

# MOTHER INDIA

Managing Editor:  
K. R. PODDAR

FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW

Editor:  
K. D. SETHNA

"GREAT IS TRUTH AND IT SHALL PREVAIL"

ALTERNATE SATURDAYS

APRIL 15, 1950

VOL. II. NO. 5. FOUR ANNAS

## CONTENTS

AUTHENTIC AND PERMANENT PEACE .. .. .	1	SEEING THINGS THROUGH by Margaret Forbes .. .. .	8
THE SACRED FIRE (Poem) by K. D. Sethna .. .. .	2	THE SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF MANKIND, by Dr. Armando Cortesao .. .. .	9
INDIA AND COMMUNISM by Rishabhchand .. .. .	3	THE FAITHFUL (Poem) by Dilip Kumar Roy .. .. .	9
GOLD (Poem) by Roman .. .. .	5	A FULLY PLANNED ECONOMY by "Chanakya" .. .. .	11
VISION AND REALISATION .. .. .	6	LIGHTS ON LIFE-PROBLEMS by K. G. .. .. .	12
SRI AUROBINDO, THE LEADER OF THE EVOLUTION Part II of "The World Crisis and India" by "Synergist" .. .. .	7		

## AUTHENTIC AND PERMANENT PEACE

In the midst of the critical problems facing us today—problems of conflict between different classes, different religions, different systems of society, different nations and races—the advent of April 24 is like the vision of a wide gate, shining with daylight, calling us out of a discordant darkness in which the mind of man, haunted by golden dreams, is yet compelled to wander among dreadful nightmares. For, April 24 is once again in the year the *darshan* day on which a large public will take the blessing of Sri Aurobindo, under whose eyes and those of the Mother it will pass together with the 700 inmates of his Ashram in Pondicherry. We do not know how large the public will be, but it is sure to run into four figures: an ever-increasing number is turning, all over the world, towards Sri Aurobindo, for there is a growing sense everywhere that in this Ashram in Pondicherry the luminous solution is being found to the age-long travails of humanity. Especially in the heart of India is the feeling, however vague on the whole, that in the figure of Sri Aurobindo there is no mere intellectual exponent of the essence of Indian culture but a living, dynamic and creative embodiment of it in a plenitude never seen before. It is one of the signs of this feeling that, a little while ago, the Asiatic Society of Bengal should have awarded him its annual peace medal.

But, while a general feeling points towards him, a clear understanding is not common of what he works for and the power of peace he commands. In three respects the popular intelligence is liable to misjudge his stature. To begin with, it may conceive him as nothing more than a powerful moral philosopher with a strong religious temperament. To be just a philosopher preaching ideas of a Spiritual Reality that is one and single in the whole world, a unitary substratum of all beings and things, would not touch sufficiently the Indian mind. It may evoke admiration of a certain impersonal type, but there will be little of warmth leading to a hushed joining of palms at the thought of him. India instinctively looks for life-values, for practical realisation, for throbbing palpable achievement. Not only in books but also in personal presence and conduct a man must express his high comprehension of the unitary Spirit, before he can draw a devoted response from the Indian mind. Sri Aurobindo is accepted by India as being more than a God-fascinated philosopher of genius. But many may be entirely equating him with a practitioner of what are commonly called virtues—faith, simplicity, truthfulness, non-violence. He may be imagined as spending all his time in affirming his trust in God and setting an example of prayer, cutting down his needs to the bare minimum and putting away from himself every thought of name and fame, divesting himself of sensual thoughts and being honest in every detail, harbouring no envy or resentment and dealing gently, in a most brotherly way, with all and sundry. Such a notion of him would not be a complete denial of the reality, but it would fit him into too small and rigid a formula: it would not be commensurate with the vast and many-sided and illumined nobility that is his genuine moral nature, for it would fail to regard that nature as part of and rooted in a consciousness fulfilling the ethical and the religious by transcending them and entering into mystical experience. If Sri Aurobindo were a great moral philosopher with a devout disposition, both teaching and practising virtues such as Gandhiji has made famous, he would certainly deserve a following and his mark on the present generation would not be negligible and the nation in its confusions and crises might well seek his guidance. But there have been mighty moralists of this kind in the past and, admirable as their example and work have been, they have not discovered the key to life's riddle and because of them mankind today is not essentially on a loftier level than it was centuries ago. At the most they have helped the race to a temporary tiding-over: the huge and fearful issue of man's ignorance and egoism and suffering has always recurred.

That Sri Aurobindo is more than a moral and religious philosopher is understood by no small portion of the Indian public. He is looked upon by quite a number as a great Yogi, a living store-house of mystical experience. Brahman, Atman, Ishwara—the Absolute, the Supreme Self, the Lord of the universe—all these are considered to have been realised by him and the white radiance of Eternity to be gathered in him, making him a seer and saint. But the fact that three decades ago he withdrew from the field of politics, the scene of his heroic combat with British imperialism, and kept mostly aloof from the external vicissitudes of the world and even retired in 1926 from day-to-day outward contact with his disciples in the Ashram—this fact produces on several the impression that his eyes are fixed on some beatific Beyond and that he regards life as merely a preparation and passage with its fulfilment far away in a deathless but also birthless status of infinite being. The light of the Divine he is indeed here amongst us and as such he is to be valued, for with that light he can carry us through our anxieties and perplexities, soothe the hurts we receive in the gloom of a bedevilled world, permeate us with a happiness and a tranquillity that stand us in good stead when we are thrown into the dust and heat of life's arena. Yet, with a cry of "Not here but elsewhere!" he appears to leave the core of our trouble unplucked, while on all that intense craving and searching for perfection in our finite complex members—in the mind straining after knowledge and harmony, the life-force aching after bliss and power, the body gasping after beauty and stability—there seems to fall from him a remote chill, the touch of a grandiose bafflement. "No doubt, he has a timeless immensity to give us", it is said, "but what about the dreaming heart of time that would see a fully developed, multi-vibrant, man-controlled and secure earth? The more we move towards the superb silence of his Yogic withdrawal into the eternal mysteries that are above, the more defeated we feel in all to which our hands have been set—art, science, politics, industry. And the more defeated we feel, the less convinced we are that this sage and recluse before whom we sincerely bow our heads and for whose benediction of transcendental calm we are grateful can solve the problems with which we are confronted and which will accept no refusal from us." This reverent criticism is valid *vis-à-vis* all other-worldly mystics, for they have created wonderful epochs of spiritual experience and even conferred on active life itself a new fervour and fertility, but all the lines of consciousness they have set going have, either by a directly ascetic effort or by an abundant earthly artistry of calling the soul heavenwards, ended in an ultimate decadence of world-values, a final enfeeblement of the *élan vital* on an earth from which one is always dragged away yet which can never be forsaken. The question, however, is: Can the Aurobindonian mysticism be deemed other-worldly?

The answer given by those who have visited the Ashram in Pondicherry is a decisive "No." They are aware that Sri Aurobindo did not retire from the political field in order to lose himself in an actionless samadhi: dynamism is in the very grain of his nature and withdrawal from one kind of activity can only mean the adoption of another because it is far more significant and effective. Retirement did not mean even the repudiation of the basic problems of politics but only the quest for a more radical way of dealing with them and bringing about the fulfilment of human societies and collectivities: proof of this is the publication of two magnificent books which are keenly alive to the circumstances and the psychology of social development and of international growth: *The Human Cycle* and *The Ideal of Human Unity*. Students of Sri Aurobindo's world-vision are also aware that his self-confinement to his own rooms since 1926 is no ascetic refusal of life, stamping the Ashram as a home of passive navel-gazers. One has only to look around to note how full of activity is

## Authentic And Permanent Peace —Continued from page 1.

the Ashram: there is hardly any fruitful human occupation that is not part and parcel of the life here. Lately a stress has been laid even on physical culture and a large sports ground is the scene daily of colourful exercises and athletics. What is still more meaningful, Sri Aurobindo withdrawn to his room does not make for an Ashram bereft of constant mixing of the Guru with the disciples; for, there is the Mother who is in varied contact with the inmates day after day and whose beautiful presence is almost everywhere, so intense is her interest and participation in all the activities. Men, women and children are full of healthy vitality under her care and guidance. The Integral Yoga is intended to take up the whole of our nature and pour into it the creative light of the Divine Consciousness. A new world assuming the responsibilities of earth-existence with a being which is dynamised by a greater power than the mere mind is springing up to constitute a nucleus of super-humanity. And Sri Aurobindo keeps aloof only because he wants to concentrate ever more fiercely on a swift solution of the acute problem of life's transformation: he seeks to expedite the emergence of the Divine in the mould of the embodied human. His is not a fundamental or permanent seclusion.

Yes, those who perceive the dynamic world-embracing character of the Aurobindonian mysticism are free from the errors of interpreting the Master in terms of the ethico-religious philosopher or of the God-realised supracosmicist. Still, a certain error can reside in even their interpretation. For, most people are under the impression that spirituality either world-abandoning or world-embracing is something that the giant mystics of the past have already practised and that modern practitioners can only play variations on an old theme. No doubt, the soar into the Ineffable beyond the cosmic labour must always be a repetition of an ancient experience, with whatever minor changes of approach and discipline the modern mind may introduce. But the dynamic spiritual realisation need not cover essentially the same orbit as in the past. While one can add nothing by way of further passivity to the immeasurable experience of a Buddha's Nirvana or a Shankara's Parabrahman or a Plotinus's One and Alone, the activity compassed by the dynamic Yogis—whether Vaishnavite or Tantric, whether following the cult of Krishna or the cult of Kali—is evidently incomplete. The spiritualised workings of the mind, the life-force and the body, which they insist on and bring about, stop short somewhere. A marvellous Light does enter into the mind's functionings, the life-force's movements, the body's processes—it is most obvious in the first, clear enough in the second and not imperceptible in the third—yet the very fact of a diminuendo in the direction of the second and the third is indicative of a flaw and, since all three are interdependent and the lower reacts upon the higher, the first itself cannot be fully admitting a divine dynamism or else is not in contact with the absolutely transformative plane

of power. If the mind is not divinised *in toto*, if the vital and the physical being harbour incapacity and frailty, an active perfection is surely not present. And because it is not present, neither Vaishnavite nor Tantric can help looking towards some supra-mundane sphere of harmonised existence whither the soul in him wills to depart when death has set its seal upon the body's imperfection and both life-force and mentality that cannot be wholly made substance of Spirit have been relinquished. The mortal, to put on immortality, has to forsake earth: the long evolution out of brute matter into aspiring self-awareness comes to an abrupt terminus: the sovereign Spirit that must be in everything cannot be brought forth in earth's evolutionary terms. There is an illogic here, as well as a lack of *rationale* for the assumption of those terms by the sovereign Spirit. Sri Aurobindo has refused to accept this illogic and irrationality. The root of it he has traced not in the nature of things but in a deficiency in the old realisations. If the Divine has fashioned the earth-formula for His progressive self-disclosure, there cannot be with the degree of mental, vital and physical spiritualisation attained by the dynamic Yogis a "Thus far and no further!" Within the depths of the Divine there must be the secret Truth-energy of evolutionary completion, and the soul in its upward grade here must be capable of uniting with that Truth-energy and effectuating its entire descent below and a transformation of our threefold nature into this luminous and faultless Supernature. A revolutionary vision of evolutionary possibilities is Sri Aurobindo's. A momentarily new working of the Eternal in Time is the ideal and objective of his Yoga and those who do not grasp the breath-bereaving novelty of the descending light and might of what he calls Supermind or Gnosis are, for all their recognition of his "force one with unimaginable rest", open to the charge of failing to do him justice.

