

# MOTHER INDIA

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K. R. PODDAR

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K. D. SETHNA

"GREAT IS TRUTH AND IT SHALL PREVAIL"

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## CONTENTS

THE FOLLY OF UNITED LEFTIST FRONT .. .. .	1	SRI AUROBINDO, THE LEADER OF THE EVOLUTION by "Synergist" Part II of "The World Crisis and India" .. .. .	7
AMERICAN TRIBUTES TO SRI AUROBINDO .. .. .	2		
A "NATIONAL" LANGUAGE FOR INDIA by K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar .. .. .	3	BY WAY OF THE TIMELESS: THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALDOUS HUXLEY by N. Pearson .. .. .	9
THE CLOSE OF THE "DIVINA COMMEDIA" Englished by K. D. Sethna .. .. .	4		
LIGHTS ON LIFE-PROBLEMS .. .. .	5	A NATIONAL SCHEME FOR DEVELOPMENT OF ART by Jagadish Chandra Khanna .. .. .	11
VISION AND REALISATION: Extracts from the Writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother .. .. .	6	THE GRIM FACTS OF THE KASHMIR-SITUATION by "Libra" .. .. .	12

## THE FOLLY OF UNITED LEFTIST FRONT

The latest slogan in the political warfare going on in India is: "All parties of the Left must unite against Congress." Sarat Bose originated the slogan. Jayaprakash Narayan has pointed out that a fundamental unity is indeed difficult to achieve because of each party's attachment to its own particular propaganda and because of moral disagreement on the methods of establishing and pursuing collective economy; but he has assented to an electoral co-operation among the Leftists. So, for practical purposes, the battle-cry of Bose remains effective. Possibly in the near future it may even lead to a straightening out of differences in the interests of a basic consolidation. The need, thus, is still acute for underlining the dangerousness of it. There are two reasons for the dangerousness.

### Is the Arch-Enemy Congress or Communism?

The first is that here is a frenzied forgetting of the real evil which India has at present to face and overcome. The vision behind the feverish call for a united Leftist front is that Congress is the arch-enemy today. Congress has certainly exposed itself to criticism, but is it not folly on the part of the Leftists to make Congress's defeat their principal objective? Have they not, time and again, denounced the grave evil of Communism? Do they not know that the Communists are bent not only on disorganising Congress government but also on giving no chance ultimately to the party of either Sarat Bose or Jayaprakash Narayan?

The latter leader himself said not long ago at a public meeting in Calcutta that the Communist tactics of creating anarchy and disruption as a protest against the Congress policy must be condemned, since such violent and vicious tactics would lead the country nowhere and paralyse every scheme undertaken by any government whatever to improve the country's lot. If Communism is allowed to have its way, neither the Forward Bloc nor the Socialist party can function. And there is no doubt that the Communists are almost as much against these political groups as against Congress. They are the most deadly menace to India, with their utterly materialistic doctrine and opportunist strategy and their allegiance to an extra-territorial power. If the Leftist parties should unite in any form, it ought to be in the cause of combating the Soviet's stooges who want to annul the best that Indian culture stands for. And the union should join hands with Congress in order to carry on this combat effectively. To sidetrack the collective energy needed for the anti-Communist cause and turn it upon Congress is directly to strengthen the hands of India's enemies; for, the very first item on their destructive programme is the elimination of the one party that has seen through the hoax of Russia's "progressiveness" and under Nehru's wise guidance forged an indirect link with the Western bloc by keeping India within the Commonwealth.

### Blind Spots That Threaten Civilisation

What is still more ironical, the Communists whom both the Forward Bloc and the Socialist party condemn and who in turn look upon them as renegades from the true ideology will make no bones about supporting the united anti-Congress front envisaged by these groups. The triumph in the Calcutta by-election which Sarat Bose claims as a resounding vote by Bengal for his party was to a considerable extent aided not only by Hindu sectarians who view both the secularity and the international outlook of Congress with suspicion, but also by large masses of Communists. And it is this fact that leads most naturally to the second reason why the effort to unite the Left is fraught with danger for India. The Communists are willing to "gang up" with any Left party not simply because of animus against Congress. The Leftist mind has, among its blind spots, two

of very immediate serious consequence which the Communists recognise as secret points of contact with themselves and which they can employ as points of departure for the establishment of their own power.

To begin with, it fails to discern the basic difference between the forces guiding the two European blocs. Although aware of the unliberal and unscrupulous totalitarianism of the U.S.S.R., it sees the western bloc of England, the United States and France as a steam-roller of imperialist and capitalist interests. No doubt, the western bloc has blemishes, but at its base there is a great drive towards freedom, especially freedom of thought which is of more value than economic equality and which is one of the prime ingredients of Indian culture. Economic readjustment so as to remove the gross disadvantages under which huge numbers of men labour is surely necessary, but even if it is achieved we shall come to the end of genuine progress unless thought has a wide scope and suffers no such regimentation as in Russia. In the so-called capitalist and imperialist countries the intellect of man is at liberty to evolve even philosophies of anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism, and the critical faculty can be directed against the very heads of the State, whereas in Russia no man dare philosophise except according to Marx and no man dare criticise Stalin who has to be hailed as the most enlightened and benevolent politician, the wisest philosopher, the acutest art-critic and the greatest scientist!

Side by side with the blind spot towards Russia's real difference from the western democracies there is the lack of vision of what is involved in freedom of thought: namely, the right of the individual. And once this right is granted we must grant also room for individual initiative in action no less than thought. Thus the predominance of the State—the cardinal doctrine of Socialism—falls to the ground. The State has several important functions to perform—without it there can be little collective security and stability and a certain measure of what is called nationalisation is perhaps advisable, but the individual's creative independent part in industry cannot be denied altogether without risk of either stagnation or a devolving of power into the hands of a single autocrat or a small clique of bosses ruthlessly enforcing in a super-individualistic manner an annulment of industrial experiment by individuals. All Leftists are wanting in a proper realisation of the evolutionary importance of the individual, the importance that despite several shortcomings and aberrancies in the ideology of the western bloc is yet inscribed fierily within it.

The united Leftist front, therefore, cannot escape being a strong menace to the vital truth of individuality and to its continuance in the world with the help of the Atlantic Charter which strives to stem the flood of Stalinism. If the Leftist forces in India could completely divest themselves of the delusion that western democracy is not fundamentally different from Soviet government and is on many counts even worse, they would in some important respects conduce to national welfare as do their namesakes in Labour-governed England. When, however, we find them opposed to England herself and vaguely feeling that Soviet Russia, behind her monstrous aspect, holds a world of essential good, we despair of truly fruitful results from their union. By their misconception of the root-issue between the two European blocs, they will make the world safer for Communism. At a time when Mao Tse-tung is sweeping a savage sickle across China and his partisans are rising all over South-east Asia and beating a brutal hammer at India's gates, the slightest access of safety to the Communist cause will be a misfortune for our civilisation.

### Congress and the Leftists

The parties of the Left should make it their business to develop definitely an anti-Communist mind. This is the first condition for their union

# AMERICAN TRIBUTES TO SRI AUROBINDO

PITIRIM A. SOROKIN,

Chairman, Department of Sociology,  
Research Center in Altruistic Integration and Creativity,  
Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A.

From the scientific and philosophical standpoint the works of Sri Aurobindo are a sound antidote to the pseudo-scientific psychology, psychiatry, and educational art of the West. Sri Aurobindo's *Life Divine* and other Yoga-treatises are among the most important works of our time in philosophy, ethics and humanities. Sri Aurobindo himself is one of the greatest living sages of our time; and a most eminent moral leader.

RAYMOND FRANK PIPER,

Professor of Philosophy,  
Syracuse University, Syracuse, N.Y., U.S.A.

The greatest gift of Sri Aurobindo to me as a philosopher is his magnificent perspective of existence, in three directions: the dignity and destiny of man; the meaning of long-time evolution, the laboratory of the Divine; and the universal dynamic of Cosmic Intelligence.

His sustained song of the nature and divine potentialities of the human mind comes as a refreshing breeze over the fragmentary, superficial, earth-bound glimpses of the self in western psychology and epistemology. He helps me to discover what I am, and what I really and deeply want of existence. His new thoughts change in my mind into clear recognitions of truths about myself which I wonder I had not found before. His writings have extraordinary power to awaken the mind to philosophic insight. *The Life Divine* is in large part a declaration and design of the freedom of mankind.

His basic message concerning evolution, which the western world desperately needs, is that mind unfolds through many levels of consciousness towards the supreme, blissful goal of the realization of God within. I find this conception of levels, or ascending ranges of consciousness, one of the most fertile in his works. He knows matter too, but nature is not a wall, but a window, or better, a stage whose meaning comes from a light that shines from beyond the senses. Evolution proceeds towards a grand divine synthesis through the creative interaction of many opposites, such as: of individual and universal, of personal and impersonal, of calm and active, of human and divine. And evil comprises many transitional devices for realizing otherwise unattainable goods. His spiritual interpretation of evolution is a much-needed supplement to the biological conception of the West.

Finally, he brings the ancient Hindu idea of the divine immanence to an unparalleled grandeur of expression in noble prose and poetry. In this process he realizes a happy blend of the perennial wisdom of the East and the best of modern western thought; for we should not forget that he was educated at London and Cambridge, and was acquainted with European culture.

I could pick a thousand sentences from his writings and say of any one of them: trace its implications and you will be led into the deep wonderlands of philosophic wisdom. I have never read an author who can compact so much of truth into one sentence as this master. Gandhi is the greatest saint, Tagore the greatest poet of modern India, but Sri Aurobindo is the greatest thinker, indeed has attained incomparable triune greatness, as poet, philosopher, and saint.

DR. FREDERIC SPIEGELBERG,

Dept. of Asiatic Studies,  
Stanford University, Stanford, Calif, U.S.A.

I am very grateful that I came into contact with Sri Aurobindo so late in life, for after having wrestled with the ultimate problems of existence for years, I am now in a position to appreciate his answers to them. In 1947, I read his *The Life Divine* and was completely knocked over. I have never come across a philosopher so tolerant as Sri Aurobindo. He always knows why there was the necessity for a certain system of philosophy to exist at a particular time.

But the words philosopher, spiritual genius, mystic, seer or saint, do not describe him correctly. They leave me unsatisfied—these words have too many wrong associations. But I can say this, that the highest significance that can be attached to these words can only give a bare idea of what he really is.

Even if I regard him as only a philosopher, I shall not restrict his greatness to this age only. We have Plato, Spinoza, Kant and Hegel—but they do not have the same all-embracing metaphysical structure, they do not have the same vision.

My students and I send you, great master, our salutations to your birthday. I think that we study *The Life Divine* as thoroughly as it ought to be studied. For many of us it has opened entirely new horizons. I am convinced that the coming generation of young American thinkers will widely and deeply be impressed by it and that your name will stand out as a beacon. Nothing on my recent trip to India has impressed me as much as being in your presence in highest gratitude.

## THE FOLLY OF UNITED LEFTIST FRONT

Continued from previous page

being of authentic use. The second condition is the removal of the two blind spots we have pointed out. But, it may be argued, if both these conditions are fulfilled, what distinction will remain between the Left and Congress? Essentially none, unless we picture Congress as a capitalist junta. To picture it like that is surely a mistake. Although Congress does not aim at abolishing all capitalism, it cannot be dubbed a party of the Right. A certain degree of capitalism—or, rather, capitalism in a certain sense—is implied by all recognition of the individual's evolutionary importance: it is just this that is supported by Congress. Not that Congress has succeeded in carrying out its semi-Left semi-Right programme or is always effectively endeavouring to do so: it wavers and wanders at times and corruption is eating at its entrails. But its general drift is in the direction which will be that of the present-day Leftist parties if they checked themselves from the follies to which they are committed. A difference between Congress and the Leftists would lie, however, in that the latter, when transformed, would bring a salutary emphasis of their own which would counteract whatever undue Rightist proclivities linger on in Congress because of the capitalist past in which this party first took shape.

