CONGRESS AND THE COMMON MAN

The Need of a Balanced View

Every newspaper in the country has cast in judgment on Congress after the defeat of the South Cantt. by-election and after the Prime Minister's straightforward admission that the defeat was due to the rot that had spread in its ranks. Various opinions have been mouthed on the nature of the rot. Nehru himself seems to think that the Congress is losing its influence because of group-rivalries and office-seeking. Expulsion of dissident members instead of winning them over and, most of all, diminution of contact with the masses. The country's newspapers add one more cause: wide-spread corruption.

It appears to most of us that these are real and grave defects. Everything in Congress's power must be done to remedy them or else the party which did so much for India's freedom will spoil its fair name irretrievably. Under no condition should they be tolerated and, if they persist, Congress has very poor chances of winning the next general election. But certain important and profound issues are involved when we make this dark prognosis. To the certainty of loss of votes by Congress in the future, the common man's reaction is: "That'll serve Congress right!" For, the common man argues merely on the plane of immediate outward happenings: he seldom argues on the plane of fundamental ideas. If Congress, owing to its gross faults, is sure to find little favour at the polling-booths in the winter of 1949, it will suffer a fate which, judged from the plane of fundamental ideas, will be most undeserved. As this is scarcely realised today in the midst of the grudges and grivances the common man bears against his rulers, it is worth while holding the balance straight and seeing where truth lies.

Can We Afford to Throw Stones?

Although the rot in the Congress ranks is far from negligible and calls for drastic action from our leaders, it is not something peculiar to the nature of Congress. Congress is not rotten just by being its own self. There is nothing in it specially conducive to the defects which everybody is castingigate at present. By this we do not merely mean that there should be a reshuffle of personnel in the government rather than a change of the governing party. We mean that any other party would be no less prone to these defects. For, these defects are born of the all-too-human constitution of us. Whether we be Congressmen, Socialists, Forward-Block-wallahs, Mahasabaites, there will always be group-rivalry and office-seeking and corruption and a general power-drunkensness. At certain times the rot increases by leaps and bounds, but the increase can take place even if Congress is not at the helm and some other party is. There is hardly any guarantee that the supersetion of the existing government will make for less rot. Until the same rot is seen in other parties we are liable to be obsessed with its presence in the party ruling us and to forget the universal mud from which the members of all parties are made. In order to serve their own aims and discredit Congress, quite a hue and cry is raised by the opposing parties over its shortcomings. And the common man, who is never inclined to look beyond his nose and who is extremely susceptible to propaganda, bristles up against the Government and imagines that just a bunch of self-serving ministers stand between him and the millennium.

We would ask him to submit his belief to even so elementary a test as the scanning of faces of the present ministers and those who will replace them if either the Socialists or the Mahasabha or the Forward Bloc takes up the reins of government. Can he discern in non-Congress eyes or mouth or presence any inviolability of character? The same poor human stuff is also here. Given similar circumstances, similar defects will crop up. If the common man himself gets into the shoes of the Congress officials it is doubtful whether he will not soil them as much by walking in foul ways. Are his character and conduct above suspicion? A correspondent to one of the city-newspapers has pertinently asked: "How many of us resist the temptation of cheating and deceiving the Income-tax office, the Railways, the Port Trust, the Customs office, the P.W.D. and a host of other Government and municipal concerns?" Maybe Congress has so dirtied itself because it has not been used to power. But which of the other parties has had even the little experience that has been Congress's in the practice of government? Nobody should gloss over Congress's thousand and three mistakes and mischiefs: the exposure of them, however, should not blind us to the immense mistake of seeing haloes round the heads of Congress's leaders and the immense misfortune that can be caused by letting India's future be planned out by heads buzzing with un-Indian ideas.

Can the Socialists Make for India's Fulfilment?