Only when we seize the Aurobindonian originality, the wonderful heart of the tremendous Yogic process that has kept the Master busy for the last forty years, do we understand the real sense in which he is the prophet *par excellence* of peace. The gold medal that he has been offered in appreciation of him as a peace-bringer can acquire its fullest significance not before we perceive that, unless our threefold nature of mind, life-urge and body become divinised down to the smallest velleity, the least nerve-quiver, the last cell-stir, there can be merely a transcendental calm in the recesses of our being, a limited play of harmony in our instrumental and outer mould, and never in this mould the flawless illumination and ecstatic equilibrium by which the colour and cry of adventurous multi-foliate earth-existence will not be annulled and yet a vast unity, spontaneous as well as inviolable, manifested—an authentic and permanent peace, proper to earth, born not from a cessation of activity but from its divinisation.

### THE SACRED FIRE

O keep the sacred fire  
A prisoner poised  
With walls that never wake  
To earthly voice.

So delicate and small  
This undefiled  
Epiphany of joy,  
This golden child,

That like a freezing blast  
The unfruitful power  
Of stormy mind will quench  
The burning flower.

Breathe tenderly your love:  
Feed the pure flame  
By secret offerings  
Of one far Name

Whose rhythm makes more rich  
That smiling face  
Of angel glow within  
The heart's embrace—

Until the dreamy hue  
Grows wide enough  
To flash upon time's chill  
A warrior laugh

Piercing through twilight walls  
Of calm to blind  
With a noon of ecstasy  
The space of mind.

A sword divine which darts  
From clay's dull sheath,  
The luminous tongue shall rise  
Devouring death

And every icy thought's  
Oblivion  
Of earth's untarnished soul,  
Its core of sun.

K. D. SETHNA

# INDIA AND COMMUNISM

By RISHABHCHAND

That the world's eye is upon India as a bulwark against the rolling tide of Communism is a fact more mysteriously significant than one is likely to concede at first sight. It is not so much the conscious as the sub-conscious thought of humanity instinctively turning to India as the saviour of its culture and civilisation. The black demon of Communism is out to devour or deface all that is pure and progressive in the life and society of men and, cowering under its grim menace, mankind finds itself bankrupt of all its resources and confronted either with an utter extinction or a cramped and mutilated existence. Russian militarism, it feels, can be stayed and even subdued, but not Russian Communism, which has such a strong, uncanny appeal to all that is crude and grossly material in the human composition.

But what is it that makes the thought of mankind turn to India? A superficial view may attribute it to India's being a stabilizing force; but that is a vague enough statement which carries more sound than sense to the mind. Where is stability in India to-day? Is not everything in flux, everything being felt for, and tried, adopted or rejected? In the field of practical politics is there any sure, guiding knowledge of the essential elements that went to constitute the long past of the country, any clear perception of the nation's organic growth and goal? A fumbling empiricism, a haphazard and half-hearted loyalty to the ancient ideals and a bold strenuous attempt at promiscuous adaptation mark our dealing with the thousand and one problems that surround us to-day. To speak of stability in the midst of this maelstrom is to speak in a vein of sentimental idealism and national pride.

It may also be asserted that the world's eye is on India, because India has been through the ages an indomitable preacher and propagator of peace and there is nothing that the war-weary world needs more to-day and nothing that Communism threatens more with complete destruction than peace. But is there peace in India today? How can she give what she herself hardly possesses? Has Gandhiji's devoted labour in the cause of peace borne fruit? It is said that India has achieved liberation by means of peace and non-violence, but that is a half-truth. Every student of political thought knows that once a country has willed to win back its freedom and staked its all upon it, there is no power on earth that can withstand it for long, whatever the means adopted for the realisation of the objective, violent or non-violent. And we must not also forget the important fact that it was not so much non-violence as the threatening conspiracy of the post-war political circumstances that forced the hands of British Imperialism and pushed India into the lime-light of international recognition. Non-violence, by appealing to the religious idealism of the masses, has been a considerable rallying force and a stimulator of the people's nationalistic aspirations, but for the sake of truth one must admit that it has been also a parent of many a national calamity and political blunder. An impatient and exclusive insistence on non-violence has precipitated more violence, not once but several times, and proved to the hilt the catastrophic futility of such drastic constraints and impositions upon human nature, such cavalier treatment of the subtle intricacies of psychological forces. It may be benevolent optimism but it is not certainly beneficent wisdom to expect whole nation to become non-violent overnight. A rigid ethical extremism has left a trail of exploding or simmering violence and rank corruption which impede, more than anything else, the advent of peace and open the door to the forces of darkness and disorder. History records a parallel instance in Asoka's injudicious introduction of Buddhist non-violence into politics and statecraft with the result that the country almost immediately suffered a definite decline and degeneracy. Widespread poverty, social and political insecurity, commercial disintegration and educational confusion have made the country to-day a little too hot for peace, and unless the nation is given the right lead along the lines of its soul's evolution, it will forfeit for ever its role of a preacher of peace to the world.

And yet there is peace or stabilizing force in India, but it is not on the troubled surface of her life; it is deep in the adytum of her soul, and in the substratum of her cultural heritage. This hidden force of peace which is not a moral force—morality is but a product of the mental consciousness—but a spiritual force, has to be evolved and made dynamic in the collective life of the people. It is this force of peace along with other equally important factors that will conquer communism and be the base of a social order, unitarian in essence and yet capable of multiple expressed variation.

## The Theory and the Practice

In an impartial assessment of Communism it would be wrong to fix upon its theoretical side only and overlook its practical bearings, implications and concrete developments. Even when—unlike as in Communism—a movement may appear to be unimpeachable in theory, its practice may often fly in the face of its theoretical foundations and give birth to many conflicting consequences. The theory and the basic principles of Communism have two sides: one subscribes to dialectical materialism and accepts economics as the sole determining factor in social evolution, the other appears to be a natural and justifiable reaction to the selfish exploitation of the people by the privileged, capitalist classes. Here there is a gospel of social equality, solidarity, scientific progress and material prosperity. Though there are

fundamental flaws and shortcomings in Communism and a totally erroneous perspective of history and human life involved in the very grain of its idea, we have, nevertheless, in part of its formulation a striking endeavour of the common man to vindicate the inherent dignity and freedom of his status and wipe out the smirch of inequality and injustice from the face of his evolutionary culture.

It is this aspect of its theory that has attracted and held the advanced mind of humanity and accounts for its phenomenal success almost all the world over. Socialism in its sober form represents the cream of the original concept of communism, apart from its congenital aggressive militarism, and it is no exaggeration to say that it has revolutionized the whole outlook and structure of a great part of human society and is the most potent socio-political force in the world today.

Unity being the master passion of the sub-conscious part of the modern, human mind, it could be achieved either on the shining summits of the spiritual or on the low plains of the material existence. But achieved it must be, for, that is the imperative demand of the Time-Spirit; and Communism came to achieve it, as best it could, on the marshy levels of the proletarian life. It came as a healing balm to countless tortured souls, a redress of rankling grievances and a cementing bond of human fellowship. It came to promote the growth of the second basic principle of the French Revolution—equality, and do away with the iniquitous distinctions and disparities of an unjust dispensation of society. But, unfortunately, it based itself on the quicksand of a stark materialistic outlook and easily lent itself to a gross misuse of power to which the lower passions in man inevitably tend. Communism, as it is practised today in Russia, is, in spite of the veneer of democratic progress, a brazen cult of claws and fangs, a ruthless dictatorship and entrenched, absolutist oligarchy—what else is Kremlin?—and it bears in itself an immense magazine or explosives that are bound to blow it up one day and make a dismal end of all its piled-up pretensions.

So far, then, as the socialistic core of Communism is concerned, it would be blindness to deny that it has gripped the imagination and influenced the thought and action of vast numbers of men. Many a progressive nation is being increasingly attracted towards it and it is being advocated by a number of eminent thinkers of modern times as the solution *par excellence* of all the vexed problems of our political, social and economic life. This is not surprising; for, however extravagant may be the claims of Socialism, they derive the force of their appeal from the obscure but insistent urge behind them towards equality and unity.

But, in practice, Communism has failed to keep its socialistic core undefiled by the lower forces of greed and envy and wanton aggression. Its history, though it is, on the one hand, a remarkable demonstration of the power and productivity of organized labour, is, on the other, a ghastly record of rapacious self-assertion, inhuman brutalities, insolent and unscrupulous diplomacy and a systematic denial of the liberties of the very people it is vowed to serve. There is a yawning gulf between its basic theory and its ever-stiffening practice, and life under it seems to be forced into fixed channels by the bloodshot eye of a pitiless totalitarianism which is a negation and cruel mockery of all democracy. We may be impressed by the efficiency and ordered advance of the regimented manpower of Russia, but if we go behind the glamorous appearances, we shall realise what it has meant to man, the evolving human being pregnant with divine possibilities, this wholesale mechanization of life—mechanization of labour and all productive capacities, mechanization of social habits and customs, mechanization of poetry and the arts, mechanization of education and general culture and, to crown all, a relentless mechanization (which amounts to sterilization) of all individuality, and a total inhibition of all originality in thought and initiative in action other than those fostered and directed by the omniscient State.

## Communism's Six Cardinal Errors

Let us now turn to an analysis of the cardinal errors in the creed of Communism and then explain why we believe that, of all countries in the world, it is India alone that can rescue humanity from the clutches of this dire monster and lead it, from the mechanized equality and deadening uniformity into which it is being dragged, to the real and enduring equality and unity which is its birthright and persistent aspiration.

The first error in the Communist philosophy is its postulate that man is a mere physical being, a chance product of the mechanical forces of Nature, and whatever appears as subtle and spiritual in him—his genius, intuition, inspiration, veridical dreams and divinations—is equally a product of the chemico-physiological forces functioning in him and around him. This Dialectical Materialism is an already outmoded philosophy in the world of progressive thought and is responsible for all the brutalities committed in Russia upon the evolving God in man.

Its second error is the envisaging of economics as the sole determining factor in the evolution of human society. This means, in plain language, that it is the bread and the brick that mould the character, inspire the thought, motivate the actions and decide the destiny of man. All individual and collective initiative is traced to economic causes and it is devoutly held that by a victorious manipulation of the economic forces, human society can be rendered efficiently productive, culturally progressive and

*Continued overleaf*



## INDIA AND COMMUNISM—Continued from page 3

organically prosperous. This naive faith is born of an inverted reading of the historical evolution of human society and is bound to receive rude shocks from contrary facts, as knowledge advances. If economic well-being were the cause of intellectual and spiritual greatness, then India would have been the land of intellectual dwarfs and spiritual anaemics and America the monopolist supplier of Shankaras and Kalidasas, Ramkrishnas and Rabindranaths and Gandhis.