The Leftists are afraid to shed their extreme views because of two fears which obsess them. They think that without complete socialism there is no way to avert economic crises and wars. When capitalism is rampant, economic crises are perhaps inevitable, but that is not tantamount to saying that economic crises are due solely to capitalism and not to factors like over-production, inflation and foreign threat to social security or that a judicious mixture of capitalism and socialism cannot avoid them. As for wars, the socialist proclaims: "They are the classic crutch by which world capitalism lifts itself out of an economic depression. They are capitalism's recipe for raising profits from two per cent to ten per cent. War is the most profitable enterprise today for world capitalism." To trace war to so simple a cause is most naive. It is surely commonsense that one of the sources of war is over-population. As Professor Fairchild puts it: "Population-pressure has always been and still is the great underlying and predisposing cause of international war." Nor is he alone in this opinion. Keynes, Robbins and Thompson are in fair measure of agreement on the point. Then there are the sources which lie outside economics: nationalism, for instance. At present we have in Eastern Europe the spectacle of Stalin the Communist and Tito the Communist glaring at each other, with explosive possibilities. Capitalism may exploit the situation, but it has surely not created it. Two non-capitalist countries are on the verge of war, simply

because Yugoslav nationalism refuses to kowtow to Russia. Even if neither economic nor ethnic factors operate, there will still be purely psychological sources of war. These can most generally be summed up by distinguishing the soul of man from the ego of man. The soul is individual without being cut off from other individualities or from the universal: the divine Spirit is single yet manifold and in it there is no strife among the many multiplicities or between the unit and the whole. The ego exists only by contrast and division: so long as man is the ego and not the soul whose light is covered up by this distortion of true individuality, war can never be averted: some pretext or other will always be found for it. And the way to the soul does not lie in sheer collectivism, in the subjection of the ego to the State, but in the proper governance of the ego and in the guidance of it towards the soul: to phrase the matter otherwise, the soul is always trying to shine out through the ego and we must help it do so by an intelligent use of individuality rather than by making the State predominant. Wars cannot be avoided by mere economic or political changes, for, whether we be capitalists or socialists, we are still soul-obscuring egos. In order to cease being such we need, as outer machinery, a sort of balance between capitalism and socialism and, as inner process shaping and regulating the outer machinery, a conscious turn towards the Divine through a broad spirituality instead of through a narrow religiosity.

It is evident that the greatest obstacle to soul-growth is Communism: here not only the outer machinery but even more the inner process is repudiated. Congress holds the promise of both, provided it puts a check upon corruption. The Leftist parties which are now endeavouring to unite stand midway. But if they unite with the purpose of "downing" Congress they will be a peril to India and weaken the only solid bulwark the country has against the Communist threat. What they should do is to unite against Communism, then discard their own Leftist exaggerations, agitate against the corrupt elements in Congress, enable it to fight both Communism and their own present *bête-noir*, undiluted capitalism, and establish the beginnings of a mixed economy. One thing alone will then remain to set the country upon the real path of progress, the one thing of paramount value without which even the best of plans will get perverted and miscarry: the clear acceptance of a broad spirituality as the light of lights and the search for a leader who embodies such spirituality and can make it operative in every department of life, especially determining with a supra-intellectual insight the correct form which what we have termed "mixed economy" should take.

# A "NATIONAL" LANGUAGE FOR INDIA

## THE REAL PROBLEM AND THE RIGHT SOLUTION

By K. R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR

Our leaders, it would appear, are in passionate search of a "national" or "state" language for India, or rather for the mutilated India which we choose euphemistically to call the "Indian Union". This is our "burning question": WANTED A NATIONAL LANGUAGE! Shall it be this language, or that? Shall it be a mixture of the two? If so, in what proportion? Shall we add some other ingredients as well, for flavour? And as for the script, shall it be right to left, or left to right, or top to bottom,—or all three simultaneously? The numerals—both the lot!—what shall we do with them? These and kindred questions are being hotly debated by our wise leaders—alas! more enthusiastic than wise, and indeed more fanatic than enthusiastic—and formulas are being devised, altered, amended, and a Marathon is fought over a comma, and a Salamis over a hyphen; and Panipats of course are enacted every day. The taste of majority rule is turning a little sour already.

### No "National" Mother Tongue

Well, then, what exactly do we mean by the term, "national language"? French is the "national" language of France. A Frenchman talks in French, writes in French, thinks in French; he does his marketing in French, his wooing and quarrelling in French; he writes poetry in French, and concocts his specialist treatises in French; he conducts the administration of his country in French, and even plays his diplomatic tunes in French. For a Frenchman, then, French is the language of emotion and of thought, emotion as tenuous and fragile as can be imagined, and thought as subtle and complex as can be formulated. In this comprehensive and absolute sense, we shall never have a "national" language for all the three hundred odd million inhabitants of the Indian Union, even as aggregates like the United States of Europe or the U.N.O. will never have truly common languages of their own.

We have in the Indian Union today over fifteen major languages, some like Bengali, Marathi or Telugu concentrated in particular regions, others like Sanskrit, English or Hindustani diffused all over the country. No single language will ever be able effectively to stamp itself upon us all, as French has stamped itself upon the Frenchman's consciousness. Our mother tongues cannot be obliterated from our daily life and thought by either Sanskrit or English or Hindustani. Our mother tongues—they only, they alone—can fill the bill when we seek to render the singular movements in our emotional life, when we wish to express love or hate, when we wish to exchange pulses, under high or low or even normal blood pressure, with our neighbours and relations, our intimate friends and inveterate foes.

### English the "Federal" Language

On the other hand, in addition to the mother tongue we do require the services of a highly developed but living language that can open to us the sumless treasuries in the multi-chambered edifice of modern knowledge. We would very much like our own mother tongues to grow up to this stature. We would very much like our children to reach the far Himalayas of Knowledge—in the humanities, in the social sciences, in the physical and biological sciences—on the wheels or wings of our own mother tongues. But—there's the rub!—for the time being, this cannot be countenanced, the more is the pity! English holds the field, and whether we will it or seek to nil it, it is likely to remain there for many years yet to come. At any rate, if Telugu cannot to-day take the place of English in the

Andhra University and Bengali in the Calcutta University as an efficient instrument of advanced studies, neither can Hindi or Hindustani accomplish the feat. If anything, the substitution of either as medium of instruction at the University level in the place of English would be infinitely more untenable than the substitution of the regional language.

There is then the question of a common language for the Indian Union for purposes of administration, inter-provincial contacts, all-India gatherings, and all that. In other words, we require not so much a "national" language as a "federal" language. English has long played, and still effectively plays, this pivotal part in our national life. The question is: Are we going to keep it on, which would be an easy and natural and wise thing to do, or are we going, in a spurt of so-called "national" sentiment, to throw it over and substitute Hindi or Hindustani or that repulsive hybrid Hindi-Hindustani? Even granted that we choose, say, Hindi as our "federal" language, we will not be able to give up English—we shall still require it for advanced studies and for promoting and maintaining international contacts. The Hindi enthusiast may say that Hindi itself will one day—certainly sooner than Doomsday—become the world language, the sole language of international communication. It may, indeed, it may. Let us rather take things as they are, and not as they might be. Of course, if Hindi grows in stature and strength, produces a dozen Nobel Laureates in Literature—it hasn't yet produced one—or produces a galaxy of savants who are willing to enrich its literature of thought, it will then be time enough to consider seriously its pretensions to be the "national" language of our country. Mere shouting and counting of hands—sometimes even headless hands—won't do.

### Advantages of English Over Hindi

The non-Hindi population of India who outnumber the Hindi-speaking people at least in the proportion of two to one are being urged to accept Hindi as the "federal" language of the Union in preference to English. We certainly have no quarrel with Hindi. We can have no quarrel with the language in which Tulsi Das wrote his immortal verse, the language in which Madan Malaviya achieved his great feats of golden eloquence. When people born to Hindi speak it among themselves, it is verily a feast for the ear, it steals into us like caressing music. There will always be people in the South who will read Hindi with affection and veneration. Neither have we any sentimental softness towards English—none

whatsoever; on the contrary, we assert our right to use English in our own way, lay violent hands on it even, if we are so minded! All that we say in favour of English is this: it is a language which we happen to be acquainted with, find useful in various ways, and cannot at present do without. It has a great literature, English literature being one of the richest literatures of the world, perhaps the richest; English, besides, is an extraordinarily elastic instrument of expression, and it is still a dynamic and a growing language; and by an accident we happen to be acquainted with it, and we have, in our own way, even contributed somewhat to its growth and its present opulence; and so, in a way, English too is an Indian language. To study English is no more *unnatural* than culture is unnatural, dress and cooking are unnatural, surgery and broadcasting are unnatural. Nature is that nature does; we are now used to civilization and its concomitants, and we are used to English as well. Likewise, to use English is no more *unpatriotic* than using American toothbrushes or Swedish stoves or Swiss watches is unpatriotic. Patriotism is a quality of the soul of man—it lies not in dogmatic prohibitions—it is no crude essay in negation. The world is fast developing a polyglot civilization, there will be no room for obscurantist "nationalisms" and "localisms" in the atomic world of to-morrow, and we can thus continue to handle English without qualms, and to the best advantage. As for English being a "difficult" language, well, all knowledge—all real knowledge—is difficult. If Bazar Hindustani may be learned in a month, "butler" English is learned in a week. You can sooner master the multiplication table than Tensor Calculus: must we therefore ban the latter? English is "difficult", no doubt; but the reward is proportionate to the toil, and it would be odd if it were otherwise.

Commanding the resources of the mother tongue on the one hand and English on the other, we should be able to get all we might reasonably want. The mother tongue is as vital to our well-being as mother's milk; we shall cherish it, strengthen it, and make it grow in puissance and versatility. But mother's milk cannot be all our diet, or all the time. We need the spiritual nourishment of Sanskrit—as the Frenchman needs Greek and Latin—and we also need the tonic sustenance of English. To-day we can no more eject English from our life and thought than we can eject Islam or Christianity or modern science. We shall certainly work in our own hallowed homes; but we shall leave the Western window open. Are there many windows opening to the West,—English, French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish? If we like, more than one window may be forced open; only, the English one is already open, and within arm's reach. We shall use the mother tongue—call it, if you will, the "regional language"—as widely as possible, as efficiently as possible, in as many ranges as possible; where it fails to reach, we shall use English. This ought to be a satisfying arrangement in the present posture of affairs. Why then bring in this three-headed hydra Hindi-Urdu-Hindustani, perhaps in a plurality of scripts? Let our northern friends set their own divided house in order. Let them not hustle us. Let

them not part their beards, as if itching for a fight. Let them not preach patriotism to us. Let them not seek to inflate an obvious fanaticism into the balloon immensity of a National Principle. If a language like Hindi were adopted as our "federal" language, it would give an enormous leverage to those in the North who are born to it, as against the large majority who will be obliged to learn it as any alien language. In this matter of a "federal" language, we should start with equal advantages for all; failing which, at least with equal disadvantages for all. In France, all Frenchmen start with equal advantages—French is their mother tongue, and it is also their national language. In our country, since this cannot be for most of us, let all of us be at an equal disadvantage. This would, among other things, minimise the power and range of the "federal" language and restrict its use within clearly defined limits. It cannot be for the good of the Indian Union that a third of its population, all concentrated in one narrow segment of the country, should become in virtue of their mother tongue a superior ruling caste, lording it over the rest.

### A Question of Historical Realism

The language question cannot be discussed in isolation, or in terms of snap votes in the Constituent Assembly. With this question is allied our future as a modern nation, a nation of spiritually emancipated men and women. These, then, are the questions that call for a bold answer: Do we want to be a new people, do we want to make this experiment of democracy a success, do we want to make ours a great and modern nation,—or do we want to make it an incredible and absurd Old Curiosity Shop? As Dr. C. R. Reddy once pithily put it: "Do we want to be a Fact, or do we desire to be a Freak or a Fancy?" Do we want to enact History, the true heroic poem of History, or do we wish to play puppets in the face of Utopia? Do we wish to march along with other modern nations, push on determinedly to the front, gathering their achievements but forging yet further, using their tools but avoiding their perversions,—or do we want only to stew in our own juice, closing our eyes cat-like, and thinking that all's well with India and the world? Let us not carry this "swadeshi" business too far, and let us not bring in notions of majority and minority in season and out of season. Even language, the greatest of God's gifts, is but a means to an end. We need to cultivate a sense of historical realism and anxiously mark the tempo of this fast changing atomic age. Circumstances as we are—the circumstances are not of our creation, they are the legacy of the past—we must be content with English, and not try to instal some other language in its place. Only English—English to which some of our own men and women have contributed many memorable and glittering pages—can be our "federal" language. Only English can serve the purposes of a language for the central administration, a language for University education, and a language for inter-provincial and international relations,—a triple advantage that can accrue to us from the adoption of no other Indian language.



