, a new conception of Nature; Shelley's amazing productiveness blended inextricably by the same means a new idealistic glow with the emotions to which the human race had been accustomed. Yeats, however, bifurcated his never too prolific inspiration, dropped the wonder that had fallen into his hands and took up moods no less valuable from the aesthetic standpoint yet not surprisingly individual enough in what may be termed "revelation" to keep enthralled the eye of aspiring ages. Individual these moods and methods are in the sense of thrusting forward a penetrating original mind of virile aristocracy, an imagination zestful, profoundly moved, admirably eclectic in its range. Their defect, in the revelatory sense, is that they do not draw out in a pure form a plane of reality beyond the mental. They have depth of thought and suggestion, at times a fierce flaming depth as in *Sailing to Byzantium*; but how far is this from the swinging wide of secret gates into a land where myth and faery and deific dream have a poignant super-life!

Not that Yeats in old age stopped being occult and mystical. He aimed at an expression of the whole man—realist and romantic, flesh and spirit, intellect and intuition. His splendid aim got splendidly accomplished—but what was lost was the accent of some inner world. Now each esoteric plunge was taken in a grand or energetic manner self-consciously moulded; in his youth his voice had been like a wind blowing from an unearthly kingdom, and whatever energy or grandeur was in it came atmosphered with a consciousness other than the proud intellect. The difference between the sources of the two styles can be felt immediately. Take these lines

"Holy Tree" in the heart:

*The surety of its hidden root
Has planted quiet in the sky.*

A similar substance is charged by the later Yeats with a more philosophical and less spiritual passion, though the poetic upshot is no whit inferior:

*Whatever flares upon the night
Man's own resinous heart has fed.*

The artistry of the aged Yeats made the thinking mind grip and undrape mysteries; that of the young Yeats cunningly surrendered to mysteries and made them grip it and undrape themselves with its aid. The larger reality behind the veil used to seize the smaller reality of the human self; the smaller came in course of time to lay hands on the larger and fit it to the various sides of the personality. If the early inspiration could have absorbed the whole man instead of a few parts as it was wont to do, there would have resulted an all-roundness not like a compromise as at present under the dominating influence of the athletic will co-ordinating the personality's diverse motions. It would have been a large harmony keyed to a centre of awareness more inward. Yeats did not achieve that rarer wholeness. So what possessed a most surprising individuality of "revelation" came to lack the cumulative power a consistent life-work alone can bestow, to enlarge beyond doubt the racial soul. As a poet of genius, the finest in the England of our day, he will last; criticism can enjoy and praise the deviation which occurred in his art, but that deviation is bound to weaken his influence, for it lost him the full-blazing torch of a poetic *vita nuova* which he might have lifted for the future.

THE FAILURE OF THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY

Continued from page 6

is the energism of Consciousness; and the Universe, the whole cosmic manifestation is the projection of a Supreme Divine Consciousness. Therefore, religion at its highest should strive not only to make man seek the Divine by shunning His manifestation, which is the world, but should make him manifest Him in life after attaining union with Him; it should seek to unite Spirit and Life in the Divine Consummation of both in the world. The human has to be uplifted into the Divine, the Divine has to be manifested in the human, creating a race of divinised beings upon earth. Such a religion—a "Religion of a Divine Humanity" is the Eternal Religion, Sanatana Dharma at its highest. Sanatana Dharma as it is usually preached, declares the essential oneness of all human beings in the Spirit—it bases itself on the great Spiritual Realisation—*Tat Tvam Asi*, That Thou Art. But this is a first step only; the second step is to manifest That in terrestrial existence. Man is That in essence and in his real spiritual nature, but outwardly he is a creature who moves in half-light and ignorance. Now he has to overtly manifest his Divinity; all the parts of his being—his mind life, and even his body have to be divinised till they become fit vehicles for the expression of That in the world. The Religion of a Divine Humanity is the only religion which is capable of giving a meaning to life and existence and of pointing towards a definite spiritual goal which unites both man and man, and man and God. It does not entirely annul human values, but transforms them into their divine equivalents and shows their real place in a divine life upon earth.