The Forward Bloc gave the Congress a beating in a part of Calcutta, the Socialists did so in a part of Bombay. Suppose the victory of one or the other were repeated all over India. What would be the ideas according to which we would be ruled? Take first the Socialists. The majority of them believe that complete nationalisation of all industries is the key to prosperity. This will mean the abolition of private enterprise and a complete shifting of stress from the individual to the State. Once such a shifting occurs, will there be any real chances of political as distinguished from economic democracy? The Socialists are sometimes found drawing a line between themselves and the Communists by saying that Communism implies economic equality without political liberty whereas Socialism combines both. But the truth is that in actual practice Socialism has any where achieved the combination, it is in spite of its basic ideas and because of certain strong elements in a country's tradition and culture which pre-vented Socialism from de-individualising society. The moment you emphasise the State at the expense of the individual's importance and initiative, you sow the seed of political servitude. Even if complete totalitarianism does not set in, there will be a fading of that fine flexible many-chained creative spirit which comes into play only where the uniqueness of the individual is recognised, the spirit which has given us all that is best in human history so far. Often this best has existed side by side with black spots, such as the system of helots in ancient Greece and of wage-slaves in nineteenth-century Europe; but these woron't are indispensable to the recognition of the individual's uniqueness, they are its accidental accompaniments at certain stages of history and are the result of factors having nothing essentially to do with it. If the individual's uniqueness is obscured, civilisation cannot fully flower, for there is in the individual a soul, a spark of the Divine, through which alone evolution is intended to reach its climax, a climax which does not annul the collective reality but can produce a harmonious collective being by bringing to light the one Godhead which is multiformly present in the individuals. And when the individual's importance is sought to be denied, there is bound to be ultimately a denial of the soul in which that importance is founded. Actually, the Socialists, as a body do declare that no such thing as a spark of the Divine exists and that neither does the Divine have existence to support the possibility of individuals being His sparks. Whole-hearted Socialism is bound to be materialistic and atheistic. Can it, then, ever make for the fulfilment of a country like India where soul and God are the prime meaning of life?

Congress, too, has a socialistic tendency and has exhibited a secular
temper which puts no premium on religion. But so far—except for occasions—Congress and the Communists are merely sects and sect parties on capitalist greed and the intolerance, the obtuseness narrowed of the sectarian and communal mind. It has never sought to make the State the chief factor in the country's economy: even its error of centralisation is being corrected. In the country the Church should be illumined rather than an actual desire to reduce provincial government to a cipher. And the religious consciousness goes unhindered, in its private capacity; Congress does not even declare, as the hundred per cent Socialists do, that religion is a child's affair: which, though not to be forcibly suppressed, must be undermined by constant propaganda against it. Un-Indian ideas are, no doubt, a danger to which Congress is prone if it allows its socialistic and secular propensities to run away with it, but the state of mind of most of its members is not determined by any serious thinking. It is, in only minuscule measure, a real form and that the negative form itself is merely an official not and at all a line of personal conduct. In short, Congress on the whole puts no imperious barrier between the Socialists in the long run would, in the wake of the genuine Indian genius.