# THE CLOSE OF DANTE'S "DIVINA COMMEDIA"

ENGLISHED by K. D. SETHNA

Dante Alighieri died in Ravenna on September 14, over six centuries ago. But we are remembering his death's day only to drive home the immortality of his genius by a rendering of the last canto of his great poem's third and final section, "Paradiso". This rendering is not, strictly speaking, a translation. It keeps Dante's form, the "terza rima", and presents faithfully as regards the main points the account he gives of the last stage of his journey in the other world, the attainment of the highest heaven. But it does not treat these points with an imagination utterly subdued to the original. Even apart from verbal liberties, it takes up Dante's vision and experience and passes them through the atmosphere of a mysticism that has not exactly the same psychological colour and movement. Besides a certain personal difference of plane, there is also some difference of general milieu, the Orient has mingled its own soul with that of Mediaeval Europe and the Christian aspiration tends here to bear the touch of India's sense of spiritual light. Dante is not submerged or falsified, he is absorbed and re-created. The style has not always the severe cut of the Dantesque suggestion; whatever force comes into play is at times of a more "rich" type, yet it tries to preserve in the midst of "richness" a compact turn and a loaded significance which are not alien to the essence of Dante.

## St. Bernard Supplicates on Behalf of Dante

"O Virgin Mother, daughter of thy Son!  
Life's pinnacle of shadowless sanctity—  
Yet, with the lustre of God-union,  
Outshining all in chaste humility!  
Extreme fore-fixed by the supernal Mind,  
Unto such grace rose thy humanity  
That the Arch-dreamer who thy form designed  
Scorned not to house His own vast self in clay;  
For, thy womb's sacred mystery enshrined  
The omnific Love by whose untarnished ray  
Now flowers this rose-heart of eternal peace!  
A beaconing magnificent midday  
Art thou to us of saviour charities,  
To mortal men hope's ever-living fount!  
So great thy power that, save its fulgences  
Shed purifying gleam, whoso would mount  
Unto this ecstasy might well desire  
Wingless sky-soar! Nor dost thou needful count  
Grief's tear, but even ere its soul aspire  
Thou minglest with its bitter drop thy bliss.  
Whatever bounteous world-upkindling fire  
Sparkles below, thy heart's infinities  
Hold in full blaze . . . Here kneels one that has viewed  
All states of spirit from the dire abyss  
To heaven's insuperable altitude:  
I, who have never craved the rapturous sight  
With such flame-voice of zeal for my soul's good  
As now for him implores thy faultless light,  
Beg answer to this orison: O pierce  
The last gloom-vestige of his mortal night  
By the miraculous beauty that bestirs  
The sleeping god in man with its pure sheen!  
Disclose the immeasurable universe  
Of ultimate joy, O time-victorious Queen!  
Quench the blind hunger of his earth-despair  
With flood of glory from the immense Unseen!  
Deny him not Perfection — lo in prayer  
A myriad saints with Beatrice upraise  
Sinless love-splendoured hands that he may share  
The vision of inviolable Grace!"

## Dante Approaches the Beatific Vision

The Eyes that make all heaven their worshipper  
Glowed on the suppliant's mouth and in their rays  
Streamed the mute blessing deep prayers draw from her.  
Then to the Light which knows no dusk they turned  
Full-open, gathering without one blur  
What never in a creature's look has burned.  
Neighbouring the Vast where the gold laughter stood,  
End of each clay-desire in clay unearned,  
I ended every hunger in my blood.  
Bernard was beckoning up with smiling face  
My soul, but to the crowning azurehood  
My glance had winged already a long space;  
For, that high splendour shapes all Nature new,  
One with the Pure that needs no power or praise  
Beyond its own white self to keep it true.  
Henceforth so large an aureoled surprise  
That words are shut in, memories scarce break through!  
As fade dream-pageants from awaking eyes  
At the rude touch of clamorous common day,  
Even so my spirit loses paradise.  
Yet though the enormous rapture rolls away,  
A silent sweetness trickles in my heart!  
Even thus the snow is in the sun's hot ray  
Unsealed or, when some ancient breeze did part  
The sibyl's thin leaves, back to the unknown  
Vanished her secrets of sooth-saying art.

O Lustre seated on a reachless throne,  
Rejoicing solitary and aloft  
In ethers where no thought has ever flown  
Out of the bound of earthly hours, enwaft  
Once more the primal brilliance to my sight —  
Slay my song's discord with Thy glory's shaft,  
That I may leave of Thy miraculous light  
A deathless sparkle to posterity!  
Empower with Thy unconquerable might  
The dim voice of my mortal memory  
To lift above the minds of future men  
The burning banner of Thy victory!  
The grace withdraw not which Thou gav'st me when  
With superhuman courage I pursued  
Thy beckoning blaze of beauty till my ken  
Reeled on the verge of dread infinitude!  
In the depths divine the myriad universe  
Clasped by a giant flame of love I viewed:  
All that the wayward winds of time disperse  
Stood luminous there in one ecstatic whole:  
Beyond corruption and the taint of tears  
Shone the deific destiny of man's soul!

## The Crowning Vision of Dante

Stunned by that flash of limitless unity  
I felt as though upon my being stole  
The weight of one mute moment's lethargy  
Heavier than the dead centuries that fall  
On the Argo's plunge across the pristine sea . . .  
What flickering earth-lure has tongue to call  
The spirit grown vast with this magnificence?  
Each longing here attains the rapturous All —  
Here life's lost heart of splendour beats immense!  
But the deep relish of divinity  
How shall my words convey? Its radiance  
Leaves my mouth stricken with helpless infancy  
Draining in dumb delight its mother's breast.  
Not that the Flame rose now more goldenly  
(For ever unchanged its high perfections rest),  
But my gaze found a growing miracle  
No power of human speech could have expressed,  
As orb within bright orb unthinkable  
From that abyss of tense beatitude  
Swam slowly into my wondering sight until  
The mystery of heaven's triune mood  
In mingling fire and rainbow-beauty shone!  
O Light eternal, in self-plenitude  
Dwelling exultant, fathomless, unknown  
Save to the immaculate infinity  
Of luminous omnipotence Thine alone!  
'Twas Thy supremest joy Thou showed'st to me,  
Thy grace most intimate masked by dazzling awe,  
When, fixing on Thy uncurbed brilliancy  
My marvelling look, with heart o'erwhelmed I saw  
Thy nameless grandeurs wear the face of Man!  
But as in vain without geometric law  
An intricate figure one may strive to span,  
So the impuissant scrutiny of thought  
With which my labouring mind essayed to scan  
This mighty secret, fell back dazed, distraught,  
Till Thy mercy flashed a beam on its dark eye  
And the heart found the ineffable knowledge sought! . . .  
Then vigour failed the towering fantasy;  
Yet, like a burning wheel, past mortal bars  
Desire rushed on, impelled perpetually  
By the love that moves the sun and all the stars.

# LIGHTS ON LIFE-PROBLEMS

(15)

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: The idea of Karma in ancient times was closely associated with a belief in rebirth. Is this association based on any inevitable necessity?
- A. This close connection between Karma and rebirth was not a mere accident, but a perfectly intelligible and indeed inevitable union of two related truths which are needed for each other's completeness and can with difficulty exist in separation. These two things are the soul side and the nature side of one and the same cosmic sequence. Rebirth is meaningless without Karma, and Karma has no fount of inevitable origin and no rational and no moral justification if it is not an instrumentality for the sequences of the soul's continuous experience.
- Q. 2: Why is Karma necessary for rebirth?
- A. If we believe that the soul is repeatedly reborn in the body, we must believe also that there is some link between the lives that preceded and the lives that follow and that the past of the soul has an effect on its future; and that is the spiritual essence of the law of Karma. To deny it would be to establish a reign of the most chaotic incoherence, such as we find only in the leaps and turns of the mind in dream or in the thoughts of madness, and hardly even there. And if this existence were, as the cosmic pessimist imagines, a dream or an illusion or, worse, as Schopenhauer would have it, a delirium and insanity of the soul, we might accept some such law of inconsequent consequence. But, taken even at its worst, this world of life differs from dream, illusion and madness by its plan of fine, complex and subtle sequences, the hanging together and utility even of its discords, the general and particular harmony of its relations, which, if they are not the harmony we would have, not our longed-for ideal harmony, has still at every point the stamp of a Wisdom and an idea at work; it is not the act of a Mind in tatters or a machine in dislocation. The continuous existence of the soul in rebirth must signify an evolution if not of the self, for that is said to be immutable, yet of its more outward active soul or self of experience. This evolution is not possible if there is not a connected sequence from life to life, a result of action and experience, an evolutionary consequence to the soul, a law of Karma.
- Q. 3: What is the necessity of rebirth to Karma?
- A. If we give to Karma its integral and not a truncated meaning, we must admit rebirth for the sufficient field of its action.
- Q. 4: What is the integral meaning of Karma, and why is rebirth necessary as a field of its working?
- A. Karma is not quite the same thing as a material or substantial law of cause and effect, the antecedent and its mechanical consequence. That would perfectly admit of a Karma which could be carried on in time and the results come with certainty in their proper place, their just degree by a working out of the balance of forces, but need not in any way touch the human originator who might have passed away from the scene by the time the result of his acts got into manifestation. A mechanical Nature could well visit the sins of the fathers not on them, but on their fourth or their four-hundredth generation, as indeed this physical Nature does, and no objection of injustice or any other mental or moral objection could rise, for the only justice or reason of a mechanism is that it shall work according to the law of its structure and the fixed eventuality of its force in action. We cannot demand from it a mind or a moral equity or any kind of supraphysical responsibility. The universal energy grinds out inconsciously its effects and individuals are only fortuitous or subordinate means of its workings; the soul itself, if there is a soul, makes only a part of the mechanism of Nature, exists not for itself, but as an utility for her business. But Karma is more than a mechanical law of antecedent and consequence. Karma is action, there is a thing done and a doer and an active consequence; these three are the three joints, the three locks, the three *sandhis* of the connexus of Karma. And it is a complex mental, moral and physical working; for the law of it is not less true of the mental and moral than of the physical consequence of the act to the doer. The will and the idea are the driving force of the action, and the momentum does not come from some commotion in my chemical atoms or some working of ion and electron or some weird biological effervescence. Therefore the act and consequence must have some relation to the will and the idea and there must be a mental and moral consequence to the soul which has the will and idea. That, if we admit the individual as a real being, signifies a continuity of act and consequence to him and therefore rebirth for a field of this working. It is evident that in one life we do not and cannot labour out and exhaust all the values and powers of that life, but only carry on a past thread, weave out some-
- thing in the present, prepare infinitely more for the future.
- Q. 5: Is not the existence of the individual soul implied in the idea of rebirth? Would the consequence of rebirth follow from the very nature of Karma if there were only an All-Soul of the universe?
- A. It would not, because then it would be that which is carrying on in myriads of forms its past, working out some present result, spinning yarn of Karma for a future web of consequence. It is the All-Soul which would be the originator, would upbear the force of the act, would receive and exhaust or again take up for farther uses the returning force of the consequence. Nothing essential would depend on its doing all these things through the same individual mask of its being. For the individual would only be a prolonged moment of the All-Soul, and what it originated in this moment of its being which I call myself, might very well produce its result on some other moment of the same being which from the point of view of my ego would be somebody quite different from and unconnected with myself. There would be no injustice, no unreason in such an apparently vicarious reaping of the fruit or suffering of the consequence; for what has a mask, though it be a living and suffering mask, to do with these things? And, in fact, in the nature of life in the material universe a working out of the result of the action of one in the lives of many others, an effect of the individual's action on the group or the whole is everywhere the law. What I sow in this hour, is reaped by my posterity for several generations and we can then call it the karma of the family. What the men of today as community or people resolve upon and execute, comes back with a blessing or a sword upon the future of their race when they themselves have passed away and are no longer there to rejoice or to suffer; and that we can speak of as the karma of the nation. Mankind as a whole too has a karma; what it wrought in its past, will shape its future destiny; individuals seem only to be temporary units of human thought, will, nature who act according to the compulsion of the soul in humanity and disappear; but the karma of the race which they have helped to form continues through the centuries, the millenniums, the cycles.
- But we can see, when we look into ourselves, that this relation of the individual to the whole has a different significance; it does not mean that I have no existence except as a more or less protracted moment in the cosmic becoming of the All-Soul: that too is only a superficial appearance and much subtler and greater is the truth of my being.
- Q. 6: What then is the real truth of the individual soul and what is its proper relation to the All-Soul or the cosmic spirit?
- A. The original and eternal Reality, the Alpha and Omega, the Godhead is neither separate in the individual nor is he only and solely a Pantheos, a cosmic spirit. He is at once the eternal individual and the eternal All-Soul of this and many universes, and at the same time he is much more than these things. This universe might end, but he would still be; and I too, though the universe might end, could still exist in him; and all these eternal souls would still exist in him. But as his being is for ever, so the succession of his creations too is for ever; if one creation were to come to an end, it would be only that another might begin and the new would carry on with a fresh commencement and initiation the possibility that has not been worked out in the old, for there can be no end to the self-manifestation of the Infinite. *Nasti anto vistarya me*. The universe finds itself in me, even as I find myself in the universe, because we are this face and that face of the one eternal Reality, and individual being is as much needed as universal being to work out this manifestation. The individual vision of things is as true as the universal vision, both are ways of the self-seeing of the Eternal. I may now see myself as a creature contained in the universe; but when I come to self-knowledge, I see too the universe to be a thing contained in myself, subtly by implication in my individuality, amply in the great universalised self I then become. These are data of an ancient experience, things known and voiced of old, though they may seem shadowy and transcendental to the positive modern mind which has long pored so minutely on outward things that it has become dazed and blind to any greater light and is only slowly recovering the power to see through its folds; but they are for all that always valid and can be experienced today by any one of us who chooses to turn to the deepest way of the inner experience. Modern thought and science, if we look at the new knowledge given us in its whole, do not contradict them, but only trace for us the outward effect and workings of these realities; for always we find in the end that truth of self is not contradicted, but reproduced and made effectual here by law of Energy and law of Matter.