Even a religion which advocates a brotherhood of man and a world unity based upon the essential oneness of all creation in the Spirit, however exalted it may be, does not clearly show the purpose and ultimate goal of existence. It supports a static conception of the Universe, and ignores its dynamic evolutionary movement. A political world unity is incomplete without a spiritual world unity, but even such a unity cannot be an end in itself, but only a means for attaining something higher—for fulfilling the purpose for which this world was created. The purpose of existence is not to form a brotherhood of men, but to manifest God in man, and create on earth a race of divinised beings. By realising the first ideal, the second is ignored, by realising the ideal of a Divine Humanity the first is also realised, for the second is the greater ideal and contains the first within it.

No doubt a political world unity will help to ensure stable conditions in the world, and give it a greater scope to pursue higher ends. But this should not prevent us from envisaging the real goal before us and as far as possible trying to canalise all our human endeavours towards that one goal. Shall we not then say that it is Sanatana Dharma raised to its highest significance—an Eternal Religion which belongs to no one race, but which is a religion that contains all existing religions within it and yet exceeds them—that alone can lead man to his ultimate fulfilment?

NEW TRENDS IN WESTERN THOUGHT

WHY SCIENCE IN RUSSIA WILL DECAY.

By BERTRAND RUSSELL

World Digest

THERE can be no doubt that during the present year a campaign will be conducted to compel physicists throughout the territory of the U.S.S.R. to renounce the "idealistic errors" which capitalism has generated in Einstein and Bohr and other theoretical physicists of the West.

This is, to my mind, the most encouraging thing that has happened in recent years in the cold war, for it makes it nearly certain that, with every year that passes, Russian technical inferiority in the matter of scientific armament will increase.

It is impossible that science should flourish in the conditions imposed by the Soviet Government. The interference with free thought is very much greater than it was in the days when science had to fight against Christian orthodoxy.

If Stalin does not like a composer's music, the composer has to eat humble pie and undertake to produce more popular tunes. What you are to think about Greek philosophers, or about modern literature, is rigidly prescribed. Stalin, "the greatest scientist of our epoch," knows all about it, and if you venture to disagree with him you run the risks of the most dreadful penalties.

Dictatorship and the Scientific Attitude

In any dictatorship it is inevitable that, sooner or later the lust for power should become a kind of madness. Those who study Nature scientifically require a certain kind of patience and humility. They must observe, and admit the results of observation, however distasteful. But to a dictator such an attitude of mind is intolerable. He can cause many millions of humans to applaud his every whim, and why should not Nature do likewise? Human secrets are unveiled by the Secret Police; therefore, it is for them to unveil the secrets of Nature.

This mentality makes scientific progress completely impossible, and we may confidently expect that science in Russia will very rapidly decay.

The attitude of the Soviet State to Russian men of science may be viewed in two different ways. On the one hand, it is deplorable as an example of what Shakespeare calls "folly doctor-like controlling skill". On the other hand, it is one of the most encouraging features to those who hope that Western military strength will become obviously superior to that of Russia.

The Lysenko Controversy

The Soviet Government, after dealing with literature, music and philosophy and insisting that they must conform to the tastes of the Politburo, began to think that the time had come to make men of science toe the line. A beginning was made with the biologists. There was a long-standing controversy as to whether what are called "acquired characters" can be inherited. Lamarck, who was a predecessor of Darwin, held that they could.

Darwin, while he did not deny the possibility of inheritance of "acquired characters," placed much more emphasis upon congenital variations, and gradually this view has more and more prevailed among biologists. They do not think that the giraffe can improve his children's necks by his own athletic exercises, any more than W. G. Grace could hope that his children would be born able to play cricket.

The view that "acquired characters" are never inherited gradually won almost universal acceptance until it was challenged by Lysenko. At a series of Russian congresses and conferences, his view was declared to be alone orthodox. The contrary view held in Western countries was declared to be "bourgeois."