Its third error is that it aims at the establishment of equality without caring to remove from society the primal causes of inequality. It takes the symptoms for the cause and flounders in a system of muddle-headed therapeutics. It is unjust to lay the whole blame at the door of the capitalist who has been no more than an ignorant instrument in the hands of the forces that make for inequality. Any thorough-bred Communist proletarian in the position of the capitalist would have behaved likewise, if not worse. If equality has really to be brought into the society of men and made a dynamic principle of a free and progressive communal living, then the very causes of inequality have to be eliminated. It is not a certain arrangement of society or a particular method of economic dealing that is at fault but the primitive human propensities of greed, envy, jealousy, egoistic power-lust, intolerance and violence that have created the inequalities and would continue to create them so long as they are allowed, whatever the disposition of society and the laws governing its external growth and expansion. Left to themselves, inequalities will crop up even in the midst of a rigorously systematized economic equality, and the classless society, the cherished ideal of the communist, if it ever came into being, will cleave asunder into many classes and seethe with the potentials of another revolution. The remedy lies, therefore, not in an adjustment, not even in an overhauling, of the outer body of the human society and an utter mechanizing of man, but in a radical change in him, a transformation of his very consciousness and nature. Man is the greatest problem to himself and it is in himself and not in his outer activities, in the spring and not in its leaping waters, that he has to seek a solution. He can go on preaching peace and trying all sorts of nostrums, making pacts and hatching policies, but nothing will be of any eventual avail. It is he who has to change, first in the individual and then in the collectivity, by a sincere and arduous process of self-purification, before he can hope to broad-base his society on a perfect unity and equality.

Its fourth error is its preaching of the gospel of savage hatred against the capitalist classes and its naked advocacy of brute force and fraud as the most effective means of realizing its objective. It is this vengeful violence that has turned it into a menace to world peace and human unity and constitutes the most vulnerable, probably the most fatal, plague-spot upon its body politic. Born of hatred rather than of pity, it has necessarily lived and thrived on hatred and is destined to perish by it. Hatred breeds suspicion and fear and poisons the springs of life, and after the first spell of economic reconstruction to which it has undoubtedly given a strong impetus, is over, it is sure to recoil upon its source and disrupt the very bases upon which such an immense structure has been so laboriously reared. Class-hatred is a pestilential anachronism in a world which, sick of war, is panting for international peace, and its fomentors are the worst enemies of mankind.

Its fifth error, probably the most pernicious of all, and outrageous to the dignity of man, is the coercion of the individual into a State-made pattern and the strangling of all individual originality and initiative other than those directly promoted or approved by the State. The individual, the predecessor and pioneer of every reform and the originator and protagonist of every evolutionary movement, is made the passive tool of totalitarian decrees and his thought is either suppressed or lashed into prescribed grooves in the sole interest of the mechanized State. A drab uniformity inevitably results from this enforced regimentation of individual genius and the cramping of individual freedom; and a precarious communal order and cohesion are purchased at the expense of all creative originality and exceptional greatness. Communism began as an oestrus of social equality, but bids fair to become a dynamite for world-explosion, unless man awakens to the essential divinity of his nature and the great aim of his terrestrial existence.

The fifth error consists in its predication of the collectivity as the driving force of all social change. According to it, it is not the individual who conceives a change and pioneers a movement in society, but the collectivity. This is an absurd proposition which is flatly refuted by the entire history of human progress.

The sixth error is the repudiation of religion and morality, and an unabashed employment of questionable means to further its ends. One of the old Bolshevick leaders was dangerously frank when he said, "In the struggle of an exploited class against their enemies, lying and deceit are often very important weapons; all the subterranean work of revolutionary organizations actually depend on overreaching the power of the State." Lenin's views were almost on the same lines and are responsible for all the fiendish atrocities usually committed in cold blood by the communists. It is a universal fact that Communism flourishes best when it battens on anarchy and chaos, flaunting its hollow pledges and delusive catchwords. With religion banned, morality flouted as the refuge of the weak and all higher idealism excised from the mental atmosphere, what else can man

do but approximate to the beast and turn his existence into an organized display of brute instincts and mechanized efficiency?

### India's Counteracting Truths

Has India any power that can stem the tide of Communism? Can she offer a deeper and abiding equality—an equality that will endure unaffected by the diversities of human relations? Has she the knowledge of the secret base of life, a clear vision of its purpose and a tradition and potentiality of culture that can fulfil the deepest aspirations of democracy, not by tethering it to the limitations of the material life, as Communism does, but by lifting it to the freedom and splendour of a higher existence of unity and harmony? Is India likely to evolve that power and knowledge and save mankind from this deadly foe of all higher values and cultural advance?

India offers to the world, not dialectical materialism which views man as an ephemeral creature and instrument of Matter, but an integral, practical, spirituality which embraces and illuminates the whole of life and links it to the Eternal. This practical spirituality reveals man as an immortal soul descended into Matter and evolving in Nature for the eventual manifestation of the Divine of whom it is an eternal portion. It invests life with a deep significance and purpose and opens up incalculable possibilities of human perfection and fulfilment. The physical personality is but the outer crust of the infinite glory that is man, and Indian spirituality explores, sublimates and integrates all the complex parts of the composite human entity and promises to render it a luminous channel for the outpouring of the power, peace and bliss of the Divine upon earth.

India has never made the mistake of believing that the laws of economics determine the evolution of human society. She knows by experience that the Transcendent God is also immanent in the whole universe, and it is His Will that fulfils itself through every individual being and thing. What takes place in the material world is not an independent movement, but a translation, more or less imperfect and blurred, of the happenings on the inner planes. This is neither fatalism nor determinism, but the knowledge of the purposive, divine dynamism acting through a tangle of physical and psychological states, wherein at certain stages of evolution, the play of life pivots upon the ego which attributes to itself a freedom of the will. But as consciousness widens and the crucial evolutionary saltus beyond the frontiers of the mind is taken, the delusion of the egoistic free-will disappears and the liberated individual human will, identified with the one transcendent and universal will, participates in the creative omnipotence of God. Not economics, but an all-seeing divine dynamics governs the evolution of human society.

Indian spirituality is nothing if not a perfect evangel of equality. The equality it claims to bestow upon man is not the shaky equability of shifting material interests or intellectual agreements, but the abiding equality of identity. It sees the Brahman everywhere, in all beings, in all things, in all happenings and, as it is described in the Gita, it embraces the man of knowledge, the cow, the elephant, the dog and the pariah in one global vision. It looks upon man as a symbol and expressive medium of God, and in spite of the social divisions and phenomenal differences and inequalities, it imparts the dominant perception of the oneness of all souls and the dignity and sacredness of all life. Saints and sages have sprung even from the lowest stratum of society and commanded universal respect and following.

It is true that this comprehensive vision of oneness and equality was narrowed and dimmed during the declining period of Indian culture, and the caste system, which is a natural and universal institution of social hierarchy, lost its flexibility and became a box of water-tight compartments. The sacerdotal domination disturbed the balance and hamstrung the harmonious growth of the Indian society as a whole and thereby sowed the seeds of its own eventual destruction. But it is a significant fact, well worth remembering, that every resurgence of spirituality in India has given birth to a revolt against the inequalities in religious and social life and borne witness to the persistent vitality, however obscured and depressed, of the high ideal of unity and equality. The synthetic spirituality that is trying to emerge today out of the welter of the past, promises to found itself upon an integral vision of the omnipresent Reality and the brotherhood of all men. A perfect spiritual equality based on the eternal truth of inner identity, and not a precarious equality of accommodated interests, will be the foundation of the social structure of tomorrow. Life will be richer, more varied, more exuberantly expansive; its rhythm will be more complex; its expression more manifold and distinctive; but the spiritual equality will sustain all this multiple play of variation and never for a moment betray any sign of disturbance or disruption.

It is to be noted here that the craze for the deification of the proletariat marks an important but transitional phase of social evolution and will soon pass away, as did the ancient deification of the aristocrats, giving place to a harmonious hierarchy functioning equitably with the subtle flexibility and automatic interaction of a progressive organism. Hierarchy will remain so long as diversity remains in the world—and without diversity there can be no world—but spiritual equality will be a permanent safeguard against the hierarchy breaking up into an anarchy of ego-centric individuals.

India has always preached the gospel of universal love, and not of

# INDIA AND COMMUNISM

Continued from page 4

hatred. Though she may not evince any sudden eagerness to turn pacifist—a premature pacifism, if successful, is likely to increase rather than diminish the aggressive tendencies in human nature—she does not revel in war, and there is in her soul that anodyne of love which can soothe all embittered elements in international relations and conduce to a real confraternity of the world's races and nations. This love, I must hasten to add, is not moral love, which often delights in self-immolation for its own sake, and goes out of its way to court martyrdom, but the spiritual love, which acts on the tranquil basis of oneness and infallibly fulfils the universal Will.

Except in periods when it described a downward curve, Indian culture has been a harmonization of the individual and the collectivity. To the individual it has given the fullest possible freedom and scope for self-perfection and self-expression. It has always encouraged the extraordinary, the exceptional, the rare men of genius or outstanding talent, and favoured a rebel child if its rebellion was the outcome of an independent spirit and fraught with possibilities of social progress. Whatever his status in society, a man received the highest honour and respect if he merited it. In the *Mahabharat* it is said that if an untouchable happens to be virtuous, even the gods would recognize him as a Brahmin. Ancient Indian culture could rise to such unparalleled heights of glory and creative magnificence, only because it made itself a fertile soil for the birth and growth of extraordinary individuals.

And yet the individual was expected to break beyond his egoistic personality and minister to the development and well-being of the collectivity. His self-widening was not regarded as complete until he identified himself with the universe. The perception of the collectivity, not as a heterogeneous mass or a compact herd of men, but as an evolving, organic body of free individuals, was responsible for the right balance preserved between the two polar forces in society and contributed to the common good of all. The collectivity was the field and condition for the development of the individual, who is always the herald and harbinger of all changes, evolutionary or revolutionary. The individual helped the collectivity and the collectivity helped the individual in a spirit of spontaneous mutuality, and created the many-coloured culture and civilization which has been the wonder of the discerning world. It is the ignorant misinterpretations of the ancient Indian culture and an exaggerated emphasis on the symptoms of its decay—its intolerant and exclusive priestcraft and petrified social hierarchy—that have disfigured Indian history and caused the general impression of a repression of the individual under a system of hide-bound orthodoxy. A sympathetic and penetrating study will prove that Indian culture has been the most catholic in spirit and the way it has harmonized the individual and the collectivity is a marvel of sociology.