K. G.

# VISION AND REALISATION

Living and accurate expression of mystical and spiritual experience is rare. To convey the realities of this experience, in all their many-sidedness, and to show what the immense reaches of yogic evolution are, this series will present extracts from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

THOU hast passed over my life, O Lord, like a great wave of love, and when I was immersed in it, I knew in a way integral and intense that I had offered to Thee—when? I do not know, at no precise moment and, doubtless, always—my thoughts, my heart and my flesh in a living holocaust.

And in that great love which enveloped me, and in that consciousness of the renunciation made, there was an immense serenity vaster than the universe and a sweetness so intense and so full of an infinite compassion that a flow of tears came slowly from my eyes. Nothing could be farther removed at once from suffering and from happiness, it was an ineffable peace.

O Sublime Love, centre of our life, Marvel of marvels, I find Thee again at last and I live once again in Thee, but how much more powerfully, how much more consciously than before. How much better I know and understand Thee. Each time I find Thee again, my communion with Thee is more integral, more complete, more definitive.

O Presence of ineffable beauty, O thought of supreme redemption, sovereign power of salvation, with what joy all my being feels Thee living in itself, sole principle of its life and of all life, marvellous constructor of all thought, all will, all consciousness. Upon this world of illusion, this sombre nightmare, Thou hast bestowed Thy divine reality, and each atom of matter contains something of Thy absolute.

Thou art, Thou livest, Thou are radiant and reignest.

January 13, 1914.

THE MOTHER  
*Prayers and Meditations.*

O MOTHER Divine, with what fervour, what ardent love I came to Thee in Thy deepest consciousness, in Thy high status of sublime love and perfect felicity, and I nestled so close into Thy arms and loved Thee with so intense a love that I became altogether Thyself. Then in the silence of our mute ecstasy a voice from yet profounder depths arose and the voice said, "Turn towards those who have need of thy love". All the grades of consciousness appeared, all the successive worlds. Some were splendid and luminous, well ordered and clear; there Knowledge was resplendent, Expression was harmonious and vast, Will was potent and invincible. Then the worlds darkened in a multiplicity more and more chaotic, the Energy became violent and the material world obscure and sorrowful. And when in our infinite love "we" perceived in its entirety the hideous suffering of the world of misery and ignorance, when "we" saw our children locked in a sombre struggle, flung upon each other by energies that had deviated from their true aim, "we" willed ardently that the light of Divine Love should be made manifest, a transfiguring force at the centre of these distracted elements. . . . Then, that the Will might be yet more powerful and effective, "we" turned towards Thee, O unthinkable Supreme, and "we" implored Thy aid. And from the unsounded depths of the Unknown a reply came sublime and formidable and "we" knew that the earth was saved.

September 1, 1914.

THE MOTHER  
*Prayers and Meditations*

## ASCENT

(1)

### *The Silence*

Into the Silence, into the Silence,  
Arise, O Spirit immortal,  
Away from the turning Wheel, breaking the magical Circle,  
Ascend, single and deathless:  
Care no more for the whispers and the shoutings in the darkness,  
Pass from the sphere of the grey and the little,  
Leaving the cry and the struggle,  
Into the Silence for ever.

Vast and immobile, formless and marvellous,  
Higher than Heaven, wider than the universe,  
In a pure glory of being,  
In a bright stillness of self-seeing,  
Communing with a boundlessness voiceless and intimate,  
Make thy knowledge too high for thought, thy joy too deep for emotion;  
At rest in the unchanging Light, mute with the worldless self-vision,  
Spirit, pass out of thyself; Soul, escape from the clutch of Nature.  
All thou hast seen cast from thee, O Witness.  
Be only eternity, peace and silence,  
O world-transcending nameless Oneness,  
Spirit immortal.

(2)

### *Beyond the Silence*

Out from the Silence, out from the Silence,  
Carrying with thee the ineffable Substance,  
Carrying with thee the splendour and wideness,  
Ascend, O Spirit Immortal.  
Assigning to Time its endless meaning,  
Blissful enter into the clasp of the Timeless  
Awake in the living Eternal, taken to the bosom of love of the  
Infinite,  
Live self-found in his endless completeness.  
Drowned in his joy and his sweetness,  
Thy heart close to the heart of the Godhead for ever.

Vast, God-possessing, embraced by the Wonderful,  
Lifted by the All-Beautiful into his infinite beauty,  
Love shall envelop thee endless and fathomless,  
Joy unimaginable, ecstasy illimitable,  
Knowledge omnipotent, Might omniscient,  
Light without darkness, Truth that is dateless,  
One with the Transcendent, calm, universal,  
Single and free, yet innumerably living,  
All in thyself and thyself in all dwelling,  
Act in the world with thy being beyond it.  
Soul, exceed life's boundaries; Spirit, surpass the universe.  
Outclimbing the summits of Nature,  
Transcending and uplifting the soul of the finite,  
Rise with the world in thy bosom,  
O Word gathered into the heart of the Ineffable,  
One with the Eternal, live in his infinity,  
Drowned in the Absolute, found in the Godhead,  
Swan of the supreme and spaceless ether wandering winged through  
the universe,  
Spirit immortal.

SRI AUROBINDO:  
*Collected Poems and Plays*

## DESCENT

All my cells thrill swept by a surge of splendour,  
Soul and body stir with a mighty rapture,  
Light and still more light like an ocean billows  
Over me, round me.

Rigid, stone-like, fixed like a hill or statue,  
Vast my body feels and upbears the world's weight;  
Dire the large descent of the Godhead enters  
Limbs that are mortal.

Voiceless, thronged, Infinity crowds upon me;  
Presses down a glory of power eternal;  
Mind and heart grow one with the cosmic wideness;  
Stilled are earth's murmurs.

Swiftly, swiftly crossing the golden spaces  
Knowledge leaps, a torrent of rapid lightnings;  
Thoughts that left the Ineffable's flaming mansions  
Blaze in my spirit.

Slow the heart-beats' rhythm like a giant hammer's;  
Missioned voices drive to me from God's doorway  
Words that live not save upon Nature's summits,  
Ecstasy's chariots.

All the world is changed to a single oneness;  
Souls undying, infinite forces, meeting,  
Join in God-dance weaving a seamless Nature,  
Rhythm of the Deathless.

Mind and heart and body, one harp of being,  
Cry that anthem, finding the notes eternal,—  
Light and might and bliss and immortal wisdom  
Clasping for ever.

SRI AUROBINDO:  
*Collected Poems and Plays*



# SRI AUROBINDO, THE LEADER OF THE EVOLUTION

## PART II OF "THE WORLD CRISIS AND INDIA"

BY "Synergist"

### POLITICAL LIFE

*Continued from Previous Issue*

At first Sri Aurobindo took part in Congress politics only from behind the scenes as he had not yet decided to leave the Baroda service; but he took long leave without pay in which, besides carrying on personally the secret revolutionary work, he attended the Barisal Conference broken up by the police and toured East Bengal along with Bepin Pal and associated himself closely with the forward group in the Congress. It was during this period that he joined Bepin Pal in the editing of the *Bande Mataram*, founded the new political party in Bengal and attended the Congress session at Calcutta at which the Extremists, though still a minority, succeeded under the leadership of Tilak in imposing part of their political programme on the Congress. The founding of the Bengal National College gave him the opportunity he needed and enabled him to resign his position in the Baroda service and join the college as its Principal. Subodh Mullick, one of Sri Aurobindo's collaborators in his secret action and afterwards also in Congress politics, in whose house he usually lived when he was in Calcutta, had given a lakh of rupees for this foundation and had stipulated that Sri Aurobindo should be given a post of professor in the college with a salary of Rs. 150; so he was now free to give his whole time to the service of the country. Bepin Pal, who had been long expounding a policy of self-help and non-cooperation in his weekly journal, now started a daily with the name of *Bande Mataram*, but it was likely to be a brief adventure since he began with only Rs. 500 in his pocket and no firm assurance of financial assistance in the future. He asked Sri Aurobindo to join him in this venture to which a ready consent was given, for now Sri Aurobindo saw his opportunity for starting the public propaganda necessary for his revolutionary purpose. He called a meeting of the forward group of young men in the Congress and decided then to organise themselves openly as a new political party joining hands with the corresponding group in Maharashtra under the proclaimed leadership of Tilak and to join battle with the Moderate party which was done at the Calcutta session. He also persuaded them to take up the *Bande Mataram* daily as their party organ and a *Bande Mataram* Company was started to finance the paper, whose direction Sri Aurobindo undertook during the absence of Bepin Pal who was sent on a tour in the districts to proclaim the purpose and programme of the new party. The new party was at once successful and the *Bande Mataram* paper began to circulate throughout India. Sri Aurobindo's first pre-occupation was to declare openly for complete and absolute independence as the aim of political action in India and to insist on this persistently in the pages of the journal; he was the first politician in India who had the courage to do this in public and he was immediately successful. The party took up the word *Swaraj* to express its own ideal of independence and it soon spread everywhere; but it was taken up as the ideal of the Congress much later on at the Karachi session of that body when it had been reconstituted and renovated under Nationalist leadership. The journal declared and developed a new political programme for the country as the programme of the Nationalist Party, non-cooperation, passive resistance, Swadeshi Boycott, national education, settlement of disputes in law by popular arbitration and other items of Sri Aurobindo's plan. Sri Aurobindo published in the paper a series of articles on passive resistance, another developing a political philosophy of revolution and wrote many leaders aimed at destroying the shibboleths and superstitions of the Moderate Party such as the belief in British justice and benefits bestowed by foreign government in India, faith in British law courts and in the adequacy of the education given in schools and universities in India and stressed more strongly and persistently than had been done the emasculation, stagnation or slow progress, poverty, economic dependence, absence of a rich industrial activity and all other evil results of a foreign government; he insisted especially that even if an alien rule were benevolent and beneficent, that could not be a substitute for a free and healthy national life. Assisted by this publicity the ideas of the Nationalists gained ground everywhere especially in the Punjab which had before been predominantly moderate. The *Bande Mataram* was almost unique in journalistic history in the influence it exercised in converting the mind of a people and preparing it for revolution. But its weakness was on the financial side; for the Extremists were still a poor man's party. So long as Sri Aurobindo was there in active control, he managed with great difficulty to secure sufficient public support for running the paper, but not for expanding it as he wanted, and when he was arrested and held in jail for a year, the economic situation of *Bande Mataram* became desperate: finally, it was decided that the journal should die a glorious death rather than perish by starvation and Bejoy Chatterji was commissioned to write an article for which the Government would certainly stop the publication of the paper. Sri Aurobindo had always taken care to give no handle in the editorial articles of *Bande Mataram* either for a prosecution for sedition or any other drastic action fatal to its existence; an editor of the *Statesman* complained that the paper reeked with sedition patently visible between every line but it was so skilfully written that no legal action

could be taken. The manoeuvre succeeded and the life of the *Bande Mataram* came to an end, in Sri Aurobindo's absence.