A conference of the Praesidium of Medical Science in September, 1948, when accepting Lysenko's theory, sent a letter to Stalin thanking him for all their best achievements. These medical pundits went on to say: "Your wise direction in the development of science, your struggle with idealistic theories and tendencies in science and ideology, are our everyday guide for our actions."

Some of these men, it would seem, had shown a tendency to heresy before the orthodox doctrine had been clearly proclaimed. They undertook that this should cease: "We promise you, our dear leader, to rid ourselves as quickly as possible of our mistakes."

The All-Union Academy of Agricultural Sciences, which met in July 1948 went even further in the way of submissiveness, and wound up a series of fulsome compliments by speaking of "the greatest scientist of our epoch—J. V. Stalin."

I do not think the Soviet scientists should be unduly blamed for their subservience. Failure to conform involves, to begin with, loss of whatever academic position a man may have occupied, and, if persisted in, may lead to liquidation or the concentration camp, with probably grave injury to wife and children.

It seems clear that what led to the Soviet Government's support of Lysenko is that his theory, if correct, gives promise of quicker results in agriculture than would otherwise be possible.

Russia and Canada are faced with a problem which is the same for both, so far as science is concerned: namely, the problem of producing a breed of wheat that is resistant to great cold. Western geneticists think this can only be done by selecting accidentally generated varieties, whereas Lysenko assures the Soviet authorities that he can order wheat grains about as if they were Soviet citizens.

In the report already mentioned, he says: "By means of human intervention, it is possible to force any form of plant or animal to change more quickly and, moreover, in the direction desired by Man." Pravda spoke of "the Soviet people's struggle to bring about a planned change in Nature."

The question that divides Lysenko from Western scientists is only one of degree. Everybody knows that animals and plants, under domestication, can be enormously changed by human agency; but if Lysenko is right, these changes can be brought about very much more rapidly than Western scientists suppose.

If he is right, Russian agriculture will go ahead very much faster than that of Western countries, and Russia will soon have a large exportable surplus of grain, which will be of great utility in international

bargaining.

If, on the other hand, he is wrong, as all competent geneticists believe, the advantage will be the other way round. It seems that the Soviet Government, having had such great success in bullying human beings, is now determined to bully Nature, but it is difficult to put Nature into a concentration camp, and I think we may rely upon her to resist All-Soviet decrees.

Modern Physics and Old-Fashioned Materialism

The Soviet authorities are now embarking upon an even more ambitious project—namely, the rectification of theoretical physics. Theoretical physics—since it produced the atom bomb—has been very much in the limelight, and it is a bitter pill for Russian national vanity that it was bourgeois scientists who accomplished this feat.

Communism and patriotism are inextricably mingled in the Russian mentality, and it is sometimes difficult to know whether a scientist is decried because he is bourgeois, or because he is foreign. Russian scientists have made frantic efforts to prove that in every direction Western discoveries were anticipated by Russians, whom capitalist nations have perversely ignored. Nevertheless, the fact remains that it is the Americans and not the Russians who made the atom bomb.

What is really worrying to Soviet orthodoxy is that atomic physicists have undermined the basis of old-fashioned materialism.

An atom is a complicated system of electrons, neutrons, positrons and what not, each of which exists for a moment and then is replaced by another precisely similar somewhere else. None of these brief pellets has any precise location.

V. L. Lvov, in the *Literary Gazette* last November, fired the opening shot in a campaign against anti-materialistic tendencies in physics—a campaign which there is every reason to believe will be

pushed through with the same vigour that characterized the attack upon received doctrines in genetics. Long ago, Lenin attacked similar tendencies, and Lvov praises him for having "in the manner of a genius" objected to the dictum: "matter vanishes, there remain only equations."

This dictum is awkward for those who have worshipped matter, for equations have no attribute suitable to an object of worship, except incomprehensibility. Professor Neils Bohr, who first introduced quantum mechanics into the theory of the atom, is a special object of Mr. Lvov's dislike, and Bohr's followers are spoken of as "The Copenhagen Bourgeois School of Physics," because Mr. Bohr is a Dane, who lived in Copenhagen until the Nazis made it too hot for him. They are said to be "the enemies of materialism in principle and for this reason their doctrines are suspect."