**Can the Forward Bloc Help us in the Present World-Crisis?**

What about the Forward Bloc? It is in several respects in tune with Congress's own ideology. Deriving its inspiration from the late Subhas Bose and from the admiring unity of all Indian elements which he achieved in his I.N.A., it stands for a healthy secularism and for a sense of human equality which can never make for a pseudo-capitalistic economy. In two major matters, however, it differs from Congress. It makes no fetish of Gandhian doctrite: ahimsa and khaddar-spinning are not to it a panacea for all evils. Also, it has a strong anti-British animus. True to the temper of Subhas Bose, it is inclining to the view of a die-hard imperialistic power with which India, so long a subject-nation, should have no dealings. In this hostility to England, the Forward Bloc is in agreement with the Socialists who, too, vehemently protest against Congress and the Congress Government of keeping India within the Commonwealth, as clearly a self-appointed republican status. Unquestionably, the doctrines of ahimsa and khuddar-spinning need to be saved from becoming extremist: ahimsa is certainly a virtue, but to apotheosise one virtue above all others and to thrust it in everyone’s face is to over-simplify the many-aspected ethical problem facing the human conscience while to see some special soul-saving quality in the art of turning the charaka and to make even education revolve round one primitive recipe is to make for a complex moving world. Congress must certainly outgrow its faults, but on the other hand the Forward Bloc is inclined to stress too much the role of violence and, owing to the I.N.A. memories, be militarian in its methods. Again, over against Congress's faults we have to see many faults of its in the Commonwealth, its clear-sighted sympathy with the Western democracies without jeopardising its freedom from all treaty-commitments to the Western bloc. The neutrality which Congress upholds is not as between two evils of equal magnitude: it is at as between an ideology which, as things stand in the concrete, seems to be utterly delusory to the mind of man and an ideology which, though bright with promise of genuine progress, is yet haunted by a past of imperialism and sullied to some extent by colour-consciousness. Nationalism and the defence of independence is a difference between a snoring black and disappearing grey, even if it can wholly throw in its lot with neither. The Forward Bloc, no less than the Socialist, is unable to advance with the times, and harbours against England and her Commonwealth. When, in the long years during the days of Indian nationalism, the new Zeitgeist developing in the Western world finds no response. In the Forward Bloc there is still active the misconception which the war-ended clouded to a considerable degree the vision of Congress as well—namely, that the Western powers are at heart blood-brothers to Hitlerite Fascism. When civilisation today is grossly menaced by what is real Fascism under a different and deluding name, when the hammer and sickle of totalitarian Godommism are lifted over half Europe and sweeping across half Asia, such a misconception is little short of deadly. Both the Forward Bloc and the Socialists—the former because of its last battle with the Britichers in the jungles of Burma and the latter because of their own anti-British record—have grossly turned the world-front against the savagery of Stalinism and expose the large-minded, facetted, deeply spiritual culture of India to its dreadful opposite. The Forward Bloc is, as doubt, patriotic and would never take any aggression lying down. But patriotism, as Edith Cavell said in another context, is not enough: there must be insight into the fundamentals of civilisation, a preparation for the future by means of an overall view of the crisis through which mankind is passing.

**Can the Forward Bloc Help us in the Present World-Crisis?**

It needs to open its eyes and see the danger of being completely possessed by the nostalgia of the Forward Bloc. It feels running high for Subhas Bose. He is looked upon as her most representative among the fighters for India's freedom. Against Gandhiji, Nehru, Patel, Rajendra Prasad, and Subhas Bose, Kalam Azad, Bengal of the immediate past has only Subhas Bose to boast. Naturally his name fires the Bengali heart and all that he stood for evokes an intense echo in it. Since Congress had expelled Subhas and since, in sputtered defence of Subhas, I.N.A. accused and assailing most of the I.N.A. personnel in various departments, it has for some reason or other by-passed them in military service and since its follies and fads and favourities are glaring, we presume the Forward Bloc finds it extremely easy to turn the Subhas-darzed Bengalis anti- Fascist, and forgetful not only of the feet of clay the Forward Bloc, like all other parties, stands on, but of the fact that Subhas himself was the forces of war in the last war and which is still persisted in by those who challenge Congress in his name. Our reading is that the finest lecture was by Subhas's brother Sarat with such consummate ease mainly because Congress has come to be pictured as a group of ingrates who baffle the labour of liberation attempted by Subhas and who fail to acknowledge that it was Subhas's banner of revolt which was far away inspired the underground movement of India, and consequently drove all India to such a point of inflammableness that after the I.N.A. trials the British were apprehensive of their position and thought it best to withdraw. We surely cannot deny the revolutionary mood induced by Subhas’s vision and the human towards the greatest of freedoms, the liberation into the vast inmost Self of divine knowledge and love and force. And who knows but that, if independence had come a little more slowly, India might have escaped partition? In any case, to attribute the modern passion for internationalism to the Englishman is one of the most sincere and thoughtful things that Subhas Bose was inclined to say, was an exaggeration. If the common man is led away by the hypnotism and by insistence on Congress’s incompleteness with some aspects of this enthusiasm, then he will subordinate to either dubious or secondary issues the most significant and pressing issue today—the salvaging of civilisation.