### Various Nationalist Movements Started

The Nationalist programme could only achieve a partial beginning before it was temporarily broken by severe government repression. Its most important practical item was Swadeshi plus Boycott; for Swadeshi much was done to make the idea general and a few beginnings were made, but the greater results showed themselves only afterwards in the course of time. Sri Aurobindo was anxious that this part of the movement should be not only propagated in idea but given a practical organisation and an effective force. He wrote from Baroda asking whether it would not be possible to bring in the industrialists and manufacturers and gain the financial support of landed magnates and create an organisation in which men of industrial and commercial ability and experience and not politicians alone could direct operations and devise means of carrying out the policy; but he was told that it was impossible, the industrialists and the landed magnates were too timid to join in the movement, and the big commercial men were all interested in the import of British goods and therefore on the side of the status quo: so he had to abandon his idea of the organisation of Swadeshi and Boycott. Both Tilak and Sri Aurobindo were in favour of an effective boycott of British goods—but of British goods only; for there was little in the country to replace foreign articles: so they recommended the substitution for the British of foreign goods from Germany and Austria and America so that the fullest pressure might be brought upon England. They wanted the Boycott to be a political weapon and not merely an aid to Swadeshi; the total boycott of all foreign goods was an impracticable idea and the very limited application of it recommended in Congress resolutions was too small to be politically effective. They were for national self-sufficiency in key industries, the production of necessities and of all manufactures of which India had the natural means, but complete self-sufficiency or autarchy did not seem practicable or even desirable since a free India would need to export goods as well as supply them for internal consumption and for that she must import as well and maintain an international exchange. But the sudden enthusiasm for the boycott of all foreign goods was wide and sweeping and the leaders had to conform to this popular cry and be content with the impulse it gave to the Swadeshi idea. National education was another item to which Sri Aurobindo attached much importance. He had been disgusted with the education given by the British system in the schools and colleges and universities, a system of which as a professor in the Baroda College he had full experience. He felt that it tended to dull and impoverish and tie up the naturally quick and brilliant and supple Indian intelligence, to teach it bad intellectual habits and spoil by narrow information and mechanical instruction its originality and productivity. The movement began well and many national schools were established in Bengal and many able men became teachers, but still the development was insufficient and the economical position of the schools precarious. Sri Aurobindo had decided to take up the movement personally and see whether it could not be given a greater expansion and a stronger foundation, but his departure from Bengal cut short this plan. In the repression and the general depression caused by it, most of the schools failed to survive. The idea lived on and it may be hoped that it will one day find an adequate form and body. The idea of people's courts was taken up and worked in some districts, not without success, but this too perished in the storm. The idea of volunteer groupings had a stronger vitality; it lived on, took shape, multiplied its formations and its workers were the spearhead of the Movement of direct action which broke out from time to time in the struggle for freedom. The purely political elements of the Nationalist programme and activities were those which lasted and after each wave of repression and depression renewed the thread of the life of the movement for liberation and kept it recognisably one throughout nearly fifty years of its struggle. But the greatest thing done in those years was the creation of a new spirit in the country. In the enthusiasm that swept surging everywhere with the cry of *Bande Mataram* ringing on all sides men felt it glorious to be alive and dare and act together and hope; the old apathy and timidity were broken and a force created which nothing could destroy and which rose again and again in wave after wave till it carried India to the beginning of a complete victory.

After the *Bande Mataram* case, Sri Aurobindo became the recognised leader of Nationalism in Bengal. He led the party at the session of the Bengal Provincial Conference at Midnapore where there was a vehement clash between the two parties. He now for the first time became a speaker on the public platform, addressed large meetings at Surat and presided over the Nationalist conference there. He stopped at several places on his way back to Calcutta and was the speaker at large meetings called to hear him. He led the party again at the session of the Provincial Conference at Hooghly. There it became evident for the first time that Nationalism was gaining the ascendant, for it commanded a majority among the delegates

*Continued on next page*

# SRI AUROBINDO, THE LEADER OF THE EVOLUTION

Continued from previous page

and in the Subjects Committee Sri Aurobindo was able to defeat the Moderates' resolution welcoming the Reforms and pass his own resolution stigmatising them as utterly inadequate and unreal and rejecting them. But the Moderate leaders threatened to secede if this was maintained and to avoid a scission he consented to allow the Moderate resolution to pass but spoke at the public session explaining his decision and asking the Nationalists to acquiesce in it in spite of their victory so as to keep some unity in the political forces of Bengal. The Nationalist delegates, at first triumphant and clamorous, accepted the decision and left the Hall quietly at Sri Aurobindo's order so that they might not have to vote either for or against the Moderate resolution. This caused much amazement and discomfiture in the minds of the Moderate leaders who complained that the people had refused to listen to their old and tried leaders and clamoured against them, but at the bidding of a young man new to politics they had obeyed in disciplined silence as if a single body.

## Period in Jail

About this period Sri Aurobindo had decided to take up charge of a Bengali daily, *Nava Shakti*, and had moved from his rented house in Scott's Lane, where he had been living with his wife and sister, to rooms in the office of this newspaper, and there, before he could begin this new venture, early one morning while he was still sleeping, the police charged up the stairs, revolver in hand, and arrested him. He was taken to the police station and thence to Alipore Jail where he remained for a year during the magistrate's investigation and the trial in the Sessions Court at Alipore. At first he was lodged for some time in a solitary cell but afterwards transferred to a large section of the jail where he lived in one huge room with the other prisoners in the case; subsequently after the assassination of the approver in the jail, all the prisoners were confined in contiguous but separate cells and met only in the court or in the daily exercise where they could not speak to each other. It was in the second period that Sri Aurobindo made the acquaintance of most of the fellow-accused. In the jail he spent almost all his time in reading the Gita and the Upanishads and in intensive meditation and the practice of Yoga. This he pursued even in the second interval when he had no opportunity of being alone and had to accustom himself to meditation amid general talk and laughter, the playing of games and much noise and disturbance; in the first and third period he had full opportunity and used it to the full. In the Sessions Court the accused were confined in a large prisoners' cage and here during the whole day he remained absorbed in his meditation attending little to the trial and hardly listening to the evidence. C. R. Das, one of his Nationalist collaborators and a famous lawyer, had put aside his large practice and devoted himself for months to the defence of Sri Aurobindo who left the case entirely to him and troubled no more about it; for he had been assured from within and knew that he would be acquitted. During this period his view of life was radically changed; he had taken up Yoga with the original idea of acquiring spiritual force and energy and divine guidance for his work in life. But now the inner spiritual life and realisation which had continually been increasing in magnitude and universality and assuming a larger place took him up entirely and his work became a part and result of it and besides far exceeded the service and liberation of the country and fixed itself in an aim, previously only glimpsed, which was world-wide in its bearing and concerned with the whole future of humanity.

When he came out from jail, Sri Aurobindo found the whole political aspect of the country altered; most of the Nationalist leaders were in jail or in self-imposed exile and there was a general discouragement and depression, though the feeling in the country had not ceased but was only suppressed and was growing by its suppression. He determined to continue the struggle; he held weekly meetings in Calcutta, but the attendance which had numbered formerly thousands full of enthusiasm was now only of hundreds and had no longer the same force and life. He also went to places in the districts to speak and at one of these delivered his speech at Uttarpara in which for the first time he spoke publicly of his Yoga and his spiritual experiences. He started also two weeklies, one in English and one in Bengali, the *Karmayogin* and *Dharma*, which had a fairly large circulation and were, unlike the *Bande Mataram*, easily self-supporting. He attended and spoke at the Provincial Conference at Barisal in 1909; for in Bengal owing to the compromise at Hooghly the two parties had not split altogether apart and both joined in Conference, though there could be no representatives of the Nationalist party at the meeting of the Central Moderate Body which had taken the place of the Congress. Surendra Nath Banerji had indeed called a private conference attended by Sri Aurobindo and one or two other leaders of the Nationalists to discuss a project of uniting the two parties at the session in Benares and giving a joint fight to the dominant right wing of the Moderates; for he had always dreamt of becoming again the leader of a united Bengal with the Extremist party as his strong right arm but that would have necessitated the Nationalists being appointed as delegates by the Bengal Moderates and accepting the constitution imposed at Surat. This Sri Aurobindo refused to do; he demanded a change in that constitution enabling newly formed associations to elect delegates so that the Nationalists might independently send their representatives to the All-India session and on this point the negotiations broke down. Sri Aurobindo began however to consider how to revive the national movement

under the changed circumstances. He glanced at the possibility of falling back on a Home Rule movement which the Government could not repress, but this, which was actually realised by Mrs. Besant later on, would have meant a postponement and a falling back from the ideal of independence. He looked also at the possibility of an intense and organised passive resistance movement in the manner afterwards adopted by Gandhi. He saw however that he himself could not be the leader of such a movement.

At no time did he consent to have anything to do with the sham Reforms which were all the Government at that period cared to offer. He held up always the slogan of 'no compromise', or, as he now put it in his Open Letter to his countrymen published in the *Karmayogin*, 'no-cooperation without control'. It was only if real political, administrative and financial control were given to popular ministers in an elected Assembly that he would have anything to do with offers from the British Government. Of this he saw no sign until the proposal of the Montague Reforms in which first something of the the kind seemed to appear. He foresaw that the British Government would have to begin trying to meet the national aspiration half-way, but he would not anticipate that moment before it actually came. The Montague Reforms came nine years after Sri Aurobindo had retired to Pondicherry and by that time he had abandoned all outward and public political activity in order to devote himself to his spiritual work, acting only by his spiritual force on the movement in India, until his provision of real negotiations between the British Government and the Indian leaders was fulfilled by the Cripps' proposal and the events that came after.

Meanwhile the Government were determined to get rid of Sri Aurobindo, as the only considerable obstacle left to the success of their repressive policy. As they could not send him to the Andamans they decided to deport him. This came to the knowledge of Sister Nivedita and she informed Sri Aurobindo and asked him to leave British India and work from outside so that his work would not be stopped or totally interrupted. Sri Aurobindo contented himself with publishing in the *Karmayogin* a signed article in which he spoke of the project of deportation and left the country what he called his last will and testament; he felt sure that this would kill the idea of deportation and in fact it so turned out. Deportation left aside, the Government could only wait for some opportunity for prosecution for sedition and this chance came to them when Sri Aurobindo published in the same paper another signed article reviewing the political situation. The article was sufficiently moderate in its tone and later on the High Court refused to regard it as seditious and acquitted the printer. Sri Aurobindo one night at the *Karmayogin* office received information of the Government's intention to search the office and arrest him. While considering what should be his attitude, he received a sudden command from above to go to Chandernagore in French India. He obeyed the command at once, for it was now his rule to move only as he was moved by the divine guidance and never to resist and depart from it; he did not stay to consult with anyone but in ten minutes was at the river ghat and in a boat plying on the Ganges, in a few hours he was at Chandernagore where he went into secret residence. He sent a message to Sister Nivedita asking her to take up the editing of the *Karmayogin* in his absence. This was the end of his active connection with his two journals. At Chandernagore he plunged entirely into solitary meditation and ceased all other activity. Then there came to him a call to proceed to Pondicherry. A boat manned by some young revolutionaries of Uttarpara took him to Calcutta; there he boarded the *Dupleix* and reached Pondicherry on April 4, 1910.

At Pondicherry, from this time onwards Sri Aurobindo's practice of Yoga became more and more absorbing. He dropped all participation in any public political activity, refused more than one request to preside at sessions of the restored Indian National Congress and made a rule of abstinence from any public utterance of any kind not connected with his spiritual activities or any contribution of writings or articles except what he wrote afterwards in the *Arya*. For some years he kept up some private communication with the revolutionary forces he had led through one or two individuals, but this also he dropped after a time and his abstention from any kind of participation in politics became complete. As his vision of the future grew clearer, he saw that the eventual independence of India was assured by the march of Forces of which he became aware, that Britain would be compelled by the pressure of Indian resistance and by the pressure of international events to concede independence and that she was already moving towards that eventuality with whatever opposition and reluctance. He felt that there would be no need of armed insurrection and the secret preparation for it could be dropped without injury to the nationalist cause, although the revolutionary spirit had to be maintained and would be maintained intact. His own personal intervention in politics would therefore be no longer indispensable. Apart from all this, the magnitude of the spiritual work set before him became more and more clear to him, and he saw that the concentration of all his energies on it was necessary. Accordingly, when the Ashram came into existence, he kept it free from all political connections or action; even when he intervened in politics twice afterwards on special occasions, this intervention was purely personal and the Ashram was not concerned in it. The British Government and numbers of people besides could not believe that Sri Aurobindo had ceased from all political action and it was supposed by them that he was secretly

Continued on page ten



# BY WAY OF THE TIMELESS

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALDOUS HUXLEY

BY N. PEARSON

A new publication by Aldous Huxley is always a literary event to be reckoned with. The appearance of his latest novel "Ape and Essence"—which depicts the possible consequences of atomic destruction, with the conquest of the Beast over the human—is a timely reminder that at least a summary assessment of this modern writer's work is long overdue. As one cannot do full justice to his entire literary output in one short article, it is proposed here to take only certain relevant strands of his writings which have a direct bearing on the newly emerging spiritual outlook of the present day.