Importance of Intellectual Freedom

The modern progress of atomic theory—Mr. Lvov maintains—has been in spite of their doctrine and not because of it: "Only the scientists of the Soviet Socialist country, guided by the great principles of dialectical materialism, are capable of bringing the theory of the structure of matter out of the morass into which it is being driven by the physicist-idealists of all schools."

This peroration might be condensed into three words: "Soviet physicists, beware!"

Men of science in Western nations have, as yet, a very great deal of freedom, but as their importance comes to be more realized there is an increasing danger that orthodoxy may be demanded of them as in the East.

I do not think it is possible to over-estimate the importance of intellectual freedom to men of science, for without intellectual freedom, the kind of originality from which progress comes is scarcely possible.

WHAT IS BASIC EDUCATION?—

Continued from page 3

of thought and reaction in the minds of children", Sri Aurobindo writes in *Essays on the Gita*:

"We bear a terrible weight of external necessity, rule and law, and our need for self-expression, for the development of our true person, our real soul, our inmost characteristic law of nature in life is in every turn interfered with, thwarted, forced from its course, given a very poor chance and scope by environmental influences. Life, State, society, family all surrounding powers seem to be in a league to lay their yoke on our spirit, compel us into their moulds, impose on us their mechanical interest and rough immediate convenience. We become parts of a machine; we are not, are hardly allowed to be in the true sense, *manusya*, *purusa*, souls, minds, free children of the spirit empowered to develop the highest characteristic perfection of our being and make it our means of service to the race. It would seem that we are not what we make ourselves, but what we are made. Yet the more we advance in knowledge, the more the truth of the Gita's rule is bound to appear. The child's education ought to be an out-bringing of all that is best, most powerful, most intimate and living in his nature; the mould into which the man's action and development ought to run is that of his innate quality and power. He must acquire new things, but he will acquire them best, most vitally on the basis of his own developed type and inborn force. And so too the functions of a man ought to be determined by his natural turn, gift and capacities. The individual who develops freely in this manner will be a living soul and mind and will have a much greater power for the service of the race".

"CHANAKYA".

EDITORIALS FROM EVERYWHERE

HUMAN RIGHTS Major Issue Of Liberty

At a time when political thought and controversy are being conducted in terms of "isms", "blocs" and ideologies it is insufficiently appreciated that the human situation can be spelled out in terms of human happiness or human misery. Fundamentally it is the individual and many others like him and his welfare or his failure to achieve it that are or should be the basic issue at stake. And it is in regard to the individual, to his rights and liberties, that the political philosophies of the Soviet Union and the western democracies are miles apart. The principles which impelled the British and American Governments to protest to Rumania, Hungary and Bulgaria about their violation of the political liberties clauses of the peace treaties are completely alien to Soviet thought. The first treaty provides, for instance, that Rumania should adopt "all measures to secure to all persons under Rumanian jurisdiction, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion, the enjoyment of human rights and the fundamental freedoms . . . there being similar provisions in regard to the other countries. In matters arising out of the treaties' execution and interpretation, the Heads of the Soviet, British and American Missions are empowered to consult together and seek appropriate enforcement measures. This the British and American Governments intend to do but there is no indication that the Soviet Union is any more disposed to co-operate on this issue than on others of a directly political character. It is significant that politically the issue has been settled in all the three countries. Intolerant of any rival centre of authority or of any distraction which might affect the citizens' steadfastness in collective totality, the Communists have—by purges, rigged elections and "absorptions"—ensured that all rival organisations submerge their individuality behind various "Fronts". Where non-Communist parties linger, they are pale shadows of their former selves and are deprived of effective leadership. So complete has been the Communist victory that the Western protest can have little significance in terms of the political struggle between East and West. It is impelled only by the single issue of liberty.