**What Congress Must Learn and the Common Man Should Do**

Congress, besides requiring to get rid of the rot in its ranks, has many things to learn from the parties which are trying to out it. Perhaps, among those parties, the Hindu Mahasabha, despite a trace of the communal tinge in it, has the most vital lesson to give. The main lesson of community is the value of India's ancient scriptures. Congress has also to understand that the Constitution it framed has an imitation of Western parliamentarianism which is ill-suited to the Indian genius: the small Unity Party of Bengal is on this point the best guide. And beyond all political parties there must look for illumination from directly spiritual sources: India’s past greatness was fashioned not by politicians but by her rishis, her yogis, her mystic vision and experience and if she is to be great again there must be at the very centre of power the view from this source. When Congress looks for this illumination it will see the true meaning of the secularity to which it has pledged itself. Our present secularism, setting up a purely secularist religion of democracy which underlines communal differences, is only a negative achievement. The true achievement would be the cultivation of the wide syncretic spiritual mind developing from the basis of our ancient scriptures which say that the party in spiritual man goes beyond creed and community and no less than personal ego and desire into a living touch with the one yet multiple Divinity whose self-expression on earth is the aim of life. Yes, there is ample room left for Congress to improve and to get enlightened and, if it does not, it will seal its own death-warrant and imperil the future of India. And, on the plane of fundamental ideas, it has greater possibilities than any other party of comparable dimensions. Should the common man be allowed to biff in the face of a ghostly mistake, or is he to be committed?

Possibly, with the rising tide of indignation against Congress, a totally non-national organisation like the Communists who knows best how to exploit the common man's discontentments and thrust dust into his nose-too-far-remotely situated parties will be swung into the high seat of government. Although no by-elections have been won by it, Communism is not a negligible factor: itsappeasement to the hungry belly and the empty heat is notorious and any stamina over berk by-marketing and heads stuffed with complacent studies will understand that the influence it exerts from beyond India's borders especially now that W. B. is no longer a mentor in Burma, Viet Nam, Malaya and China. Even if the extreme right does not keep the polls, the menace of it will not cease. For, both the Socialist party and the Forward Bloc are swept-over from the law to their Communism will be far easier than from Congress. Perhaps a switch-over will be unavoidable, since the Communist movement has been the fiery forerunner of Fascism but also mightier resources at its back and, with the bankruptcy of nationalism removed, it will be a pushing to Congress, and all who do not take a definite stand on the side of the Western democracies, and the preparation of their D-Day the Communists will infiltrate the ranks of the party in power and prepare its members as many of them actually did in the Calcutta by-election: they can soon do so with Congress. From every
THE DEATH PENALTY
IS IT IN KEEPING WITH LIFE'S TRUE GOAL?

BY "CHANAKYA"

That was a moment of real inspiration when the other day Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the Law Member of the Government of India, suggested casually in the Constituent Assembly that the death penalty should be abolished altogether. Why does he not bring a Bill to implement this? Now is the right hour. There cannot be a greater memorial to the apostle of non-violence than the death penalty in time to save his murderers from the gallows. He will certainly smile from Heaven if India takes such a decision.

The Right View of the Human Individual

It is time mankind changed its dealings with criminals. A really better order of society, based on spirituality, "would treat in its sociology the individual from the point of view of the criminal, not as units of a social problem to be passed through some skilfully devised machinery and either flattened into the social mould or crushed out of it, but as souls suffering and entangled in a net and to be saved, souls growing and to be encouraged to grow, souls grown and from whom help and power can be drawn." (The Psychology of Social Development by Sri Aurobindo.)

Already more than a score of countries have abolished the death penalty; even in India some of the States have done so; now that India is free to universal States are merged in the Indian Union, will they have to re-erect the gallows?

In spite of appearances, humanity is advancing. About a century and a half ago, there were 250 crimes for which people were hanged in Britain, and by his crime, the conviction that civilisation would collapse if the death sentences were curtailed. It is the religion of humanity born in Europe in the 18th century that has brought about a change of outlook. "Humanitarianism has been its most prominent emotional result. Philanthropy, social service and other kinds of outward beakwardness have expressed of good works. Democracy, socialism, pacifism are to a great extent its by-products or at least owe much of their vigour to its inner presence. The fundamental idea is that the living, the godhead to be worshipped and served by man and that the reaction against the cruel and incomprehensible blindness of the human being and human life are the chief duty and chief aim of the human spirit. War, capital punishment, the taking of human life, cruelty of all kinds whether committed by the individual, the State or society, not only physical cruelty, but moral cruelty, the degradation of any human being or any class of human beings under whatever sympathetic plea or in whatever interest, the oppression and exploitation of man by man, of race by race, of class by class, of nation by nation and all those habits of life and institutions of society of a similar kind which religion and ethics formerly tolerated or even favoured in practice, whatever they might do in their ideal rule or creed, are crimes against the religion of humanity, abominable to its ethical mind, forbidden by the religious, the moral and natural conscience to be fought against absolutely to a degree to be tolerated. Man must be sacred to man regardless of distinctions of race, creed, colour, nationality, status, political or social advancement. The body of man is to be respected, no man immune from violence."