Surveying the whole of Huxley's work over the past 30-years—his earliest publication was a book of verse "The Burning Wheel" which appeared in 1916—we see that he is not only consistently one of the outstanding writers of the day, but also one who has continually reflected the shifting pattern of the times, particularly during this long period of upheaval between and immediately following two world wars. But over and above this he has been, and still is, one of the most potent influences to have taken a hold of and brought into sharper prominence the deeper currents underlying the surface tendencies of the age. It is appropriate therefore, that there should now be a widening interest in Huxley's work, not only in Europe and America where he has long been regarded by discerning critics as being one of the most serious-minded of the moderns, but also in India. For it is to Indian spirituality and mysticism that his more recent writings have inevitably turned, as containing the crucial factor of man's search for a decisive pathway through the present chaos of the world.

### From the Natural Towards the Mystical

Briefly scanning his earlier works—"Crome Yellow" (1921), "Antic Hay" (1923), "Those Barren Leaves" (1925) and "Point Counterpoint" (1928)—we find the full play of his rapier-like satire probing and thrusting into all the futilities and trivialities of the social life of the time. Himself an accomplished intellectual, springing from a background where Reason was the supreme law, he early realised the ultimate impotency of that "cultivated" intellectualism which produces the dilettante and the fashionable snob. And Reason also, when developed as an end in itself divorced from the springs of life, merely withers into a dried-up formula; while life, without the guidance of a reasoned morality naturally sinks into that ethically state where non-morality and "primitivism" are the rule and ideal. While his earliest novels depicted the consequences of this schism between a growing "primitivism" and the old morality, the writings that followed showed the need for reconciling the reason of man with his feelings and natural instincts. At this period we note the influence of William Blake, especially in his essays of the later '20's—"Proper Studies" and "Do What You Will". And at the same time the influence of D. H. Lawrence—with whom he was associated towards the end of the latter's life—only accentuated the "primitiveness" in his novels and short stories,—e.g. "Brief Candles" (1930). It is noteworthy however, that while the carefree spirit of the 20's almost frustrated and submerged any serious effort or line of thought that sought to go against the current stream, Huxley's writings boldly and sharply exposed the shallowness of outlook behind the apparently respectable and secure facade of the accepted order of social life. And not only in the western world did he delight in tearing down the cloak of respectability,

but in his essays of travel in the East he delighted in ridiculing those bizarre imitations, the less cultured influences from the West, inculcated upon an alien setting. Thus his impressions of India in 1923 ("Jesting Pilate") merely repeat the process of sweeping away external accretions (in this case the less reputable results of foreign domination), in order to reach the major truths which lay behind them,—as his subsequent writings convincingly show.

By the end of the 20's however, there was a marked change in the world's affairs. The uprising generation, having frittered away those post-war years in futile living, were suddenly jolted into a sense of realism. Signs of collapse were beginning to appear in the fabric of the whole social and economic structure of the time. It was now being asked seriously, how this reckless drive of a civilisation to its own apparent destruction could possibly be averted. In his most popular novel "Brave New World" (1932), Huxley showed how the various trends of modern science as they were then being applied to everyday life would, when stretched to their extreme limit and conclusion, inevitably lead the world to that grossly synthetic life where all human values and aspirations are completely submerged in a highly-developed mechanical materialism. Certainly one could no longer put one's faith in Science alone, as holding out the solution for the salvation of man. But if not Science what then? It is in the novel "Eyeless in Gaza" (1936) that we first catch a direct hint of what was later to develop into Huxley's claim for mysticism and the religio-ethical way of life as containing the most vital factors for man's survival. For it had become increasingly evident that some other factor, beyond Reason and the instincts, was the essential need for accomplishing the true "wholeness" of man.

### Search for Spiritual Ends and Means

It is in his later work "Ends and Means" (1937)—a veritable "reform" book—that we find the most comprehensive statement of Huxley's new orientation. In these essays the theme of non-attachment and the contemplative life as the aim to be striven for, was fully elaborated, with great stress on the means whereby this ideal could be attained. The book shows clearly that it is those very means, the old-world ethics of man, which the modern generation has lost or deliberately rejected, and which must first be recovered. It goes on to deduce that it is the means in fact, which wholly determine the nature of the ends; and that a given end must necessarily have its own particular means of attainment. For there is a fixed law of human behaviour (known from time immemorial) in which good actions will ultimately bring about beneficent results and rewards, and faulty or evil ones must inevitably bring their own bitter fruits and punishments. And so, Huxley concludes, we must concentrate on correct means in order to attain the right ends or aims of man. If the

ultimate aims are Peace, Harmony and Goodness—which have been among the most widespread of human ideals—then we must train ourselves to do those actions which in the past have fostered these ideals, and reject those which have countered or retarded their achievement. Thus war, Huxley condemns, is in its very nature one of the major evils of the world, since it has always brought about widespread destruction and suffering in its train, and is opposed to the establishment of a true Peace. It is only through pacifistic means, therefore, that man can attain his desired ends of a peaceful harmonious society and way of living.

Although it is true that the modern generation is sorely in need of a way to overcome its present perplexities, it is apparent that such facile and ready-made means cannot meet all the complex problems that beset the present-day world. Furthermore, one is aware of other more pressing factors of human yearning and experience, which weigh considerably against these rather hasty and summary conclusions, centred as they are around the all-dominant means. In the first place, good or correct means alone will not automatically and of themselves bring about Good, however "right" those means might be. Such belief in a mechanical action-and-reaction process is a misreading of that ancient law which is a relative rather than a rigid and absolute rule of human behaviour. For even a pious exercise of virtues in one's daily life is not proof against one becoming an instrument of widespread destruction and suffering, as for instance in the case of those who are carried away by excessive political fervour. In a later work "Grey Eminence" (1940)—the biography of the Capuchin monk Father Joseph—Huxley shows in fact how virtuous piety has been unwittingly harnessed, through blind patriotism, to a destructive end. It is clear therefore (although Huxley does not seem to have taken sufficient account of this fact) that the means themselves must be directed and even moulded by a greater aim, which surpasses and at the same time includes the ideals of Peace, Harmony and Good. For by a broader interpretation of human destiny, as Sri Aurobindo has fully elaborated it in "The Life Divine", it can be seen that while these ideals do not in themselves serve as the ultimate criterion of human perfection, there is a greater goal to which man's deeper aspirations constantly turn. This goal is the manifestation here in this earthly field, of the Divine Nature itself. For it is only the actual manifestation of that higher Nature, within the human, which can really bring about a permanent Peace and Harmony in the world. In the light of this greater goal, the aims and apparent ends of the many spiritual endeavours of the past—from the practice of the virtues in one's outer life to inner purification and enlightenment—are themselves part of a basic and progressive means whereby the transformation of man's nature can ultimately be achieved. Thus spiritual means—including partial ends and attainments—become the steps, as well as the aids, which are to be consciously and constantly directed towards the goal of Divine Perfection.

### Preoccupation with the Divine Ground

In this connection it is unfortunate that Huxley, throughout all his writ-

ings, by condemning the headlong rush of modern "progress" towards its own apparent destruction, has also condemned Progress itself as an integral factor in human development, and along with Progress he has also rejected the principle of Evolution, which is really the underlying process of man's spiritual growth. For man is fundamentally an evolving creature of Earth, as well as possessing the consciousness of an inner divinity,—the seed of a greater Being to which he can eventually grow. It is through this rejection of the very motive force of human development, that he is thus left only with partial ends to represent the ultimate aim of man. For in turning from Progress he is obliged to accept the static and limited aim of unitive knowledge of the Divine Ground, rather than the more far-reaching dynamic one, of the actual transformation of this earthly life into the true figure of the Divine. And by taking unitive knowledge alone as the sole aim, the earthly goal becomes that idealised state of peaceful and harmonious existence where the disturbing influence of "progress" cannot enter. Admirable as this world-transcending ideal is, and has been for many generations of idealists and reformers, it is more of a stage in human development rather than the ultimate goal perceived by a more comprehensive vision of Reality. For unless a spiritual aim is linked directly with the actual life of humanity, the whole endeavour inevitably results in escape or retreat from the world—as has happened in so many efforts of the past—and life on earth would be almost unaffected, in a radical way, by any spiritual attainments springing therefrom. Earth life itself would be taken to be a temporary or transitory phase towards some "higher" transcendent Beyond, and man's development here would be reduced to a static end,—a state of fixity which must inevitably turn into stagnation and decay. It is clear, therefore; that such a negatively directed ideal cannot effectively grapple with the pressing problems of the present-day world; it can only by-pass them with a devastating sweeping aside of the major issues.

In spite of his dismissal, however, of the principle of Progress in humanity, we must be infinitely grateful that Huxley has opened up for the modern generation of the West a highly significant field of spiritual thought, especially by his thorough researches and analysis of the mystical writings of the world. "Perennial Philosophy", which first appeared in 1945, represents Huxley's patient search over a number of years, into all the obscure corners of world mysticism. And the result is not only an anthology of mystical writings, but also an attempt to distil from them the true essence of spirituality,—which Huxley terms the Highest Common Factor of all mysticism and religion. From this endeavour he has extracted four fundamental doctrines as being the core of the Perennial Philosophy. These may be summarised as follows—

1. That the phenomenal world of matter and of individualised consciousness is the manifestation of a Divine Ground, within which all partial realities have their being, and apart from which they would be non-existent.

2. That man is able not only to know about the Divine Ground, but also to realise its existence by direct intuition.

3. That man possesses a double

*Continued on next page*

nature—an ego and an eternal Self. It is the latter, the inner man, that is the true spirit, the spark of divinity within the soul. It is possible to identify oneself with this inner spirit which is of a like nature with the Divine Ground, and so one can become identified directly with the Divine Ground itself.

4. That man's life on earth has only one end and purpose: to identify himself with his eternal Self, and so come to unitive knowledge of the Divine Ground.

Although these four doctrines are common enough to the spiritual knowledge of India—the home of the Vedas, Upanishads and Gita—they are for the most part new roots for the western world, by which it can attain to a wider and deeper spiritual insight than was possible from its own traditional sources. We must see however, that these doctrines, fundamental as they are, constitute the basis rather than the ultimate goal of man's endeavour. For we are sufficiently convinced that there is a greater destiny—the actual fulfilment of divinity within the life of the world—which we must take to be our highest aim. And in the spiritual endeavour towards this attainment the Perennial Philosophy forms the fundamental ground rather than the ultimate end and purpose. Huxley pertinently strikes the true keynote of man's eternal quest for the Divine, when he enquires: "what is the That to which the thou can discover itself to be akin?"; or in other words, what is the nature of the Divine Ground? For it is only from this fundamental inquiry that modern man can begin to attain to that integral transformation of his nature—and indeed of the whole earthly field—which gives the true meaning and purpose to his earthly existence.

#### The Method of Purgation by Horror

Although Huxley cites copiously from the writings of the Christian mystics and draws widely from the wealth of material contained in the Indian scriptural works, it is in the mystical writings of the Zen Buddhists that he appears to find the fullest and highest exposition of this basic Perennial Philosophy. This is not so surprising when we regard the near kinship of Huxley's work with the wit and anecdote of those old Zen masters. There is one important difference, however; for

whereas the Zen masters from their high pinnacle of serene detachment were able to survey and satirise so brilliantly the frailties and quaint antics of man, the western satirists—at least the modern ones—have invariably taken the netherward view. Thus we find in Huxley's novels, that he fails to reach that high level of lofty humour which springs from a true detachment,—such as was the prerogative of the Zen masters. In common with the current expression of the moderns, he tends to deliberate largely upon the horrific and perverse aspects of human life and society,—intending perhaps to shock the reader into some realisation of the deeper truths. But if this is so, his alternation between the harsh strident "realism" of the moderns and the cold analytical presentation of the scientist hardly helps to produce the real detached outlook on life, which is the essential basis of a wider realisation. Such presentation in fact tends to dim any natural humour that may be contained therein, and only leaves behind a feeling of frustration and a disgust for life itself. It has the effect, therefore, of distracting and disturbing the reader from the main purport of his work, rather than of rousing and uplifting his consciousness to a higher level.