U. N. REACTION

Towards the end of April, the Political Committee of the United Nations adopted by 34 votes to 6 a resolution denouncing the Hungarian and Bulgarian Governments for their trials of Cardinal Mindszenty and the Bulgarian pastors. This was a reflection of the increasing concern in the Western world over the gradual elimination of all political, social and religious rights in eastern

Europe. The organ entrusted by the United Nations to "make recommendations for the purpose of promoting respect for, and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all" was the Social and Economic Council of the international organisation. The fact that the United Nations burdened by urgent political problems found itself impelled to draft a declaration of Human Rights is in itself a significant step in the evolution of progressive thought. While it is true that precedents of a sort existed in the Magna Carta and the concept of political liberty was closely connected with the French and American revolutions, they were overshadowed by the purely political aspect of human rights. Social and economic rights received an impetus with the Industrial Revolution, and subsequently Mr. Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms" was a courageous declaration of the need to express the ideals of liberal democracy in terms of economic and social welfare. The existence of a body of human rights derived from the nature of man and the purposes of human life provide a common background throughout the western world. It is in clarifying the meaning of their common tradition that the value of the human rights declaration lies. Unless some authority exists to interpret and enforce the Declaration the citizens of Europe and of the other free countries of the world cannot be given complete security. As the cases of Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary have shown the chance of establishing such an authority remains remote. But the challenge of Communism demands a clear-cut and forceful reply. The task of the United Nations will not be over, however, merely because a declaration of rights has been made. An attempt must be made to give legal expression in the form of international conventions to the main provisions of the human rights document. It is here that the difficulties can be anticipated. Natural rights and duties are eternal but the particular form they take in any period of history depends on the circumstances then obtaining and—unfortunately—on the requirements of expediency. The most that can be hoped is to produce a definition of what in normal circumstances can be regarded as the essentials of free government. This the Human Rights Declaration of the United Nations has done, but it still remains to reconcile the differences in tradition and outlook even among the Governments and peoples of the western world.

FIRM POLICY

Though the Soviet Union and her satellites might find it possible to subscribe to some innocuous statement of principle, there is little doubt that in Russia and those territories now dominated by Soviet thought and culture the fundamental rights and freedoms are completely rejected. Pious generalities are easily accepted

by all, and it is better that the western powers should seek, in their day-to-day policies, the enforcement of the human rights declaration rather than remain content with a document to which even the Russians can theoretically subscribe. In proposing to take action in regard to the treaties with Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary, the British and American Governments have taken the lead in ensuring that human rights become a live reality in the contemporary political scene. Such action constitutes a direct challenge on an issue about which there can be no compromise. Russia can answer only by rejecting, without disguise, the ideals and principles which are not only basic to western civilisation but to the United Nations itself.

SLAVE LABOUR

There can be no more damning indictment of the Soviet Union's disregard of human rights than that contained in the system of slave labour for which—in the words of Mr. Christopher Mayhew—"there is no parallel in history." The evidence in support of the indictment is derived from many and varied sources which have been checked over a long period. Even among those who are wary of accepting reports of the inhuman system of slavery which the Russians have evolved scepticism cannot withstand the overwhelming force of the evidence that is available. Many millions—numbering perhaps up to 15,000,000—are living in wretchedness and under-nourishment; they are described as persons deprived of liberty. In answer to Russian accusations regarding Britain's "colonial system", Mr. Mayhew declared: "If the great body of evidence on Soviet forced labour now available to us has any meaning at all it means that there exists in Soviet Russia a monstrous system of oppression which makes a mockery of the claim that that country is a democratic or socialist State". In numerous books—some of them official Russian publications—and in such reports as that of the American Federation of Labour, the story of human misery in Soviet labour camps can be read by all. That is a situation with which no compromise is possible unless the Human Rights Declaration is to be deprived of all meaning.