(HThe Idea of Revolution by Sri Aurobindo.)

In spite of its great achievements, this religion of humanity has not been able to accomplish all its aims as it cannot entirely prevail against its own principal enemy, the enemy of all real religion, "human egoism, the egoism of the individual, the egotism of class and nation, unreality, unreality spiritual, but not only physical cruelty, but moral cruelty, the degradation of any human being or any class of human beings under whatever sympathetic plea or in whatever interest, the oppression and exploitation of man by man, of race by race, of class by class, of nation by nation and all those habits of life and institutions of society of a similar kind which religion and ethics formerly tolerated or even favoured in practice, whatever they might do in their ideal rule or creed, are crimes against the religion of humanity, abominable to its ethical mind, forbidden by the religious, the moral and natural conscience to be fought against absolutely to a degree to be tolerated. Man must be sacred to man regardless of distinctions of race, creed, colour, nationality, status, political or social advancement. The body of man is to be respected, no man immune from violence." We have to worship not man as God but God in man, we must regard all human beings as vessels for the manifestation of the Divine, and find our unity with all men through our unity with the Divine. That vision would bring about a change of soul in humanity, and it is for India to show the actual way and the discipline. Let her first proclaim her faith in the divinity of man by abolishing the death penalty altogether.

Apart from the violent ending, the suffering that the condemned man has to bear is greater than the excesses which he inflicted on his victim. An experienced chaplain said: "No one can leave the slaughterhouse without a deep sense of humiliation, horror and shame." The innocent relatives of the hanged man suffer anguish and shame for a life-time, seared not only by his crime, but by his punishment. And there is the chance that all this suffering may be inflicted on an innocent man and he is liable to say for no one will claim that human justice is infallible. Many persons have been found to be innocent after they had been hanged.

True Defence Against the Murderer

The community demands that its citizens should be defended against the murderer. But the true defence consists in bringing about a change in human society, in the demand that punishment can prevent people from committing crimes, for the simple reason that man becomes helpless when moved by passions." Arjuna said in the Gita: "What is this that drives a man to sin as if by force, even against his own struggling will?" The Blessed Lord said: "This is desire and its companion, the passion of men, all-devouring, all-poluting; who know this as man's great enemy (which has to be slain)." Instead of hanging the murderer, we have to find means to save him from this domination by passions. And it is not often even the passions of men, but super-natural beings who find an entrance through these means for fulfilling their nefarious designs. "There are forces, and subliminal experience seems to show that there are supernatural beings embodying those forces, that are attached in their root nature to ignorance, to darkness of consciousness, to misuse of power, to force, to all the causes and consequences of things that we call evil. Those powers, beings or forces are active to impose their adverse instructions upon the creatures, eager to maintain their reign in the manifestation, they oppose the increase of light and truth and good and still, more are antagonistic to the progress of the soul towards a divine consciousness and divine existence." (The Life Divine, by Sri Aurobindo.) If we accept this truth which is perfectly rational and verifiable by inner experience, we shall not be eager to inflict punishment or to discharge the care of the community, but shall turn our attention to the means by which we can effectively deal with these forces which are the source of evil in the world.

Is Capital Punishment a Deterrent?

British judges strongly held the belief that death is the strongest deterrent necessary to save innocent lives from armed burglars and desperate criminals. The murders of Antiquis and P. C. Edgar are quoted. But Edgar was killed when the hanged of the young man who shot Antiquis was fresh in men's minds. Such murders were continued in spite of the death penalty. Capital punishment may incite the ruffian to shoot his way out when cornered and to add the murder of witnesses to that of the first victim. But we need not depend for support. The facts from abolitionist countries of many races and types of civilization prove that the murder rate is unaffected by abolition. Sweden, Holland, New Zealand with sparse rural population, Belgium with its dense industrial concentration and even to a degree of other countries have the factor in common; no one has experienced any rise in the murder rate after years of abolition. William Temple said: "I believe that the example of the State taking life does more to lower the value of human life in the minds of its citizens than all the deterrent influences of the penalty can do to protect the lives of the citizens."