Huxley's latest publication "Ape and Essence" is yet another illustration of a too excessive (and in this case unrelieved) use of horror and perversity, which obscures rather than illumines what he is aiming to convey. The only justification, if any, for this exaggerated portrayal of the bestial nature, would appear to lie in the old belief of "casting out the devil" by purgation, or in its modern version of externalising the subconscious regions of man's nature. But it is clear from such methods of the past, that a stirring up and exposure of the lower levels, is not in itself sufficient to purify permanently or integrate the complex nature of man. Here again we have the tendency to over-simplify the process and overleap the more integral method. This is not to say that these lower elements of the nature have to be repressed. Self-purification, as the truly Enlightened have taught us, is a more comprehensive process which can only be established as a permanent basis by the persistent and gradual building up in the being, and in the aura

around, of a resistance against the intrusion of these lower forces. For it is apparent that even in the most complete purgation, there is no guarantee that the hostile forces and elements of these lower levels will not encroach again to lodge within the being. Indeed in those spiritual practices of the flesh, for suffering and for complete effacement of ego, there was every possibility of thus becoming a continual prey to these hostile elements. Hence the necessity in those practices, of diverting the whole energy in a constant vigil and unceasing purgation. It is really the development of a true detachment or withdrawal, and the exercise of discrimination, which are the preliminary and accompanying steps for the active rejection of those elements hostile to the establishment here of the Divine Nature. First self-purification and then the wider and more extensive world purification—this is the more secure order of progression. For it is only when one has established a sufficient measure of purification in oneself that one can become a centre and active influence in the universal purification and enlightenment.

#### The True Role of the Creative Artist

From this spiritual background we can consider better the position of the creative artist who seeks to uplift or enlighten the general consciousness of humanity through his own creative work. There are two aspects to note; one is the artist's own experiences, attitude and expression, and the other is the reaction (both actual and intended) upon the wider circle of readers or admirers. If his own expression is merely the exposure of the perversities and the distortions inherent in the present human nature (such as is prevalent among the moderns), then it forms neither the basis for his own purification or broadening of outlook, nor does it serve towards the wider enlightenment of humanity. The effect on the reader is most frequently contrary to the artist's intention,—if there is in fact the sincere striving to raise the consciousness. In most cases such works act more as an emotional and imaginative stimulant, exploiting the spectacular and sensational levels of the vital nature. And as a stimulant they excite without leading to a true detachment where

the discriminative faculties can function. In fact these latter faculties are most often numbed into inactivity or swept aside by the onrush of the sensational elements. From the spiritual point of view, therefore, there is no justification for this current fashion of excessive and exaggerated "realism" (including the surrealism of the modernists), which merely diverts the whole of man's creative energy and attention towards the lower levels of mind and life. Rather is it for the modern creative artist, seeking to give the lead in the uplift of man, to seek the higher levels of inspiration and expression, which alone can bring light in the present darkness of the world.

One feels it necessary to have dwelt at greater length on this point of an excessive concentration on the lower levels, this "splashing in the ooze" (as Huxley says in another context), since it has become such a major and extensive development of the modern literary (and artistic) expression, out of which the present-day writers seem incapable of escaping. In the case of Huxley's writings we find, however, that it is chiefly in his imaginative works that this excessive pandering to the popular taste and fashion prevails, with merely an undercurrent or interlude of intellectual discourse or philosophising. In his non-imaginative writings—his essays, criticisms and comments—we have the much purer expression, where we can enjoy the high intellectual virtuosity and the finer flavour which characterise the best of Huxley's work. There we have the full display of that keen sensitive intellect, which having probed into all the ways and by-ways of the moderns' frantic search for a new faith and ethos, has eventually discovered in the heart of mysticism and spirituality the real key which alone can save the modern world. And having thus embarked on the way of the Timeless he is certain to come upon that larger Reality—the Height of the Divine—beyond the Ground which is but the base of the Transcendence. It is with more than a passing interest, therefore, that we look forward to a new landmark in Huxley's literary Odyssey,—of which "Ends and Means" and "The Perennial Philosophy" are significant stages.

## SRI AUROBINDO, THE LEADER OF THE EVOLUTION —From page 8

participating in revolutionary activities and even creating a secret organisation in the security of French India. But all this was pure imagination and rumour and there was nothing of the kind. His retirement from political activity was complete, just as was his personal retirement into solitude in 1910.

#### Silent Yogic Action During Last War

But this did not mean, as most people supposed, that he had retired into some height of spiritual experience devoid of any further interest in the world or in the fate of India. It could not mean that, for the very principle of his Yoga was not only to realise the Divine and attain to a complete spiritual consciousness, but also to take all life and all world activity into the scope of this spiritual consciousness and action and to base life on the Spirit and give it a spiritual meaning. In his retirement Sri Aurobindo kept a close watch on all that was happening in the world and in India and actively intervened whenever necessary, but solely with a spiritual force and silent spiritual action; for it is part of the experience of those who have advanced far in Yoga that besides the ordinary forces and activities of the mind and life and body in Matter, there are other forces and powers that can act and do act from behind and from above; there is also a spiritual dynamic power which can be possessed by those who are advanced in the spiritual consciousness, though all do not care to possess, or possessing, to use it, and this power is greater than any other and more effective. It was this force which, as soon as he had attained to it, he used, at first only in a limited field of personal work, but afterwards in a constant action upon the world forces. He had no reason to be dissatisfied with the results or to feel the necessity of any other kind of action. Twice however he found it advisable to take in addition other action of a public kind. The first was in relation to the second World War. At the beginning he did not actively concern himself with it, but when it appeared as if Hitler would crush all the forces opposed to him and Nazism dominate the world, he began to

intervene. He declared himself publicly on the side of the Allies, made some financial contributions in answer to the appeal for funds and encouraged those who sought his advice to enter the army or share in the war effort. Inwardly, he put his spiritual force behind the Allies from the moment of Dunkirk when everybody was expecting the immediate fall of England and the definite triumph of Hitler, and he had the satisfaction of seeing the rush of German victory almost immediately arrested and the tide of war begin to turn in the opposite direction. This he did, because he saw that behind Hitler and Nazism were dark Asuric forces and that their success would mean the enslavement of mankind to the tyranny of evil, and a set-back to the course of evolution and especially to the spiritual evolution of mankind: it would lead also to the enslavement not only of Europe but of Asia, and in it India, an enslavement far more terrible than any this country had ever endured, and the undoing of all the work that had been done for her liberation. It was this reason also that induced him to support publicly the Cripps' offer and to press the Congress leaders to accept it. He had not, for various reasons, intervened with his spiritual force against the Japanese aggression until it became evident that Japan intended to attack and even invade and conquer India. He allowed certain letters he had written in support of the war affirming his views of the Asuric nature and inevitable outcome of Hitlerism to become public. He supported the Cripps' offer because by its acceptance India and Britain could stand united against the Asuric forces and the solution of Cripps could be used as a step towards independence. When negotiations failed, Sri Aurobindo returned to his reliance on the use of spiritual force alone against the aggressor and had the satisfaction of seeing the tide of Japanese victory, which had till then swept everything before it, changed immediately into a tide of rapid, crushing and finally immense and overwhelming defeat. He had also after a time the satisfaction of seeing his previsions about the future of India justify themselves so that she stands independent with whatever internal difficulties.



# A NATIONAL SCHEME FOR DEVELOPMENT OF ART

By JAGADISH CHANDRA KHANNA

Man as an evolving mental being has travelled far from his hoary animal past when all his activities and interests were centred round the demands of his primary instincts—food, sex and self-preservation. Civilised man even in the earlier stages of his mental development felt that apart from these vital instincts in him there was something in him, a part of his being, which yearned and aspired for things higher, Beauty, Harmony and Truth and was thrilled to the depths by their ethereal touch. Exquisite carvings in stone of animal figures have been discovered in some of the pre-historic grottos in Spain which exhibit these urges and artistic trends even in the primitive cave-men yet hardly emerged from the savage.

Quest for beauty, no less than that for goodness and knowledge, is ingrained in the human soul, for is it not a manifestation of the Supreme Artist (Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram), the creator of the starry firmament and the crimson dawn, the blue lotus and the peacock's tail?

Any scheme for the development of human personality, therefore, which ignores this imperious urge of man, the mental and the aesthetic no less than the vital being, will not only stunt his true growth by imposing an atrophy on his higher centres, but ultimately fail in its very aim.

## Art Education: Past and Present

The ancient civilisations, it must be said to their credit, were fully alive to this truth. In our own country, for example, music, the arts and poetry were as necessary a part of the education of the youth as the sciences and the art of war. The aim in education was not only to enable him to hold his own in the struggle for existence but also to equip him to rise high above his every-day world of strife and pain, of egoistic desires and their consequences—frustration and sorrow—to the tranquil heights of the Spirit and discover his true stature—his oneness with the source of all Beauty, Knowledge and Bliss. It was in art too that the ancients discovered a wonderful magic power of "stilling the restless grosser passions, of instilling a distaste for the rough, uncouth and excessive in action and manner and restraining both feeling and action by a striving after the decent, the beautiful, the fit and seemly."

Aristotle speaks of art as the matchless alchemy through which the Divine effects the "Katharsis", the purification of feelings, passions and emotions, without which the upward ascent of man is not possible. And the Sanskrit poets hail it as "Kantasammita" the voice of the Beloved which stirs us to our depths by its very sweetness, which elevates and illumines yet does not preach. For such indeed is the function of art.

Today, however, a soulless and mercenary system of education prevails. How gravely this soulless foreign system has affected us can be judged from the intellectual equipment of the average graduate who, to quote Havell's words, "is less equipped artistically than a Pacific Islander." Having no artistic or aesthetic training he looks at the masterpieces of Ajanta and Ellora, the great Trimurti at Elephanta, the sublime temples of Tanjore and the rest with blank stupefaction, impressed at best by their external size and form, but completely ignorant of the profundity of their concept.

It is this serious neglect of a vital aspect of education that we have to rectify. It is not necessary that every man should be a professional artist. It is necessary, however, "that every man have his artistic faculty developed, his taste trained, his sense of beauty and insight into form and colour activated and corrected." "A nation," in the inimitable words of Sri Aurobindo, "surrounded daily by the beautiful, noble, fine and harmonious, becomes that which it is habituated to contemplate, and realises the fullness of

the expanding spirit in itself. The spirit of Indian art must be revived, . . . . the inborn skill and taste of the race and the intuitive gaze of the Indian eye must be recovered and the whole nation lifted again to the high level of the ancient culture and higher."

## A New Scheme

An ambitious scheme dealing with this important subject has been receiving the attention of the Central Government. It has been formulated by Mr. Barada Ukil, the founder of the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society, and sponsored by the latter. I shall give below some of the salient features of the scheme, which, to begin with, will be a five-years one. Mr. Ukil suggests:

(1) Fine Arts (Drawing and Painting) should be introduced as a compulsory subject in both the Primary and Secondary Schools, and as an option subject in the University Degree course like other optional subjects, theoretical and practical.

(2) Remodelling of the Art Schools in the country to suit our cultural heritage and establishing Art Institutions in all such Provinces where there exists no such institution at present.

(3) Establishment of Museum and Art Galleries in Provincial Capitals to house specimens of Museum collections and fine arts respectively. The educational institutions should be directed to send their students in batches by rotation and at regular intervals under proper escorts, to view and study the exhibits in their local Museums and Art Galleries.

(4) Founding of a separate Directorate of Arts in every Province; under the Central Government's Department of Education and Arts.

(5) A team of four qualified Indians (composed of artists and critics) should be sent to Europe, America, China and Japan, for securing first-hand knowledge of conditions of Museums and Art Galleries in those places, so that their expert knowledge may be successfully utilized in the construction of our National Museums and Art Galleries with such modifications as may be deemed proper in view of our own national outlook and traditions.

(6) Awarding of scholarships by Provincial Governments to talented young artists for post-graduate studies in foreign countries, conditions being that the Governments shall have first lien on their services.

(7) All educational institutions should be directed to purchase a fixed minimum number of coloured facsimile reproductions and enlarged photographs of famous Art works of the country—ancient and modern—for display in their libraries and common rooms for study of students.

The last suggestion is the pivot round which the entire scheme revolves, and is worth considering in detail.

According to Sir John Sargent's report there were 2,18,795 recognised Educational Institutions in British India in 1936-37, excluding the Indian States. Assuming that 50% of the above institutions are now left with the Indian Union, there would be, say, 1,05,000 insti-

tutions in the country. Of these 1,00,000 are in Group "A", i.e. Primary, Middle English and Middle Vernacular Schools and 5,000 in Group "B", i.e. High Schools and Colleges. Institutions in Group "A" will be required to purchase 15 pictures each—all properly framed in one standard size at Rs. 4 each, payment to be made by instalments. Those in Group "B" will likewise purchase 30 framed pictures each at Rs. 7 per picture, payment to be made in instalments.