THE TIMES OF INDIA (Bombay)

KASHMIR AND CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

One of the most gratifying features of the last session of the Constituent Assembly was the presence of Sheikh Abdullah and three other representatives of Kashmir. About 20 months ago India pledged her word to liberate Kashmir whatever the cost and handicaps. The representation of Kashmir in the Constituent Assembly is evidence of India's sincere

desire and capacity to redeem her pledge. India has not only liberated Kashmir. She has invited Kashmir to devise India's constitution. Compare the status of Kashmir in the Indian Union with the position of the states which have acceded to Pakistan. The people of Kalat and other states are being ruthlessly suppressed.

The representation of Kashmir in the Constituent Assembly has been vehemently denounced in Pakistani circles. Mr. Mahomed Ibrahim Khan, the so-called president of the self-styled Azad Kashmir Government, said last week that the representation of Kashmiris indicated that Pt. Nehru considered the accession of Kashmir to India as accomplished, and that that attitude was not compatible with the statement of the Indian representative in the Security Council that the accession was conditional. There is no point in this criticism. Because the representatives of Kashmir sit in the Constituent Assembly it does not mean that the Government of India are now opposed to a plebiscite being held. If the result of the plebiscite shows that Kashmiris are opposed to Kashmir's accession to India, the representatives of Kashmir will withdraw from the Constituent Assembly. But as there is no prospect of a plebiscite being held in the near future, it is unfair that the representatives of Kashmir should be excluded from the Constituent Assembly for no fault of theirs. Indeed, we feel that already a grave injustice has been done to Kashmiris. The Kashmiris should have been asked to send their representatives to the Constituent Assembly 20 months ago when the Government of India accepted Kashmir's accession to India.

It is the rulers of Pakistan, and not the Government of India and the Kashmir Government, who are responsible for the delay in plebiscite. Why should Kashmiris suffer for the mistakes of Pakistanis? The disbandment and disarmament of Azad Kashmir forces is a condition precedent to a free and impartial plebiscite. But as this condition is not acceptable to the Pakistan Government, a plebiscite is out of the question. It has been suggested by a section of Pakistanis that the Pakistan Government should ask the Azad Kashmir Government to send its representatives to the Pakistan Constituent Assembly. There was a lunatic who called himself Emperor of India. The rulers of Pakistan are at liberty to make a fool of themselves. But there is only one recognised Government of Kashmir and that is Sheikh Abdullah's Government. We are sure that Sheikh Abdullah and the other representatives of Kashmir will play a useful part in the deliberations of the Indian Constituent Assembly.

THE LEADER (Allahabad)

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The Owl's Banquet

BY "MINERVA"

A sample of the efficiency claimed to be the result of the State-control of everything in Russia is to be found in John Steinbeck's recent book, *A Russian Journal*. "Since everything," writes Steinbeck, "in the Soviet Union, every transaction is under the State, or under monopolies granted by the State, the book-keeping system is enormous. Thus the waiter, when he takes an order, writes it very carefully in a book. But he doesn't go then and request the food. He goes to the book-keeper, who makes another entry concerning the food which has been ordered, and issues a slip which goes to the kitchen. There another entry is made, and certain food is requested. When the food is finally issued, an entry of the food issued is also made out on a slip, which is given to the waiter. But he doesn't bring the food back to the table. He takes the slip to the book-keeper, who makes another entry that such food as has been ordered has been issued, and gives another slip to the waiter, who then goes back to the kitchen and brings the food to the table, making a note in his book that the food which has been ordered, which has been delivered, is now, finally, on the table." We suppose one's appetite is made sharper because of this long disciplined process than under the anarchic conditions of western democracy where promptness of service is the motto.

Belgrade's most famous building is her only skyscraper — a 13-storey

affair called the "Albania"; and the city also has a number of hotels, one of which is called the "Moscow", and another the "London". The most popular joke in Belgrade today is the story of Tito being shown some plans for the reconstruction of the capital, and being asked if he has any suggestions to make. "Well", says Tito, "we should cut the 'Albania' in half, pull down the 'Moscow', and widen the street leading to the 'London'."