Congress And The Common Man

Continued from page 3

view-point, the defeat of Congress will be a setback for our country. But Congress as it is at the moment—internally torn, power-grabbing, bribe-infested, addicted to the shameless pursuit of the masses, full of petty dictators, teeming with ministers who go holidaying abroad at public expense, crowded with officials whose qualification for their posts is their having gone to jail in the past. To add to this, Congress, with all its boasting of having shouted "Mahatma li jai" or worn khadi caps—Congress with all these blots upon it today end with insufficient hold on its own great principles of spiritual inspiration that is native to the Indian genius—such a Congress will hardly impress the common man with the sterling achievements that stand to its credit, achievements like the bloodless integration of the States, the successful fight against the poison of Communism, in wise steering of the country through the troubled waters of international politics, the grappling of the huge "refugee" problem, the brilliant conduct of the military campaign in Kashmir, the swift knock-out to Razakar Hyderabad—such a Congress will not easily convince the common man that, as a leading paper in this country has pointed out, many of its difficulties are not of its own making, that the administrative machine came to it creaking and groaning from a war-burdened past, that dollar scarcity and obstacles the path of procuring machinery have partly retarded industrial production, that agriculture has suffered from a shortage of capital, a steep rise in wages and other costs of production and a grave deficiency of manure and implements. Until the time some party with more principles, more fundamental principles, with more national-wide an organisation, it is the duty of Congress to re-establish itself in the common man's esteem by checking the demoralisation of its members, by putting its contact with the people and turning more and more to a political and economic programme, founded in the light of human and spiritual. The common man, on his side, must do his best to keep his balance, to discount exaggerated, view the situation steadily and view it accurately, while persisting in legitimate criticism, give Congress a fair chance to do the country the great service it alone can render in the present hour of danger within and without.
In the essay "The Failure of the Religion of Humanity", we saw how a theo-centric world-view gave place to an ego-centric one—how a God-centred philosophy of life was abandoned in favour of a man-centred one when Comte declared, "The whole edifice of Positive worship was to make men feel clearly how far superior in every respect is the synthesis founded on the Love of Humanity to that founded on the Love of God." God was eliminated from man's life as something extraneous to his being, an unknowable Entity, that is, a non-entity. Philosophers were asked by Comte to give up speculating about the nature of the Ultimate Reality, and religiousists not to seek God but to serve humanity. When Positivism triumphed, material progress became the goal of civilization, which now definitely took a rationalistic-utilitarian-hereditarian turn. The words of the Collective Man and of material ends became the New Gospel of the West.

Karl Marx

But this New Gospel was still not placed upon a firm foundation; it was not an entirely man-centred Gospel; An unknowable was still hovering in the background—man-worship had not yet turned into God-denial; agnosticism had not yet become dowittist atheism. It was left to Marx to finish what the Agnostics had begun. Harnessing Hegel's Dialectic and Feuerbach's Materialism to his own "Economic Interpretation of History", he stated that "production" was the chief element in man's struggle for existence, and therefore the economic factor was the basic one in the life of a people, and that it was "production" which governed its culture—its intellectual, religious, aesthetic and social life. J. G. Crowther a keen follower of Marx, very succinctly explains the Marxian position in Soviet Science: "Out of the struggle of the animal world man arose. After he had been able to snatch sufficient food to keep him alive he began to have the opportunity to think; thus the first concern of man is production, the production of food. The achievement of production provides the opportunity for thought, thus the mode of production of the goods to satisfy human needs comes to condition thought. Marx therefore said that the general character of the thought of any historical period, the nature of its art, science and laws, is a reflection of the mode of production that exists at that epoch."