## The Soul of Indian Polity

India is the land, probably the only land in the world, where since the hoary days of the past down to the infiltration of foreign invaders, politics has been consistently moulded and guided by the principle of democracy. It may, indeed, be asserted that democracy has been the very soul of Indian policy. Whether the sovereign power was monarchical or republican, whether it was a congeries of small free states ruling the country or an expansive empire of paramount suzerainty, the people were the virtual masters. The king was regarded as a servant of the people (ref. Shukraniti) and a wage-earner (ref. Baudhayana), and it was the ministers in the Assembly who, as guardians of the people, were the custodians and administrators of the law. But if we go still far behind the external machinery of the government, we shall see that it was really the Law that was the sovereign, the undisputed determinant and guide of the socio-political destiny of the people. This Law was not, as in other countries, a mere mass of political rules and ordinances, not even a code of morals, but the crystallization of the accumulated political wisdom of the nation. This wisdom in the field of politics, as in the other fields of life, was not an empirical acquisition, but the outcome of direct spiritual experience. When we translate the word Law into Dharma, we get not a word, but a living concept, deep, embracing and subtly flexible, which mirrors the soul of the nation and reveals the native rhythm of its self-expression. This Dharma was the supreme authority and the Rishi, its living embodiment and the acknowledged spiritual seer, was its sole administrator. The political ruler, the king, was subject to the Dharma and owed allegiance to its guardian or guardians. Thus, in the last analysis, we find spiritual wisdom directing politics as well as the whole life of the society, and making for equality among all classes of men. The glaring inequalities, which were so ugly a feature of the decadent Indian society, were conspicuous by their absence in the ancient organization, which was founded upon the highest spiritual idealism ever conceived by man. I cannot do better than close this point with a reproduction at some length of the words of Sri Aurobindo on the subject of Indian polity:—

"It was not the business of the state authority to interfere with or encroach upon the free functioning of the caste, religious community, guild, village, township or the organic custom of the region or province or to abrogate their rights; for these were inherent because necessary to the sound exercise of the social Dharma. All that it was called upon to do was to co-ordinate, to exercise a general and supreme control, to defend the life of the community against external attack or internal disruption, to repress crime and disorder, to assist, promote and regulate in its larger

lines the economic and industrial welfare, to see to the provision of facilities, and to use for these purposes the powers that passed beyond the scope of the others"....

"Thus in effect the Indian polity was the system of a very complex communal freedom and self-determination, each group unit of the community having its own natural existence and administering its proper life and business, set off from the rest by a natural demarcation of its field and limits, but connected with the whole by well-understood relations, each a co-partner with the others in the powers and duties of the communal existence, executing its own laws and rules, administering within its own proper limits, joining with the others in the discussion and regulation of matters of a mutual or common interest and represented in some way or to the degree of its importance in the general assemblies of the kingdom or empire. The sovereign or supreme political authority was an instrument of co-ordination and of a general control and efficiency, and exercised a supreme but not an absolute authority; for in all its rights and powers it was limited by the Law and by the will of the people, and in all its internal functions only a co-partner with the other members of the socio-political body."

"The one principle permanent at the base of construction throughout all the building and extension and rebuilding of the Indian polity, was the principle of an organically self-determining communal life,—self-determining not only in the mass and by means of the machinery of the vote and a representative body erected on the surface, representative only of the political mind of a part of the nation, which is all that the modern system has been able to manage, but in every pulse of its life and in each separate member of its existence."

The most important and determining factor in the national reconstruction of to-day and tomorrow is spirituality, the essential power and principle of Indian life. No endeavour that fails to take full account of it and apply it to every limb and cell of the society, is ever likely to succeed. It was an effulgent, dynamic spirituality that inspired the lofty ideals and shaped the course and pattern of life in ancient India, and whatever the aberrations in later times, whatever the passing predilection for quietism and escapism, the same ideals persist down to the present day, more or less unimpaired, if not actually enriched in certain directions, and are bound to seek their utmost fulfilment in the near future. Deprive India of her spirituality and you have deprived her of the very spring of her life and condemned her to sterility and stagnation. Foster her spirituality and you have helped her to grow and burst into a carnival of creation. India lives for God and His work in the material world, and neither material prosperity nor vital and mental achievements, but only a union with Him and a perfect expression of His Will in her, can satisfy her soul for ever.

Communism is utterly foreign to the spirit and tradition of Indian culture, because it is incurably materialistic, unidealistic, unethical, unspiritual and vandalistic in its dealings with the eternal values of human existence. India has God as her pole-star and freedom and purity as the steps of her progress towards Him, while Communism is rivetted to matter and sold to its worship. India dreams not only to achieve an equal distribution of material wealth and amenities to her children, but also to dispense the light and bliss of the Spirit to all humanity. Her democracy is polarized to her ideal of raising mankind from the quagmire of base materialism and enable it to live a divine life of freedom, equality and creative harmony.

## Gold

Alone in the flame-white ethers of trance  
Stands the pinnacle of the unreachd Gold—  
Summit of the intangible vastitude  
With inscrutable secrecy of the Sun-caves . . . .  
A gold-blue hush of the high starry seas  
Is mother of the myriad unbarred domains  
Of rapture and sapphire-souled rhapsodies  
And worlds of cadenced unwall'd dreams  
And bright-plumed swans in a luminous sphere,  
Symbol of the soul's unhorizoned ascent;  
Its silver-deep silence encrowns the earth's  
Somnambulist urge for the unseen heights  
With inspiration's magical eagle-pinnion'd fire  
Opening wide god-enraptured spirit-gaze . . . .  
A gold-red rose from the distant light-peaks  
Stands above the dust with effulgent calm  
And a puissance and a will indomitable  
Urging the clay to open its granite doors  
And change its vesper-rocks into the high  
Sky-ecstasied sculpture of the unknowable . . . .  
A Gold is asleep in the womb of the gloom  
Of deep, remote, unmemoried somnolence  
Bearing the seed of unplumb'd august might,—  
A mirror of Gold of the altitudes.

ROMEN

# 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.

Such was our conversation this morning, O Lord:

Thou hast made the vital being awake with the magic wand of Thy impulsion and Thou saidst to it: "Awake, bend the bow of thy will, for the hour of action will soon come." Suddenly awakened, the vital being rose, stretched itself and shook off the dust of its long torpor; it perceived from the elasticity of its members that it was still vigorous and fit to act. And it was with an ardent faith that it replied to the sovereign call: "Here am I, what demandest Thou of me, O Lord?" But before another word could be uttered, the mind intervened in its turn, and after bowing down before the Master in token of obedience, thus spoke to him: "Thou knowest, O Lord, that I am surrendered to Thee, and that I try my best to be a faithful and pure intermediary of Thy supreme Will. But when I turn my look towards the earth, I see that man's field of action, however large it may be, is always terribly restricted. A man, who, in his mind and even in his vital being, is vast like the universe, or at least like the earth, as soon as he begins to act, is shut up within the narrow limits of a material action, very bounded in its field and results. Whether he is the founder of a religion or the author of a political transformation, the man of action becomes a petty, little stone in a general edifice, a grain of sand in the immense dune of human activities. I cannot see any realisable action which is of so great a worth that the whole being should concentrate upon it and make of it its reason of existence. The vital being delights in the adventure: but must it be allowed to throw itself into some lamentable adventure, unworthy of an instrument conscious of Thy Presence? "Fear nothing", was the reply. "The vital being will not be allowed to set itself in motion, thou wilt not be asked to bring in all the effort of thy organising faculties except when the proposed action will be vast and complex enough for all the qualities of the being to be fully and usefully employed. What this action will be exactly, thou wilt know when it will come to thee. But I warn thee from now, so thou mayst prepare thyself not to reject it. I warn thee also, as well as the vital being, that the time of a small tranquil, uniform and peaceful life will be over. There will be effort, danger, the unforeseen, insecurity, but also intensity. Thou wert made for this role. After having agreed for long years to forget it completely, because the time had not come and also because thou wert not ready, awake now to the consciousness that it is very truly thy role and that it was for this that thou wert created."

The vital being, first, awoke to the consciousness and with the enthusiasm which is natural to it exclaimed, "I am ready, O Lord, Thou canst count upon me." The mind, more feeble and timid, although as docile, added, "What Thou wilt I too will. Thou knowest well, O Lord, that I belong entirely to Thee. But shall I be able to be at the height of the task, shall I have the power to organise what the vital being has the capacity to realise?" "It is to prepare thee for it that I am working at this moment; it is for this that thou art undergoing a discipline of plasticity and enrichment. Do not worry about anything: power comes with the need. It is not because, at the same time as the vital being, thou hast confined thyself to very small activities when it was useful that it should be so, in order that the things which had to be prepared might have the time to prepare themselves,—it is not that, I say, that can make thee incapable of living outside these smallnesses in a field of action in keeping with thy true stature. I have chosen thee from all eternity to be my exceptional representative upon the earth, not in an invisible and hidden way, but in a way apparent to the eyes of all men. And what thou wert created to be, thou shalt be."

As always, O Lord, when the voice of the depths was silent, the sublime and all-powerful benediction enveloped me fully.

And for a moment, the Master and the instrument were but one: the One without a second, the Eternal, the Infinite.

THE MOTHER

*Prayers & Meditations.*

December 8, 1916

\* \* \*

Each time he rose there was a larger poise,  
A dwelling on a higher spirit plane;  
The Light remained in him a longer space.  
In this oscillation between earth and heaven,

In this ineffable communion's climb  
He grew towards the integer of his soul.  
A union of the Real with the unique,  
A gaze of the Alone from every face,  
The Presence of the Eternal in the hours  
Made whole the fragment-being we are here.  
At last was won a firm spiritual poise,  
A constant lodging in the Eternal's realm,  
A safety in the Silence and the Ray,  
A settlement in the Immutable.  
His heights of being lived in the still Self;  
His mind could rest on a supernal ground  
And look down on the magic and the play  
Where the God-child lies on the lap of Night and Dawn  
And the Everlasting puts on Time's disguise.  
To the still heights and to the troubled depths  
His equal spirit gave its vast assent:  
A tranquil purity, a serene strength  
Faced all experience with unaltered peace.  
Indifferent to the sorrow and delight,  
Untempted by the marvel and the call,  
Immobile it beheld the flux of things,  
Calm and apart supported all that is:  
His wide tranquillity helped the toiling world.  
Inspired by silence and the closed eyes' sight  
His force could work with a new luminous art  
On the crude material from which all is made  
And the refusal of Inertia's mass  
And the grey front of the world's Ignorance  
And nescient Matter and the huge error of life.  
As a sculptor chisels a deity out of stone  
He slowly chipped off the dark envelope,  
The illusion and mystery of Inconscience  
In whose black pall the Eternal wraps his head  
That he may act unknown in cosmic Time.  
A splendour of self-creation from the peaks,  
A transfiguration in the mystic depths,  
A happier cosmic working could begin  
And fashion the world-shape in him anew,  
God found in Nature, Nature fulfilled in God.  
Already in him that task of Power was seen:  
A new being breathed under new stainless heavens;  
His soul and mind and heart were bright and free,  
Only life's lower reaches remained dim.  
But there too, in the uncertain shadow of life,  
The ambiguous cowed celestial puissance worked  
Watched by the inner Witness's moveless peace.  
Even on the struggling Nature left below  
Strong periods of illumination came:  
Lightnings of glory after glory burned,  
Experience was a tale of blaze and fire,  
Air rippled round the argosies of the Gods,  
Strange riches sailed to him from the Unseen;  
Splendours of insight filled the blank of thought,  
Rivers poured down of bliss and luminous force,  
Visits of beauty, storm-sweeps of delight  
Rained from the all-powerful Mystery above.  
Thence stooped the eagles of Omniscience.  
A dense veil was rent, a mighty whisper heard;  
Repeated in the privacy of his soul,  
A wisdom-cry from rapt transcendences  
Sang on the mountains of an unseen world;  
The voices that an inner listening hears  
Conveyed to him their prophet utterances,  
And flame-wrapt outbursts of the immortal Word  
And flashes of an occult revealing Light  
Approached him from the unreachable secrecy.