The UNO is a household word and it seems to us the most natural one, too. But few realise how it was originally found and that its finding was quite a job. Alden Hatch tells us in his biography of Roosevelt, *Citizen of the World*, that Roosevelt and Churchill discussed for hours what name to give to the anti-Axis association they had planned. "The Allies" was too reminiscent of past failures; any mention of a league would prejudice the Americans. They tried a number of names, liked none, went to bed without reaching a conclusion. The next morning as Roosevelt was dressing he startled Prettyman, his attendant, by shouting: "I've got it!" He commanded, "Take me to Churchill's room". Prettyman wheeled him down the hall of the White House on a dead run and knocked at the closed door of the British Prime Minister's room. There was no answer and the President leaned over and banged on the panel.

"Who's there?" called a muffled voice.

"It's I—Franklin."
"Come in".

Prettyman pushed the President into an empty room.

"Where are you, Winston?"

"In my bath."

"I've got to speak to you."

"All right, open up."

Roosevelt wheeled himself up to the door and swung it open. The Prime Minister's round torso rose from a welter of soapsuds.

"Winston," Franklin shouted, "how about 'The United Nations'?"

Churchill beamed through a mask of leather.

"That ought to do it," he exclaimed.

Many memorable broadcasts were made during the last war—several by Roosevelt and Churchill. Lord Haw-Haw and Tokyo Rose also made a name for themselves, though a very obnoxious name. The most original broadcast, however, was the humourist P. G. Wodehouse's. He was captured when the Nazis overran France, and made to tell England over the Berlin Radio how mistaken the Britishers were about the Nazis. But once he took advantage of the Germans' ignorance of the English phrase, "Tell it to the marines", which means "It's bosh." Wodehouse spoke in a moving tone: "The Germans are treating me with the utmost consideration. They respect the individual's rights. We, prisoners, are like guests. The German Government is most civilised and humane. This is a truth all must know. Speak of it to all your friends. Publish it to the common people. Proclaim it to the home guards. Announce it to the army. Declare it to the air force. Tell it to the marines."

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—:oO:—

SRI AUROBINDO SUPPORTS MERGER OF FRENCH INDIA

Sri Aurobindo in his own supreme spiritual way strives for India's solidarity and greatness, Sjt. Nolini Kanta Gupta the Secretary of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram told the A.P.I. special representative on June 14.

Sri Aurobindo feels certain and has expressed it more than once, the Secretary said, that the different parts of India, whoever may be their present rulers, are bound to join the mother country and that India, free and united, will become a dynamic spiritual force bringing peace and harmony to the war-scarred world and suffering humanity in general.

Asked whether this meant that Sri Aurobindo desired Chandernagore, Pondicherry and other French Settlements in India to join India, the Secretary said: "Certainly so. He has prophesied that these small foreign pockets in India would sooner or later become one with India and India would become the spiritual leader of the world. Sri Aurobindo's great Yoga-Shakti is directed to that end."

The Sri Aurobindo Ashram, the spiritual home of numerous devotees from all over the world, undoubtedly dominates the life in Pondicherry, but the institution as such takes no interest in politics. "No politics in the Ashram" states a notice prominently displayed at the Ashram Library and the Reading Room, where many disciples wait daily before going to receive blessings from the Mother—the slim and frail-bodied lady who with her inspiring and dynamic personality controls the many-sided activities of the Ashram and commands, next only to Sri Aurobindo, the willing and affectionate regard of all the 600 odd permanent residents of the Ashram.

As a spiritual home, the Ashram as such adopts a neutral attitude towards the burning question of the day in Pondicherry, namely, the refer-

endum to decide the future of the French settlements in India, the Secretary said. He, however, strongly refuted the notion in certain quarters that the Ashram is pro-French, and referred to one of his public statements wherein he had stated: "Nobody here (Ashram) is for the continuation of French rule in India."

SRI AUROBINDO'S ATTITUDE WELCOMED

Congress and progressive circles have welcomed the attitude of Sri Aurobindo and inmates of his Ashram towards the ensuing referendum in French settlements of India:

According to these circles, the Ashram Secretary's lucid clarification of the Ashram point of view, namely, that the French settlements of India should be integrated with the mother country, will "serve the national cause."