For Marx, economic struggle was the main factor which governed the cultural process and determined the character of the philosophy and religion and the ethical and spiritual ideals of a people. If this is granted, the philosophy of a Shankara or a Plotinus, the teachings of a Krishna or a Christ, a Mahatma or a Zoroaster, the divine-inspired and revelatory writings of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita do not reveal any ultimate truths of existence but are merely reflections of the mode of production that existed at a particular epoch and the conditions of production of goods that are right or wrong. Justice and injustice based upon these teachings are naturally dictated by the interests of the prevailing economic situation and are determined by social convenience. Besides, all the teachings move round a central "Divine Reality", which is to do with the materialist outlook that view does not exist; it declares Matter to be the fundamental Reality. However absurd these conclusions may seem to us, it must be clearly understood that these are the only conclusions which a materialistic world-view based on Economics, instead of a Spiritual Metaphysics and Psychology, can lead to. It is not within the scope of this essay to examine all the philosophical issues involved in Marxism as our inquiry is only concerned with values and their sanction. In any case a detailed examination of these issues is not necessary, for the very fundamentals of Marxism deny spiritual values and do not give rise to an ethic.

Then Marx states, "It is not the consciousness of mankind that determines its existence, but on the contrary its social existence determines its consciousness." But what is man and what is the nature of his consciousness? These are the questions which must always be asked before any world-view is accepted. A true and complete philosophy of life must answer the eternal questions— it must make a definite statement about the nature of the Ultimate Reality and man's relation to it, about the nature of the Universe and man's place in it, about the basis of existence. According to Marx, man is not a self-seeking who uses mind, life and body as his instruments of self-expression and seeks spiritual fulfilment upon earth, not a being who is an emanation of the Divine, but a physical being—an economic-social unit, a food-getting animal in the midst of the Universe that determines the ultimate reality and the ultimate existence. Marxism states that Matter is the fundamental Reality and that the evolutionary process is blind—it has no design or purpose in it, but man can have before him the goal of producing a "classless society."

Then Marxist psychology affirms that consciousness is not the fundamental fact of a man's personality. According to it, consciousness or mind is a by-product of matter—mental processes are caused by a prior cerebral activity, which in its turn is the result of the action of bodily processes. The effect of the philosophical impotence of men, and physical and psychological determinism on man's seeking for higher values as well as on his conduct in the world are not difficult to understand. As we saw in the essay "The Rise of Materialism"—"If a mental act is determined by a cerebral action, which is determined by bodily processes, or by the reaction of the physical and nervous system to the action of external stimuli, then a man's mental processes are physically and physiologically determined, and conditioned by environmental impacts. If this is so, how are we to explain, like his conceptions of good and evil, and right and wrong, or his volitional acts like choosing the good and rejecting the evil are not within his control but are physiologically determined, and if that is the case, then his belief in his own moral values or his pursuits of ethical or spiritual aims and ideals are chimera's?"

Then in Essays I and VII, we saw that man's consciousness is not determined by the economic and social conditions in which he lives, on the contrary, it is his consciousness that determines them.

Man's knowledge of himself and the world is determined by the type, level and range of his consciousness. He creates the super-structure of his civilization on a foundation of this knowledge. This means that his philosophy and religion, art and literature, sociology and politics bear the stamp and reflect the nature of his consciousness. Man at present possesses a particular type of consciousness, a mentally developed but a spiritually unenlightened one, and creates a culture whose character is determined by it; if he were to evolve further into a higher type of being and possess a spiritual consciousness he would be sure to create a greater and more enlightened culture; not a rationalistic-utilitarian culture but a culture that is spiritual.

The Inner and the Outer

We have all along stressed the fact that the inner determines the outer, and not the outer the inner; but this does not necessarily mean that the outer has no effect upon the inner—they both inter-act with each other. The outer serves to stimulate the inner and to bring out its potentialities, and aids it first to grow and then to formulate itself outwardly in life. Whilst in his inner reality man is a soul-being and creates his external conditions, he is outwardly a nature-organism and a social being who is affected by his natural and social environment. But though as a nature-organism and a social being he is affected by his environment, as a soul-being, he is capable of reconditioning it and redeeming it; that is, as long as he remains in his outer consciousness and knows himself only as a "natural being", he is subdued by the conditions around him, but if he were to contact his inner soul and grow into a wider and more luminous spiritual consciousness, he would possess greater knowledge and greater power and would be consequently in a position to remodel his environment. Man does not live alone as a separate self-existing entity—but at the same time his being is not wholly influenced by the action of outer circumstances. There is an individual's inner life that flows into the external and that flows from within, and the receiving of impacts of an external world which it adjusts to its own individuality and turns into material for its own development; it then projects itself outward and recreates and remoulds its environment in accordance with its own inner truth. As an individual ascends the ladder of Being, his capacity for self-determination increases and his mastery over outer circumstances becomes greater. As long as wuthuka, soul, is enslaved in the workings of praritis, nature, he is subject to its action—but as he detaches himself from it and learns to control its working through spiritual growth he gradually becomes its master.