SRI AUROBINDO

*Savitri: Bk. I, canto 3.*



# SRI AUROBINDO, THE LEADER OF THE EVOLUTION

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

By "Synergist"

### SECTION III: THE NEW WORLD-VIEW

#### (a) THE SPIRITUAL METAPHYSIC

Continued from previous issue

"The spiritual process of life is then in some sense a creation, but a self-creation, not a making of what never was, but a bringing out of what was implicit in the Being. The Sanskrit word for creation signifies a loosing forth, a letting out into the workings of Nature. The Upanishad in a telling figure applies the image of the spider which brings its web out of itself and creates the structure in which it takes its station. That is applied in the ancient Scripture not to the evolution of things out of Matter, but to an original bringing of temporal becoming out of the eternal infinity; Matter itself and this material universe are only such a web or indeed no more than a part of it brought out from the spiritual being of the Infinite. But the same truth, the same law holds good of all that we see of the emergence of things from involution in the material energy. We might almost speak here of a double evolution. A Force inherent in the Infinite brings out of it eternally the structure of its action in a universe of which the last descending scale is based upon an involution of all the powers of the spirit into an unconscious absorption in her self-oblivious passion of form and structural working. Thence comes an ascent and progressive liberation of power after power till the spirit self-disclosed and set free by knowledge and mastery of its works repossesses the eternal fullness of its being which envelops then and carries in its grasp the manifold and unified splendours of its nature. At any rate the spiritual process of which our human birth is a step and our life is a portion, appears as the bringing out of a greatness, *asya mahimanam*, which is secret, inherent and self-imprisoned, absorbed in the form and working of things. Our world-action figures an evolution, an outrolling of a manifold Power gathered and coiled up in the crude intricacy of Matter. The upward progress of the successive births of things is a rise into waking and larger and larger light of a consciousness shut into the first hermetic cell of sleep of the eternal Energy.

There is a parallel in the Yogic experience of the Kundalini, eternal Force coiled up in the body in the bottom root vessel or chamber, *muladhara*, pedestal, earth-centre of the physical nervous system. There she slumbers coiled up there like a Python and filled full of all that she holds gathered in her being, but when she is struck by the freely coursing breath, by the current of Life which enters in to search for her, she awakes and rises flaming up the ladder of the spinal cord and forces open centre after centre of the involved dynamic secrets of consciousness till at the summit she finds, joins and becomes one with the spirit. Thus she passes from an involution in inconscience through a series of opening glories of her powers into the greatest eternal superconscience of the spirit. This mysterious evolving Nature in the world around us follows even such a course. Unconscious being is not so much a matrix as a chamber of materialised energy in which are gathered up all the powers of the spirit; they are there, but work in the conditions of the material energy, involved, we say, and therefore not apparent as themselves because they have passed into a form of working subnormal to their own right scale where the characteristics by which we recognise and think we know them are suppressed into a minor and an undetected force of working. As Nature rises in the scale, she liberates them into their recognisable scales of energy, discloses the operations by which they can feel themselves and their greatness. At the highest summit she rises into the self-knowledge of the spirit which informed her action, but because of its involution or concealment in the forms of its workings could not be known in the greatness of its reality. Spirit and Nature discovering the secret of her energies become one at the top of the spiritual evolution by a soul in Nature which awakens to the significance of its own being in the liberation of the highest truth: it comes to know that its births were the births, the assumptions of form of an eternal Spirit, to know itself as that and not a creature of Nature and rises to the possession of the revealed, full and highest power of its own real and spiritual nature. That liberation, because liberation is self-possession, comes to us as the crown of a spiritual evolution.

We must consider all the packed significance of this involution. The spirit involved in material energy is there with all its powers; life, mind and a greater supramental power are involved in Matter. But what do we mean when we say that they are involved, and do we mean that all these things are quite different energies cut off from each other by an essential separateness, but rolled up together in an interaction, or do we mean that there is only one Being with its one energy, varying shades of the light of its power differentiated in the spectrum of Nature? When we say that Life is involved in Matter or in material Force, for of that Force Matter seems after all to be only a various self-spun formation, do we not mean that all this universal working, even in what seems to us its unconscious inanimate action, is a life-power of the spirit busy with formation, and we do not recognise it because it is there in a lower scale

in which the characteristics by which we recognise life are not evident or are only slightly evolved in the dullness of the material covering? Material energy would be then Life packed into the density of Matter and feeling out in it for its own intenser recognisable power which it finds within itself in the material concealment and liberates into action. Life itself would be an energy of a secret mind, a mind imprisoned in its own forms and quivering out in the nervous seekings of life for its intenser recognisable power of consciousness which it discovers within the vital and material suppression and liberates into sensibility. No doubt, practically, these powers work upon each other as different energies, but in essence they would be one energy and their interaction the power of the spirit working by its higher on its lower forces, depending on them at first, but yet turning in the scale of its ascent to overtop and master them. Mind too might only be an inferior scale and formulation derived from a much greater and supramental consciousness, and that consciousness too with its greater light and will a characteristic originating power of spiritual being, the power which secret in all things, in mind, in life, in matter, in the plant and the metal and the atom assures constantly by its inevitable action the idea and harmony of the universe. And what is the spirit itself but infinite existence, eternal, immortal being, but always a conscious self-aware being,—and that is the difference between the materialist's mechanical monism and the spiritual theory of the universe,—which here expresses itself in a world finite to our conceptions whose every movement yet bears witness to the Infinite? And this world is because the spirit has the delight of its own infinite existence and the delight of its own infinite self-variation; birth is because all consciousness carries with it power of its own being and all power of being is self-creative and must have the joy of its self-creation. For creation means nothing else than a self-expression; and the birth of the soul in the body is nothing but a mode of its own self-expression. Therefore all things here are expression, form, energy, action of the Spirit; matter itself is but form of spirit, life but power of being of the spirit, mind but working of consciousness of the spirit. All Nature is a display and a play of God, power and action and self-creation of the one spiritual Being. Nature presents to spirit at once the force, the instrument, the medium, the obstacle, the result of his powers, and all these things are the necessary elements for a gradual and developing creation.

But if the Spirit has involved its eternal greatness in the material universe and is there evolving its powers by the virtue of a secret self-knowledge, is disclosing them in a grandiose succession under the self-imposed difficulties of a material form of being, is disengaging them from a first veiling absorbed inconscience of Nature, there is no difficulty in thinking or seeing that this soul shaped into humanity is a being of that Being, that this also has arisen out of material involution by increasing self-expression in a series of births of which each grade is a new ridge of the ascent opening to higher powers of the spirit and that it is still arising and will not be for ever limited by the present walls of its birth but may, if we will, be born into a divine humanity. Our humanity is the conscious meeting place of the finite and the infinite and to grow more and more towards that Infinite even in this physical birth is our privilege. This Infinite, this Spirit who is housed within us but not bound or shut in by mind or body, is our own self and to find and be our self was, as the ancient sages knew, always the object of our human striving, for it is the object of the whole immense working of Nature. But it is by degrees of the self-finding that Nature enlarges to her spiritual reality. Man himself is a doubly involved being; most of himself in mind and below is involved in a subliminal conscience or a subconsciousness; most of himself above mind is involved in a spiritual superconscience. When he becomes conscient in the superconscience, the heights and the depths of his being will be illumined by another light of knowledge than the flickering lamp of the reason can now cast into a few corners; for then the master of the field will enlighten this whole wonderful field of his being, as the sun illumines the whole system it has created out of its own glories. Then only he can know the reality even of his own mind and life and body. Mind will be changed into a greater consciousness, his life will be a direct power and action of the Divinity, his very body no longer this first gross lump of breathing clay, but a very image and body of spiritual being. That transfiguration on the summit of the mountain, divine birth, *divya janma*, is that to which all these births are a long series of laborious steps. An involution of spirit in matter is the beginning, but a spiritual assumption of divine birth is the fullness of the evolution."

\* \* \*

This theme of Involution-Evolution, which we have stated to be the leitmotif of the Aurobindonian *Weltanschauung*, will now be examined in a larger metaphysical frame-work. With our existential approach we

# SEEING THINGS THROUGH BY MARGARET FORBES

'Lovely is Truth, lovely in its origin, lovely in its working out, lovely in its consummation.' What can we in the modern world understand by such a statement? To the great majority of people to-day heavily involved in the earth's suffering all seems obscure and inexplicable. They tend to despair of the working out, and of the consummation they have no glimpse. As a faint analogy we might imagine players in an orchestra suddenly called upon to plunge into the most difficult movement of a symphony with no previous knowledge of its opening subject or its resolution, without rehearsal and unable to see the Conductor! A grim state of affairs, indeed.

In this situation the psychologists make confusion worse confounded, forgetting that, as Sri Aurobindo says, 'We must know the Whole before we can know the part.' Yet—is some sense of Wholeness, interrelations and effort directed towards conscious ends really so foreign to our daily experience? The artist sees his work in a single vision which yet comprehends all its stages, and he sustains this unity-in-multiplicity from start to finish. From this springs the 'inevitability' of art. Or again, a mother lives intimately with the image of her child before it is born, and also, in the case of a well-informed woman, with biological knowledge of the growth and working-out from conception to the consummation of birth. Something deep in our being urges us to participate in the creative rhythms of nature, however dark and troubled they may be, and in the popular and rather beautiful phrase, to 'see things through'—yes, even to suffering torture and death in the process. For the sake of—what? For instance (only one of millions), those girls who were parachuted into France, caught by the

Nazis, tried as spies and, standing hand in hand, shot by a firing-squad. What inner force supported them in their lonely ordeal? Did a secret voice whisper 'Lovely is Truth'? Something like that must happen when in however humble a degree a person shares with Christ in that moment of apparently conspicuous failure in which he cried 'I have attained my joy!'

Those who give way to despair and bewilderment would do better to look into these things, exerting themselves to search for an explanation as to what it is all about. 'Seek and ye shall find' is true forever, but it is necessary to look in the right direction—that is to say, towards the *Superconscious*, for enlightenment of the subconscious. Otherwise, in company with the psychologists, we are like the dog in the Bible progressing no further than a return to his vomit. But so intense is the need that people all over the world are sincerely searching and the cool, calm voice of Sri Aurobindo comes to our assistance. 'In fact', he says, 'what is happening is that the Ignorance is seeking and preparing to transform itself into the Knowledge that is already concealed within it.' We are then confronted with, and participating in, not a meaningless mechanical evolution, a muddle in the middle and a blind alley at both ends, but a Transformation! 'Seeking and preparing', does not that give a clue to the notable fact that, though evil is rife and human life stinks to heaven, yet everywhere there is an awakening and a sense of responsibility, which may be partly a sense of guilt but is at its highest sacrificial?

*Absent thee from felicity awhile  
And in this harsh world draw  
thy breath in pain.*

Shakespeare's words of tragic beauty are applicable to our pre-

sent state both as a challenge to our understanding of 'what is happening' and to our courage and creative endurance of this terribly tough spot or turning-point of the Truth-Consciousness. For at this moment we have to realise that a new development is demanded and that 'our total being can rise out of subjection to fact of present nature only by identification with a greater Truth and greater Nature.' Not bliss of the far heaven do we seek but in this harsh world to so live for the Divine that Transmutation may take place, transmutation of mind, vitality and body into 'a life of unity, mutuality and harmony born of a deeper and wider Truth of our being.' And in that Divine birth is our felicity—'God, Light, Freedom and Immortality.'