The total receipts from the sale of these pictures according to the figures supplied by Mr. Ukil would come to Rs. 70.5 lakhs. The authorities of the institutions will be able to recover the entire amount of their respective contributions by collecting a monthly subscription of one anna per student for 20 months and 32 months by Group "A" and "B" institutions respectively—even by making an allowance of 25% of the total number of students in case of poor students, who cannot contribute even one anna per month.

The pictures are to be produced in bulk and an additional income of about Rs. 2 lakhs can be made, explains Mr. Ukil, by publication of portfolios of 10 pictures each (out of the surplus pictures) with short notes and life sketches of the artists. The nett income, thus, after deducting all the expenses would come to Rs. 15,90,000. This sum of Rs. 16 lakhs, suggests Mr. Ukil, will be a material contribution towards the financial commitments involved in implementing the other suggestions.

## What We Should Do

The scheme is certainly ingenious in that it is self-supporting to a considerable extent. The suggestions pertaining to the hanging of famous Indian paintings in the institutions can be put into effect immediately. Visual study, as acknowledged by psychologists all the world over, has a direct appeal to the juvenile mind and its importance needs no emphasis. If the children in the Primary and Secondary schools and the boys in the High Schools and Colleges are brought up in proper artistic surroundings it will help cultivate that aptitude for art which is latent in them. The pictures on the walls will, besides, create that atmosphere of beauty and grace which is so conspicuous by its absence today in these institutions.

The poet said of the child that "grew in sun and shower"—

And beauty born of murmuring sound

Shall pass into her face.

Even so the beauty of artistic creation, when it is all around us, steals into our consciousness and works a subtle change in our nature by elevating and refining it. The effect of the pictures on the minds of the boys, when they are in their most impressionable and formative stage, will be incalculable.

As for the construction of art galleries and museums in all big cities, I believe Mr. Ukil would not be over-anxious for their construction in these exceptionally stringent times. The idea should, however, be taken up as soon as the present conditions of shortage of building material are relieved. It is, however, time that the westward craze, born of a complex of inferiority and blind aping of Europe, should give place to a healthy self-confidence in our own cultural heritage and innate artistic genius. In an illuminating article appearing in the "Modern Review", some time back, Dr. Tarak Nath Das dwelt at length on the huge waste of money involv-

ed in the education of hundreds of our young men abroad. He suggested that if absolutely necessary it would be better for Indian Universities to borrow the services of Western teachers for specified periods till such time that our own teachers come up to the requisite standard, than to spend so much annually and with such little actual profit to the students. What is true of scientific studies, where the Western Universities lead in laboratory equipment and other facilities, applies with still greater justification to the education in art. It is not implied, however, that we adopt an insular attitude and cut ourselves adrift from the world trends but only that we shed our inhibitions and realise what a wealth of art is lying here in our own country waiting to be drawn upon and needing our close study. Mr. Ukil will agree with me that our students should go abroad only when they have first delved deep into their deep founts and come out saturated with our own great cultural heritage.

The suggestion about the introduction of art as a compulsory subject of study in the primary and secondary schools and an optional one in the colleges, however, needs the earliest attention of our educationists and the Government.

It is reassuring that the Ministry of Education under the Hon'ble Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is keenly aware of this problem. In a speech, some time ago, at the opening of the INDIAN ART EXHIBITION he said, "I must confess that art education has been sadly neglected in our country, whether as a repository of ancient history or an embodiment of the visions of beauty that have moved men. No doubt, students are sometimes taken and sometimes themselves go to Museums in Jaipur, Mysore or Hyderabad. Such visits are, however, perfunctory and occasional, and there is no effort to integrate the study of art into the scheme of our general studies. The Ministry of Education have proposals in hand which will lead to the enrichment of our life through the integration of art in education, both secondary and university, but the implementation of the plans will take some time."

It is to be hoped that the time will be as short as possible and that the urgency of the problem is not lost sight of by those in power.

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# THE GRIM FACTS OF THE KASHMIR SITUATION

By "LIBRA"

## Fact One

The time has surely come to look the grim facts of the Kashmir situation squarely in the face. The first fact is that the U. N. Commission is trying to please both parties and therefore cannot offer a fair final solution. Nothing else can explain its inconsistency in assuring India, on the one hand, that the terms of the Agreement of August 13, 1948, implied the "large scale disarmament and disbandment of the Azad Kashmir forces" and in advising Pakistan, on the other hand, that the resolution did not contemplate any such step. Later, Pakistan granted that the withdrawal of her own armies and of India's implied that the Azad forces would not remain intact; but the Commission did nothing definitely to stop her construing its talks to mean that these forces would be touched only after the removal of the Indian armies from Kashmiri soil. Clearly, if there is no disposal of these dangerous forces at the right time the Kashmir issue will never be settled with justice. The U. N. Commission, by its failure to be single-minded, gave Pakistan a constitutional excuse to sabotage the settlement. Its weakness stands self-exposed and to expect real ultimate adjudication from it in its present mind is to live in dreamland. Rightly have its recent arbitration-proposals been turned down by the India Government in spite of the recommendations by Truman and Attlee. The very basis of the proposals is at fault—namely, the acceptance of Pakistan the aggressor and India the rescuer as being of equal moral status in the Kashmir-case.

## Fact Two

The second fact is that, even if the Commission had followed a clear logical line and suggested to Pakistan the disarmament and disbandment of the Azad Forces, there would have been little possibility of Pakistan accepting the suggestion. Pakistan speaks as if with two voices. Sometimes she tries to make out that she is all for a free plebiscite and that India is double-faced and cunningly plotting to avoid it. Thus, the newspaper *Dawn*, Pakistan's chief organ of high-powered anti-Indian propaganda, editorially accused Pandit Nehru on August 9 of determination "to put spokes into the U.N.C.I.P. wheel and delay and eventually prevent the holding of a plebiscite." The accusation is patently absurd because a plebiscite is thought by India to be the one thing which would give her the greatest chance of getting Kashmir. Shaikh Abdulla is well-known to have a large following which is very likely to tilt the balance in India's favour. Pakistan's exhibition of eagerness to have a plebiscite in spite of Pandit Nehru's alleged machinations is, therefore, merely a throwing of dust in the world's eyes. She cannot risk a plebiscite because she fears the result of it.

And her anti-plebiscite attitude comes out unmistakably in the other voice in which she speaks. This is not a voice with a democratic accent. It is a voice of communal and religious partizanship. It is heard mostly in the pronouncements of the Azad leaders, but it is Pakistan's own voice too, since the admission has been made that her own regular

army is not only one in mind with the Azad forces but also exercises an operational command over them and is for all practical purposes one fighting unit with them. There can be no two interpretations of the words used by Sardar Ibrahim at Rawalpindi on August 13: "Kashmir is a country which belongs to Muslims and must form a part of Pakistan." The implication here is that by any means Pakistan must acquire Kashmir and whatever impedes her right of possession must be counteracted. The immediate disarmament and disbandment of the Azad troops as a preliminary to a plebiscite would undoubtedly impede that right: ergo, no such measure is ever admissible.

## Fact Three

The third fact is that, as a result of Pakistan's obstinacy about the Azad forces, a free plebiscite in a secure Kashmir is impossible. Still to entertain hopes of it is to indulge in extreme wishful thinking. We must either accept a plebiscite on Pakistan's own terms or else go without one. Those terms would involve the activity, open or concealed, of the Azad leaders. The utterance of Ghulam Abbas, styled *Quaid-i-Millat* (leader of the people) of Kashmir, at Skardu on August 17 leaves no doubt about this. The *Quaid-i-Millat* declares: "Nothing can stand in the way of the people of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir liberating eventually their Muslim brethren in the Kashmir Valley." Whether the Muslim brethren in the Kashmir Valley want "liberation" or no, they will be forced to enjoy it, and neither the U.N. Commission nor India will be allowed to spoil the enjoyment.

## Fact Four

The fourth fact is that Pakistan is carrying on large military preparations. The London correspondent of the *Hindustan Times* recently disclosed how busy Pakistan has been, buying arms from Italy and exploring the possibilities of acquiring surplus British war stocks, especially tanks in a nominally "demilitarised" condition. Britain will not make any direct sales to Pakistan, but the latter can acquire the tanks from the countries to which Britain does export them. "Candidus" writing in the *Times of India* (August 25), states that there is mounting evidence of armed activity by Pakistan on her side of the Kashmir border. A new road to Gilgit has also been built for heavy military traffic. As the editor of the *Hindustan Times* (September 4) points out, the whole economy of Pakistan, in fact, is geared to war purposes. While India spends on her defence services less than half her budget, Pakistan has budgeted to spend twice the amount she spends for civil objectives. After allowing for the note of exaggeration which is a common feature in Pakistani propaganda, we can derive a very good hint about Pakistan's mood and preparation from Liaqat Ali Khan's announcement, on June 14, of his country's readiness to fight a hundred years' war in Kashmir.

## Fact Five

The fifth fact is that to serve her aims in Kashmir Pakistan has started a cold war—with the name of

Soviet Russia as her master weapon. Of course, the real situation is that Stalin has sharply called Liaqat Ali Khan to heel by threatening to back up Afghanistan who has been having rather strained relations with Pakistan of late. Pakistan had long ignored Russia: now came Russia's chance to put the screw on her. The result is that Liaqat Ali Khan has suddenly developed brotherly relations with Stalin. The cordiality is pretty artificial, but it has provided Pakistan with a first-rate bogeyman to try to frighten India with. Russia is known to be looking askance at India because of the Commonwealth link forged by Nehru: so Liaqat Ali Khan feels he can really give our Prime Minister the "creeps." Nehru is not likely to have goose-flesh, but he cannot escape a serious headache. And the best thing for him is to start high-level negotiations with the United States for the necessary equipment in case Russia pits any war-material against us.

## Fact Six

The sixth fact is that the hilly north-western regions of Kashmir have become doubly important for our country. They always were excellent strategic ground for a military offensive directed either towards Pakistan or towards India. That is why both India and Pakistan are anxious to possess them in the interests of their own safety. But now, if India leaves them in Pakistan's hands, there will be the additional danger of Russia holding a pistol at India's head, for they include the Russo-Kashmir border. If they are in India's hands, Pakistan may not feel safe from India, though India has definitely no intention to invade her, but Pakistan will never be threatened by Russia through them. They are, therefore, of more value to India than to Pakistan. The latter, however, will be all the more tightened up in preventing them from going to India, for Russia will be insisting on their remaining within her sphere of influence.

## Fact Seven

The seventh and final fact is that, in view of the extreme difficulty, if not impossibility, of arriving at a radical solution, the idea of cutting up Kashmir into two parts is looming on the mental horizon of many people. The idea has never been quite absent, but it is bound to gather increasing force now. There will be quite a section of observers, both in India and abroad, who will say: "Neither India nor Pakistan

wants partition. So, if partition comes about, there will be no humiliation for one and triumph for the other. Either will get something and lose something. A just decision will have been made." But the point ignored by these advisers is that Pakistan cannot really have any serious objection to partitioning Kashmir. As Gopalaswami Ayyangar remarked on September 6 to the delegation of the Jammu Goodwill Mission, certain interested quarters in Kashmir are carrying on propaganda for partition. On the strength of this propaganda by Pakistan's agents, it is quite conceivable that her demand for the whole of this province is merely a clever move to trick us into thinking that if she agrees to partition she has accepted as much disadvantage as we have. Partition would suit Pakistan well enough: she will get the hilly north-western regions which are of great military value and India will never sit comfortable under their menacing shadow. Particularly with Stalin leering from behind Liaqat Ali Khan, the allotment of Gilgit and other northern positions to Pakistan will signify the end of India's security.

## What Are We to Do?

Face to face with these seven grim facts, what are we to do? One thing is clear: we must never yield on vital issues, our stand must be the same as in the past, and we must convince both Truman and Attlee that by supporting our cause they would serve best the cause also of their own countries and of civilisation. For the rest, all that can be said is most aptly summed up in the words of Sardar Baldev Singh on August 26. After declaring that India meant ill to none and wanted an amicable settlement, he uttered a note of warning: "I have heard it said by leaders of Pakistan that Kashmir is essential for the existence of Pakistan. There are some people in that country who even talk of settling this issue by force of arms. But if any one feels one can gain anything by bluff or by threat of force he is highly mistaken.... Our brave soldiers have fought under most difficult conditions and by their acts of bravery they have proved their mettle and saved the beautiful valley of Kashmir from destruction. I have not the least doubt that brave men and officers of our armed forces will add another glorious chapter to their brilliant record whenever they are called upon to do so."

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