Mr. A. Lahache, President of the National Liberation front in Pondicherry, told P.T.I. last week the authoritative declaration that none of the members of the Ashram is pro-French—and that Sri Aurobindo himself desires abolition of various foreign pockets in India—was "most timely".

"It is bound to have profound influence on the public mind in Chandernagore, which is to decide its future next Sunday, and other French settlements", he added.

A prominent member of the French India Representative Assembly said that the Ashram Secretary's statement was an important and forthright one and it "leaves no room for doubt about the Ashram attitude on the burning question of the day."

HOW TO CHECK COMMUNISM

BY B. C. SEN

Secretary, The Unity Party

Sir Ramaswamy Mudaliar, Dewan of Mysore, who has recently returned from a tour of America, observed that the people of America expected India to be a bulwark against the spread of Communism in Asia. In order that India may effectively play that role, she should set her own house in order. According to one estimate there is at least one Leftist man or woman in every educated family in India today, and the Leftists, whatever be the party to which they may outwardly belong, are agreed that a Socialist Republic should immediately be established in India by sabotage and violence.

Mr. P. S. Kumaraswamy Raja, Premier of Madras, said recently in a meeting held in his home town: "The Communists are resorting to violent and underground activities to capture power. If the country is to be saved from the danger of being subjected to foreign domination again, it is the duty of the people to help the Government to put down such activities." The West Bengal Premier said that the danger of Communism in his province is only less than what it is in Hyderabad, where, according to Sardar Patel, 300 Congress workers have been murdered by the Communists in two districts. This gives a sufficiently realistic picture of the Communist menace in India.

Besides the precautions the Government are already taking, we give the following suggestions:

1. The Congress and the Government must come out with a clear ideology and not play with the fire of Socialism and Communism. As it is, it is made to appear that the Congress and the Communists have the same ideology, the same objective, only they differ in their methods. The Communists are cleverly turning this against the Congress by saying that they have not the vision and the courage to take the steps which will immediately end the miseries of the people and bring the Socialist millen-

nium. The Congress should declare that neither Capitalism nor orthodox Socialism is the right solution for the world's future; that it is not a socialistic republic but a spiritualised society that is the ultimate goal not only of India but of all humanity, though India will have to show the way. Man must go through a spiritual discipline which will raise him to a higher level of consciousness in which exploitation and oppression will have no place and love and harmony will be the basis of human relations. The Congress, by adopting the Dharma Chakra of Asoka as the national symbol has tacitly accepted this ideal; it has now to be clearly formulated.

2. Communist propaganda must be checked. The cinemas in Calcutta and other big cities are making a roaring trade with Russian pictures and this is spreading Communism like wild fire. This must be stopped by legislation, if necessary. At the same time an intensive propaganda should be carried on to show how hollow are the communist claims, how the Five-Year Plan and Collectivisation of Russia led to wide-spread famine, in comparison with which the Bengal famine of 1942 was negligible, and how the socialistic regime in Russia is maintained by the G. P. U. police and millions of slave labourers. Books

like *I Chose Freedom* by Kravchenko should be translated into all Indian languages and widely distributed all over India.

3. The poverty of the masses must be tackled immediately and not left to some future date when the big projects, bigger than the Tennessee Valley of America, will begin to give dividends. The needs of the masses of India are not many and we are sure they can be met *even now*, if the Government try on the right lines and can secure the co-operation of the industrialists and the general public.

4. A spiritual movement which will awaken the people to their great heritage is the urgent need

of the poor. Here we can take the suggestion of Vivekananda, to whom many of our leaders only pay lip homage. In *My Plan of Campaign*, the Swami said: "Every improvement in India requires first of all an upheaval in religion. Before flooding India with socialistic or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas. The first work that demands our attention is that the most wonderful truths contained in our Upanishads, in our scriptures, our Puranas must be brought out from the books and scattered broadcast all over the land, so that these truths may run like fire all over the country from north to south and east to west, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from Sind to the Brahmaputra."

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