The bitterest sorrow to-day (one had almost written 'the most barren sorrow', but can it ever be that?) is amongst those who think only in terms of one short life where breath is drawn in pain—those who have no sense of continuity save the material history of man, heredity and a vague religious hangover. And now they see themselves confronted with the shockingly violent contrast of possibilities: the 'Welfare State' or—annihilation. The human situation seems in fact to have arrived at the 'acme of tension of which Sri Aurobindo speaks. One is out of one's depth here—but still, at all levels, deep speaks to deep, and faintly we perceive that the Abyssal Inconscience of the Past contains, like the flickering idea of a melody, the *Superconscious Bliss* of the Future. 'She desires the ancient dawns and fulfils their light.'

Such reflections suggest a deeper interpretation of the little brave celloquialism quoted above, about

'seeing things through.' Does it mean in truth seeing through to their essence? through their bewildered, petulant, scared but steadfast and glorious striving towards the fulfilment of their light within Light? Does it involve the power to see all things transparently, identified at last in 'a self-flow of spiritual Self-nature?' 'Here,' writes Sri Aurobindo on Gnostic Being, 'here we touch the kernel of the dynamic difference between life in the mental ignorance and life in the gnostic being and nature. It is the difference between an integral fully conscious being in full possession of its own truth of existence and working out that truth in its own freedom, free from all constructed laws, while yet its life is a fulfilment of all true laws of becoming in their essence of meaning, and an ignorant, self-divided existence which seeks for its own truth and tries to construct its findings into laws and to construct its life into a pattern so made... It is at once the truth of the being of the self and the truth of the will of the Ishwara one with that truth—a bi-une reality—which expresses itself in each individual gnostic being according to his super-nature.' And we find once more the musical analogy, no longer discordant and disordered but realised as perfect orchestral living. 'Such a gnostic consciousness and gnostic will, aware of its one-ness in many gnostic individuals, aware of its concordant totality and the meaning and meeting-point of its diversities, must assure a symphonic movement, a movement of unity, harmony, mutuality in the action of the Whole.'

'Lovely is Truth' indeed... And shall we not add, 'How beautiful are the feet upon the Mountain of him who bringeth good tidings?'

## THE SPIRITUAL METAPHYSIC *Continued from previous page*

have proceeded from Matter to Spirit, from terrestrial to supra-terrestrial levels, laying stress on the ascending evolutionary movement. In the next essay we shall follow a different approach—the ontological one—and proceed from the summits of the Spirit downwards to the terrestrial level, emphasising the descending movement. The main question before us is, to use Sri Aurobindo's own words, "Is man a biological creation of a brute energy which has somehow unexpectedly and quite inexplicably managed to begin to feel and think, or is he in his real self that inner Being and Power which is the whole sense of the evolution and the master of Nature? Is Nature only the force of self-expression, self-formation, self-creation of a secret Spirit, and man however hedged in his present capacity, the first being in Nature in whom that power begins to be consciently self-creative in the front of the action, in this outer chamber of physical being, there set to work and bring out by an increasingly self-conscious evolution what he can of all its human significance or its divine possibility?" From what has preceded we can say that the real sense and significance of evolution is the emergence of higher and higher grades of Being, Consciousness, Force, Delight and Truth. But as we have seen, the idea of evolution carries within it the reciprocal idea of a previous involution; all that has evolved, all that is overtly manifested, must have been involved and secretly present in essence. Life evolves out of Matter because it is already involved and lies concealed in Matter, and Mind evolves out of Life because it is there dormant in Life. This seems to indicate that in essence Matter is a form of veiled Life, and Life a form of veiled Consciousness, and pursuing the argument a little further we may state that Mind itself may hold involved in it a still higher reality, the Supramental Truth-principle, which may be pressing forward to emerge. "In that case," say Sri Aurobindo, "the unconquerable impulse of man towards God, Light, Bliss, Freedom, Immortality presents itself in its right place in the chain as simply the imperative impulse by which Nature is seeking to evolve beyond Mind, and appears to be as natural, true and just as the impulse towards Life which she has planted in certain forms of Matter or the impulse towards Mind which she has planted in certain forms of Life... As the impulse towards Mind ranges from the more sensitive reactions of Life in the metal and the plant upto its full organisation in man, so in man himself there is the same ascending series, the preparation, if nothing more, of a higher and divine Life. The

animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, worked out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she wills to work out the superman, the god. Or shall we not say, rather, to manifest God? For if evolution is the progressive manifestation by Nature of that which slept or worked in her, involved, it is also the overt realisation of that which she secretly is."

We can then sum up and state that Spirit, with its powers Matter, Life and Mind, and its as yet unmanifest highest power—its creative dynamism and gnostic light, the Supermind—is involved in terrestrial existence, and gradually evolves, creating in its ascent higher and higher grades of organised life and greater and diviner modes of existence. That is the reason why it was stated that the true history of the world is the history of the evolution of the Spirit, and that the history of man cannot be understood unless it is studied in its cosmic matrix and the historic process seen as part of the ontological process. Evolution is in its inner reality a manifestation in which the Spirit imprisoned in the nescience of Matter gradually emerges in an ascending series as various principles of Being till as the Supermind it comes out as an all-transforming overtly divine principle into which all the other evolved principles are uplifted and divinised, thereby finding their fulfilment in a spiritually motivated and organised divine life. As the higher principle emerges, the lower is not discarded but integrated into the higher, so when life emerged in a material universe, it animated and vitalised Matter, and a vital-material organised existence was created—a world of physical-vital beings, first the plants, and later the animals; and when Mind emerged, a new level of organisation was created, a world of thinking and living physical beings, for it mentalised the existing vitalised Matter. Now with the emergence of the Supermind, the reorientation and reorganisation of earth-existence should become possible, as also the creation of a race of divinised beings. Therefore it should be man's constant endeavour to evolve into a higher type of being and thereby transmute his life. "This alone," says Sri Aurobindo, "is man's real business in this world and the justification of his existence, without which he would be only an insect crawling among other ephemeral insects on a speck of surface mud and water which has managed to form itself amid the appalling immensities of the physical universe."



# THE SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF MANKIND

BY Dr. ARMANDO CORTESAO

From its very beginning Unesco has been concerned with the production of a Scientific and Cultural History of Mankind—a project which originated at the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education which met in London during the war. In 1947, the General Conference of Unesco, adopted a resolution instructing the Director General “to continue in 1948 preparations for the production of books which will provide, for the general and specialist reader, a wider understanding of the scientific and cultural aspects of the history of mankind, of the mutual interdependence of people and cultures and of their contributions to the common heritage”.

The General Conference also recommended, that “account should be taken of the work done by the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education”, namely, a project which the latter has sponsored for the publication of a collection of historical studies dealing particularly with “the European heritage” now being successfully carried out under the direction of Sir Ernest Barker. In view of various enquiries and consultations meanwhile held by the Secretariat, the General Conference in 1948 and again in 1949, confirmed the decisions taken in 1947, further instructing the Secretariat that both the National Commissions and international non-governmental organizations should be consulted.

The International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies was one of the organizations consulted and at its request Prof. Lucien Febvre, of the College de France and Membre de l'Institut, presented in May 1949 a report outlining his ideas in regard to the project and how to plan the work. At the same time, Professor Miguel Osorio de Almeida, of the University of Brazil, was asked to prepare a general report on the question and his report was presented in June 1949. All this preparatory work cleared the ground for the work of an international Committee of Experts which met at Unesco House, in December 1949, in order to draw up a plan for the publications proposed and to give its opinion as to how this plan should be carried out.

The Report of this Committee of Experts, with such comments as may be offered, will be presented to the General Conference in May-June 1950, together with the Director-General's suggestions for the implementation of the whole scheme. If the General Conference approves the Project, work upon it will then be begun, perhaps early in 1951. The carrying out of such a complex and important project is not a task to be taken lightly. The period from the end of the General Conference to the beginning of 1951 will certainly not be too long for the final preparatory work.

Three sorts of publications are contemplated: (1) the central work, in six volumes, of approximately 500 pages each, intended for scholars and the educated public, which will be written by specialists, to be followed by (2) an abridged one-volume version, best drafted by a single writer, for the use of teachers and the general public, and (3) a standard model textbook for (a) secondary, and (b) primary schools, adapted to the needs and conditions of the different countries.

\* \* \*

The task in hand is the preparation and publication, at different levels, of “books which will provide

an understanding of the scientific and cultural aspects of the history of mankind, of the interdependence of peoples and cultures and of their contributions to the common heritage.” This is what John Dewey in his *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* would call the “problematic situation” which generates the problem. The problem, as defined by the Committee of Experts, is: “What are the Elements from all Civilizations which ought to be combined in the World Civilization?” The Fact and the Aim are therefore, “The Establishment of a World Civilization”. This implied the need for an enquiry on the two themes set up in the problematic situation, which were also defined by the Committee of Experts as “The Progress of Mankind,” and “The Mutual Indebtedness of all Peoples”.

It is the analysis of the problem thus presented for tentative solution that will provide the criterion for the selection of relevant facts to be examined and studied. This immediately raises the question of the scientific method, or rather methods, to be followed. The method used cannot be only Baconian inductive nor only Cartesian deductive, i.e. neither simply empirical nor exclusively rationalistic. It must necessarily vary with the different aspects of the problem, which are many. The relevant facts have not only to be selected and interpreted but the teachings deduced from them must be blended in order to find the best possible answer to the problem. The *a priori* reasoning should be preceded by a *posteriori* reasoning: logical method cannot be absent from serious and unbiased critical history, as this ought to be. Historical method has indeed many meanings, especially when applied to an all-embracing and never before attempted work like this, with its profound significance and implications. Both the evolutionary method and the deductive-inductive method formulated by J. Stuart Mill are essential, when we come to study and analyse the many aspects of the geneses and growths of civilizations and to draw special conclusions from such study and analysis.

The experts who drew up the plan of the central work certainly had these considerations in mind, and proposed the division into five parts of similar importance, though varying greatly in length. Volume I. would contain the opening part, “General Considerations”, introducing fundamental knowledge about Man and the world in which he finds himself, and a second part, “The Contribution of Successive Ages of Man to the Growth of Civilizations”, describing the series of stages in the progress of humanity in social organization, and man's control over,

and understanding of, Nature, from the Palaeolithic Age down to the present time (which future historians may call the Age of the Liberation of Atomic Energy and of the Development of International Consciousness). Volumes II and III are allotted to the third part, “Mutual Indebtedness of All Cultures”, which would be concerned with exchanges and transmissions in all branches of human knowledge, practice and experience, demonstrating the mutual indebtedness of all peoples and bringing out the fact that there is no culture which has not contributed to the total human patrimony. Volumes IV and V would contain the fourth part, “The Characteristics of the Main Historical Cultures and Civilizations”, outlining their various patterns and particular world-outlooks, which are now fusing into the world picture of universal Man. Volume VI would correspond to the concluding part, “Synthesis and Conclusions”, divided into three sections: “The Two Themes”, “The Fact and the Aim”, and “The Problem”, which have been mentioned above.

The teleological character of this plan brings out the importance of the part that axiology has to play, particularly in the preparation of part four and the working out of the concluding part five. No other history can participate more than this in a philosophy of values, the conception of value varying as much with geography as with the chronology of history. If “history is philosophy in motion”—as Benedetto Croce said—then Voltaire was right when he declared that “only philosophers should write history”. Indeed, the true historian must interpret the facts of history, after they have been unfolded, described, classified and selected: he then becomes a philosopher, whatever his field of work. The historian must,

nevertheless, always realize that, however important metaphysics may be, however high the mind may tower over matter, no-one should minimize the rôle of environment in the conditioning of life; moreover, environment becomes ever more a product of civilization, which is the triumph of mind over material conditions. Neither should he forget that human society has been shaped by emotions, often uncontrolled by reason. Psychology cannot therefore but have an important place in the interpretation of history.

Human life is counted in decades; the life of Mankind in millennia. If the individual man counts, Mankind counts still more. It is by serving Mankind that the individual man can best serve himself, assert his self-respect, defend his freedom. Is it not by aiming at finding out what are the elements from all Civilizations which ought to be combined in the World Civilization that this “Scientific and Cultural History of Mankind” can best serve Mankind and the individual man?

Kant wrote that “the history of the human race, viewed as a whole, may be regarded as the realization of a hidden plan of Nature to bring about a political constitution, internally and externally perfect”. For the sake of avoiding controversy, leaving aside what might be taken as the implied evolutionary determinism here, and substituting the word “Civilization” for “political constitution”, these words might open the Introduction to our work. Are not the great religious and philosophical systems, scientific and technological progress, aesthetic achievements and social advance—the history of the human race, viewed as a whole—great tributaries of that mighty river which we call Civilization?

(An “Exclusive” from UNESCO)

## The Faithful

When darkness blinds, O give—I may not wail,  
But sing: “Thy Grace, beyond the zone of Night,  
Still waits her hour when she'll to me unveil  
The Day of days illumined by thy Light.”

If barren deserts vast and trackless seem,  
O may I never lose my faith in flowers.  
If thunders boom—the lightning hopes will gleam:  
If the world is hot—the blue attends with showers.

The mountains are forbidding like sentinels  
And loom life-hostile—sterile, bleak and stern?  
But melt they not in streams, athrill like bells,  
That chant: “No power dare our songs intern!”

If storm impends with stars extinct on high  
And the alien ocean swirls, O grant—I may  
Repeat thy mantra on soul's rosary:  
“Who surrenders to thy Will shall find the Way.”

DILIP KUMAR ROY

Translated from his own Bengali song

**IMPORTANT WORKS OF  
SRI AUROBINDO**

	Rs. A. P.
The Life Divine 2 vols. .. .. .	26 8 0
Essays on the Gita 2 series .. .. .	17 8 0
Isha Upanishad .. .. .	2 8 0
Lights on Yoga .. .. .	1 8 0
Bases of Yoga .. .. .	2 0 0
The Riddle of This World .. .. .	1 8 0
The Yoga and Its Objects .. .. .	1 0 0
The Mother .. .. .	1 0 0
Ideals and Progress .. .. .	1 0 0
Heraclitus .. .. .	1 4 0
A System of National Education .. .. .	1 8 0
Complete Poems and Plays 2 vols .. .. .	15 0 0
Savitri (complete set of 24 cantos of Part I) .. .. .	14 8 0
The Human Cycle .. .. .	7 0 0

**Important Publications of  
Sri Aurobindo Circle, Bombay**

Letters of Sri Aurobindo I Series .. .. .	6 8 0
"    "    "    II Series .. .. .	8 0 0
Letters of Sri Aurobindo, III Series .. .. .	6 0 0
The Significance of Indian Art—Sri Aurobindo .. .. .	1 8 0
The Poetic Genius of Sri Aurobindo—K. D. Sethna .. .. .	4 4 0
The Adventure of the Apocalypse (Poems)— K. D. Sethna .. .. .	5 8 0
Sun-Blossoms (Poems)—Nirodbaran .. .. .	4 8 0
Towards a New Society—Nolinikanta Gupta .. .. .	1 12 0

SRI AUROBINDO CIRCLE Annual Numbers 1 to 5  
at Rs. 5, Rs. 5, Rs. 5/8, Rs. 6 and Rs. 7 each.

TO BE HAD OF

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, French India.  
Sri Aurobindo Circle, 32, Rampart Row, Fort, Bombay, 1.  
Sri Aurobindo Niketan, Connaught Circus, P. B. 85, New Delhi.

**ANNOUNCING  
BHARAT MATA  
A HINDI MONTHLY  
WITH THE SAME SPIRITUAL  
IDEALS AS  
MOTHER INDIA.**

Issue On April 24, 1950

SUBSCRIPTION : Rs. 6

**PAYABLE: MANAGER, "BHARAT MATA,"  
32, RAMPART ROW, FORT, BOMBAY**

**THE  
BANGALAKSHMI INSURANCE LTD.,**

33, Netaji Subhas Road,  
CALCUTTA.

**DISCLOSED A COMFORTABLE SURPLUS  
IN THE VALUATION AS AT 31-12-48.**

Wanted Chief Agents for Bombay and other  
provinces throughout India on attractive  
terms.

**MOTHER INDIA  
IS AVAILABLE AT  
WHEELER'S & HIGGINBOTHAM'S  
RAILWAY BOOK - STALLS.**

**TRAVEL  
IN COMFORT BY  
AIR : RAIL: SEA**

BOOK THROUGH  
**INTERNATIONAL  
CARRIERS LTD.,**  
32, Rampart Row, BOMBAY  
Phone: 22319.

WE ALSO ARRANGE:

\* TOURS, PILGRIMAGES,  
SHIKARS, CHARTERS,  
CRUISES, ETC., ETC.

\* LIFT FROM YOUR RESI-  
DENCE TO AIR COM-  
PANY'S OFFICE.

\* TRANSPORT OF PAR-  
CELS FROM YOUR GO-  
DOWN TO AIR COM-  
PANY'S OFFICE.

Special Arrangements for  
people going outside India.  
Apply for Particulars.

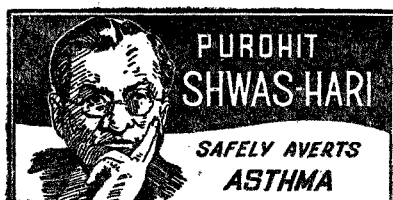
**JEWEL  
CREATIONS**

BY

TEL. 30321.

**CHIMANLAL MANCHAND  
& CO.**

NEW QUEEN'S ROAD, BOMBAY.



**OUR SUBSCRIBERS**

WHO HAVE APPRECIATED AND HELPED FROM THE  
BEGINNING THE IDEALISTIC VENTURE THAT IS "MOTHER  
INDIA" ARE REMINDED THAT THE FIRST YEAR ENDED  
WITH THE ISSUE OF FEBRUARY 4, 1950.

A RENEWAL OF SUBSCRIPTION WILL FIND US GRATE-  
FUL.

**IF** this is a specimen copy you are receiving, it is an invitation to subscribe.  
you find it significant and interesting, don't fail to avail yourself of the  
subscription form below.  
you can spare your copy, please pass it along to your friends. Else  
supply the names and addresses of those who will be really interested  
and we will post free copies of one issue to friends anywhere in  
the world.

: MOTHER INDIA :

Subscription: Rs. 6 for 1 year; Rs. 3/4 for 6 months; As. 4 single copy.  
Get your own copy by sending this form with remittance.

PLEASE ENROL ME:

NAME: (BLOCK LETTERS) .....

ADDRESS .....

As a Subscriber to MOTHER INDIA for ..... Months.

# A FULLY PLANNED ECONOMY

BY "CHANAKYA"

The biggest problem in India is psychological, says Nehru, and there he has no doubt hit upon the truth, not only for India but for the whole world. The Congress Committee in its recent session voiced the same view that the Congress should aim at the creation of a psychology whereby things would "move on". But what is this all important psychological change and how is it to be brought about?

Pandit Nehru has said: "The people will put up with almost any amount of hardship provided they really understand what the Government is striving for, and have confidence in it. It is up to us to gain their confidence, to tell them exactly what we are aiming at, and to ask for their co-operation."

To serve this purpose of winning the confidence of the people, the Government proposes to set up a statutory Planning Commission. In the meantime, the Congress has appointed its own planning committee for drawing up a five-year programme to improve the lot of the common man. But is this the proper way of solving the problem? Everybody will admit that any economic planning involves a corresponding loss of liberty. In a fully planned economy personal freedom of purchase, movement, and occupation—and thereby many would add, of speech and thought—would disappear almost by definition. Professor Hayek has shown in his book, *Road to Serfdom* how a seemingly harmless price control order or foreign exchange regulation must lead inexorably to slave labour and the secret police. The example of planning socialistic Russia ought to serve as warning to all enthusiasts of planning. And in a vast country like India, central planning, if pushed too far, is bound to become a huge machine of suppressing individual liberty which is essential for the growth of life. Indeed that is the danger of all Socialism of which a fully planned economy forms a part. To plan correctly, one must have a correct appraisal of all data; is it ever practicable to collect all the necessary data in a vast country like India? Some amount of planning and therefore control is indispensable for orderly progress, but to strike the golden mean is not easy and that is the root of the conflict between the two ideologies that is threatening the peace of the world today. Here, the planning should begin not from above but from below from the village. Let the villages plan their own economic development and let the provincial government serve only as a coordinating agents. And at the centre the planning should be the minimum, leaving the provinces to have free scope to build up their life in their own way.

## The Necessities of Life

Referring to the objective of the proposed Planning Commission, Nehru explained: "The objective is first of all to provide the necessities of life for every individual in India. Everybody should have food, clothing, housing, health, and education. This again is rather a distant objective. We want something more tangible before us." It seems there has been some mistake in reporting this part of the speech of the Prime Minister. For how can these primary necessities of life be made the distant objective of a planning Commission? But, really speaking, they

are not to be made the objective, near or distant, of any planning commission; indeed, there is nothing to be planned about it, it is rather a matter of execution by the Government immediately. If you want a psychological change in the people you must give food to the hungry and not mere promises. The Government is spending lacs of rupees in propaganda for growing more food; but how can people work to grow more food if they are not first supplied with the primary necessities of life? This is a vicious circle which the Government alone can break, for it is the Government alone who has the means to supply the people with primary necessities immediately. That was what Britain did first of all though her economic condition was far worse than that of India just after the war. Britain was a debtor country and owed to India about one thousand crores of rupees. Still she did not hesitate to borrow huge sums from America to feed and clothe her people; it is in this way that the Government there got the full cooperation from the people and has already recovered wonderfully. Nehru imitates Britain in many things, he has highly praised Britain's social approach to problems. We wonder why he could not follow Britain in this most vital matter. The Government in India has rationed food, but curiously this has not been done for the whole country; how can such a system work satisfactorily? If there is shortage of any vital article, it should be equally distributed to all and that is the object of rationing and control. Obviously this could not be done by the Government in this vast country. But why did the Government assume that all rationing and control must be done by the Government? It is this idea of centralising all power as a means of efficiency which is at the root of most of the troubles of India. Every village and town and city should be asked to arrange for rationing and control within its own jurisdiction, the task of the Government being only to make up deficiencies of supply by imports from foreign countries and to exercise general supervision and co-ordination. And in the matter of food, it is not sufficient to ration rice or wheat only. Every person in the country, irrespective of any class distinction, should be assured of not mere subsistence but full nutrition. Otherwise there will be no sound human material left to carry out any scheme however well planned. To be more concrete, rice, wheat, meat or fish, milk or milk powder, butter, sugar should be rationed for all in quantities to be determined by nutritional experts and a price must be fixed for them so that they may be within the reach of the common people, and also arrangement should be made so that all people without any distinction may have sufficient money to buy food and other necessities of life. This is the fundamental planning for which no Commission is necessary. If people are thus freely supplied with all prim-

ary necessities of life as is being done in Britain and other advanced countries, most people in the country will find employment and those remaining unemployed can be given allowances by which they can maintain themselves in health during the period of unemployment.

## Village Reconstruction

It should not be imagined that all this is only chimerical or impossible, it is not even so difficult as people think it to be. The first thing is to revitalise the villages, and we can say frankly that in spite of all talk of village reconstruction by the Congress all these years, the true genius of village reconstruction has not yet appeared in India. The preoccupation of the Congress has always been politics and it is now even more so than ever before; beginning from the primary Congress worker up to the Prime Minister everybody is preoccupied with the thought how to win the next election; no real constructive work can be done with such an attitude. We shall illustrate our observations with some concrete examples. The situation in West Bengal is admittedly very bad. In spite of the close attention of the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister, nothing has yet been done to improve the condition. It is now admitted by all that it is through the co-operative movement that the villages can be reconstructed; but the Government of West Bengal is not allowing the formation of any co-operative society for about a year. They are giving loans directly only to people who are likely to support the present ministry in the coming elections, they cannot trust co-operative societies. Collective fine was realised from several parts of Bengal during the 1942 movement. The Bengal Government is returning the fine not to the people who paid it but to organisations who promise to help them in the next elections. Can any constructive work be done under such conditions? It is not only in Bengal, but everywhere that the interests of the country are being sacrificed to party interests; if the Prime Minister does not take courageous steps to stop this rot, the country cannot be saved from utter ruin and disorder.

Two things are essentially needed to bring a healthy psychological change in the masses. Firstly, they must be immediately supplied with the primary necessities of life such as nutritious food, and clothing. Secondly, the villages must be given true freedom to manage their own affairs. The morale of the villagers has become very low. They do not believe that their condition can be changed or improved and they feel no initiative at all to change. Each pursues his own narrow self-interest and there is no urge to combine at all for the common good. The only thing that can create any enthusiasm in the villages is faction and litigation. This is a sign of death and disintegration; nothing has been done by the Congress so far to improve the situation and there is yet no sign of any serious effort in this direction. Our villages were not so always. In ancient India they throbbed with life and activity and the whole country was enlivened by them. It is the communal institutions which helped

them to act for the common good. Those institutions were destroyed by the British who introduced their own institutions like the local board and the district board which are not really self-governing bodies but only parts of the administrative machinery of the government. The panchayats that are now being created by the government in India are all on the same line, they are not a revival or reconstruction of the ancient system. In ancient India the panchayats were not formed by laws made by the government as it is being done now. The people themselves formed their own laws and rules and their authority was in no way derived from the government. There is a curious idea prevalent that unless the panchayats are formed by governmental laws they will have no authority. But wherefrom does the government itself drive its authority? Is it not ultimately from the villagers? Then why cannot the villagers form their own government on their own authority? That is the only condition of freedom, the true basis of democracy which the west has yet to learn. It is a pity that our leaders have gone to the west to take their lessons in democracy. The term "Democracy" was coined by the Greeks to describe the system they found prevailing in India. Let that system be revived in a manner suitable to modern conditions, that will bring the needed psychological change for making things move on.

Now the panchayats formed by the Congress are nothing but election machines, intended to help the Congress party to win the next election; and the panchayats formed by the government are parts of the government machinery. Both these have to be scrapped and the villagers allowed to form genuine panchayats themselves to carry on their own affairs and it is to these panchayats that the work of rationing and control should be given. Then only the evils of control will be mitigated, for in this case it will really be self-control. The villagers themselves will collect the surplus food produced in the village and sell it according to the instructions of the government; similarly the villagers themselves will determine what things they must import from outside so that all villagers may live a decent and healthy life. All this, of course, supposes a re-awakening in the villages and this is no doubt a stupendous task. If the Congress earnestly takes up this work, it can yet be done. Then the Congress will have to give up its programme of council-entry and revert to its original programme as envisaged by Gandhiji. The Congress should educate the masses about their duties as citizens and leave them to choose their own representatives instead of thrusting upon them a prepared list of party candidates. It is reported that apropos the Prime Minister's call to "revitalise" the Congress the younger sections have formed a sub-committee to save the Congress organisation from "stagnation and disruption." They can do nothing better than to urge the older Congressmen to give up the programme of fighting the next elections. Then all Congressmen will be freed to do real constructive work in the villages following the lines indicated above and that alone can revitalise the Congress and turn it into a real *loka-sevak sangha*.



# LIGHTS ON LIFE-PROBLEMS

( 27 )

One of our chief aims will be to provide authentic guidance in regard to the many important questions which arise in the minds of thoughtful persons all over the world. This cannot be better done than by considering these questions in the light of Sri Aurobindo's writings, because Sri Aurobindo is not only a Master of Yoga in possession of the Eternal Spiritual Truths, but also a Guide and Helper of mankind in various spheres of life and thought. To bring home the light of this guidance and to make it directly applicable to the problems that present themselves to an observing intelligence, a series of questions of common interest along with precise answers directly taken from Sri Aurobindo's writings will regularly appear in these columns.

Q. 1: The modern trend in art, especially in poetry, has been towards laying a predominant stress on its thought-content. The modern mind asks of the poet not so much perfect beauty of song or of creative vision as a message to the seeking intelligence. The poet is expected to be not a supreme singer or an inspired seer but a philosopher, a prophet, a teacher, even something of a moral preacher. Is this not a deviation from the true function of poetry?

A. This is only a sign of the intellectual malady of our age of which we are almost all of us the victims. "The native power of poetry is in its sight, not in its intellectual thought-matter, and its safety is in adhering to this native principle of vision and allowing its conception, its thought, its emotion, its presentation, its structure to rise out of that or compelling it to rise into that before it takes its finished form. The poetic vision of life is not a critical or intellectual or philosophic view of it, but a soul-view, a seizing by the inner sense; and the mantra is not in its substance or form poetic enunciation of a philosophic truth, but the rhythmic revelation or intuition arising out of the soul's sight of God and Nature and the world and the inner truth—occult to the outward eye—of all that peoples it, the secrets of their life and being" . . . . In claiming for the poet the role of the seer and in seeking the source of great poetry in a great and revealing vision of life or God or the gods or man or Nature, it is not meant that "it is necessary for him to have an intellectual philosophy of life or a message for humanity which he chooses to express in verse because he has the metrical gift and the gift of imagery, or a solution of the problems of the age or a mission to improve mankind, or, as it is said, 'to leave the world better than he found it'. As a man, he may have these things, but the less he allows them to get the better of his poetical gift, the happier it will be for his poetry. Material for his poetry they may give, an influence in it they may be, provided they are transmuted into vision and life by the poetical spirit, but they can be neither its soul nor its aim, nor give the law to its creative activity and its expression."

Q. 2: Are the functions of the poet and the philosopher then totally distinct?

A. "The philosopher's business is to discriminate Truth and put its parts and aspects into intellectual relation with each other; the poet's is to seize and embody aspects of Truth in their living relations, or rather, —for that is too philosophical a language,—to see her features and excited by the vision create in the beauty of her image". "The philosopher may bring in the aid of colour and image to give some relief and hue to his dry light of reason and water his arid path of abstractions with some healing dew of poetry. But these are ornaments and not the substance of his work; and if the philosopher makes his thought substance of poetry, he ceases to be a philosophical thinker and becomes a poet-seer of Truth. Thus the more rigid metaphysicians are perhaps right in denying to Nietzsche the name of philosopher; for Nietzsche does not think, but always sees, turbidly or clearly, rightly or distortedly, but with the eye of the seer rather than with the brain of the thinker. On the other hand we may get great poetry which is largely or even wholly philosophic in its matter; but this philosophic poetry is poetry and lives as poetry only in so far as it departs from the method, the expressions, the way of seeing proper to the philosophic mind. It must be vision pouring itself into thought-images and not thought trying to observe truth and distinguish.

In earlier days this distinction was not at all clearly understood and therefore we find even poets of great power attempting to set philosophic systems to music or even much more prosaic matter than a philosophic system, Hesiod and Virgil setting about even a manual of agriculture in verse! In Rome, always a little blunt of perception in the aesthetic mind, her two greatest poets fell a victim to this unhappy conception, with results which are a lesson and a warning to all posterity. Lucretius' work lives only, in spite of the majestic energy behind it, by its splendid digressions into pure

poetry, Virgil's Georgics by fine passages and pictures of Nature and beauties of word and image, but its substance is lifeless matter which has floated to us on the stream of Time saved for the beauty of its setting."

Q. 3: But in India the attempt at expressing philosophical thought in poetry has been successfully carried out in the Gita and the Upanishads. How was this possible?

A. "India, and perhaps India alone, had managed once or twice to turn this kind of philosophic attempt into a poetic success, in the Gita, in the Upanishads and some minor works modelled upon them. But the difference is great. The Gita owes its poetical success to its starting from a great and critical situation in life, having that in view and always returning upon it, and to its method which is to seize on a spiritual experience or moment or stage of the inner life and throw it into the form of thought, and this, though a delicate operation, can keep well within the limits of the poetic manner of speech. Only where it overburdens itself with metaphysical matter and deviates into sheer philosophic definition and discrimination, which happens especially in two or three of its closing chapters, does the poetic voice sink under the weight, even occasionally into flattest versified prose. The Upanishads too, and much more, are not at all philosophic thinking, but spiritual seeing, a rush of spiritual intuitions throwing themselves inevitably into the language of poetry, shaped out of fire and life, because that is their natural speech and more intellectual utterance would have falsified their vision."

Q. 4: Does this mean that there should be no philosophy in poetry or that the poet has no right to express philosophic thought or spiritual truth as some critics have tried to maintain?

A. That depends on what is meant by 'philosophy' in a poem. "Of course if one sets out to write a metaphysical argument in verse like the Greek Empedocles or the Roman Lucretius, it is a risky business and is likely to land you into prosaic poetry which is a less pardonable mixture than poetic prose. Even when philosophising in a less perilous way, one has to be careful not to be flat or heavy. It is obviously easier to be poetic when singing about a skylark than when one tries to weave a robe of verse to clothe the attributes of the Brahman. But that does not mean that there is to be no thought or no spiritual thought or no expression of truth in poetry; there is no great poet who has not tried to philosophise. Shelley wrote about the skylark, but he also wrote about the Brahman.

Life like a dome of many-coloured glass

Stains the white radiance of Eternity

is as good poetry as

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!

There are flights of unsurpassable poetry in the Gita and the Upanishads. These rigid dicta are always excessive and there is no reason why a poet should allow the expression of his personality or the spirit within him or his whole poetic mind to be clipped, cabined or stifled by any theories or 'thou shalt not's of this character'. If the expression of philosophical truth in poetry is absolutely denied "then half the world's poetry would have to disappear. Truth and Thought and Light cast into forms of beauty cannot be banished in that cavalier way. Music and art and poetry have striven from the beginning to express the vision of the deepest and greatest things and not the things of the surface only, and it will be so as long as there are poetry and art and music." "Philosophy has its place in poetry and can even take a leading place along with psychological experience as it does in the Gita. All depends on how it is done, whether it is a dry or a living philosophy, an arid intellectual statement or the expression not only of the living truth of thought but of something of its beauty, its light or its power."

K. G.