If man wants to create perfect social, political and economic systems, he must first develop into a greater being; the present rationalism's notion prevailing in half-light and half-darkness is incapable of producing them. The condition of the world proves this.

Since we admit that outer conditions affect the lives of men, we grant that the economic factor is an important one, and consequently one which cannot be by any means neglected; but to state that it is the basic factor which determines the consciousness of men, and that philosophy, religion,
VALUES AND SANCTIONS

Continued from page 4

art, literature and science are only reflections "of the mode of production that exists at that epoch" and that their character is determined by economic struggle is a gross exaggeration. Such preposterous statements cannot be held valid by the philosophic reason of men—they do not correspond to the full facts of human existence. The idea of promoting the so-called "health, wealth and happiness of mankind" and creating the kingdom of heaven upon earth by economic and social adjustment is one which today can only be entertained by minds that have no insight into the nature of the forces that govern the destinies of men.

The New Gospel

With men's ethical values regulated by economic and social utility and therefore having no ultimate sanction, with the revival of the infra-ethical formulas "the end justifies the means," and with spiritual values utterly ignored, because the existence of God or Destiny is denied, the New Gospel was now complete. The Positivists had declared:

What proffeth a man if he save his soul And be cast Cast out of the World?
So, seek ye first the kingdom of worldly goods, And the kingdom of the Spirit will be added unto you— If it exists.

Marx added to this:

In the beginning was the Word, And the Word was with the Prechristian, And the Word was Economic Production. It is the Stomach that quickeneth, The Spirit proffeth nothing, For it doth not exist. The words I say unto you, They are bread and they are life; For it is not writ: Man lives by bread alone?

This was the New Gospel—its John the Baptist was the Positivist, and its prophet was Kari Marx. Like Positivism, the advent of Marxism was also inevitable. Marxism had come to make for two reasons; at least at one place in the world, a new economic-social experiment had to be made—and Russia proved to be the ideal place for it—in which the domination of the rich over the poor had to be completely broken, and the humble and the lowly of birth had to be given their right to stand on an equal footing with their more fortunate fellow-men. It had to be shown that the mere fact that a man exists, apart from all other considerations, entitles him to the basic human rights—the right to have proper food and clothing, and a roof over his head. No doubt, a system of social relationships which ignores this fact cannot have the sympathy of any right thinking man. But all this could have been achieved without supporting a Materialistic conception of the Universe, without God-deny, and without the utter imbecility of the Individuals in the interests of the Collectivity, represented by a Party. Marx was a well-meaning man, but unfortunately, he did not know that there were more things in heaven and earth than were dreamt of in his economic philosophy.

If religion was the opium of the people, then its distorted outer forms should have been discarded, as only God-worship with spiritual union with Him as its culmination should have been kept. Instead, God was denied, but religion was kept, a new kind of religion, a religion without a God—a super-optimist. Though Marx should have allowed God-worship a place in his world-view, it was not possible for him to do so, for an accept ance by him of the reality of God or Spirit would have been detrimental to his Economic Interpretation of History, which could have only stood on a materialistic foundation. That is the reason why, though he took from Hegel his "Dialectic," he rejected his Absolute, and accepted the Materialism of Feuerbach.

Atheism

True religion, that is, a religion based on God-realization, and which makes spiritual union with God its aim, is not the opium of the people, but atheism or God-denial is most assuredly the parent vice, the master falsehood of the age, the spring of all the other vices and falsehoods. Man's religion is the expression of his soul's seeking to attain constant union with its source and sustaining power, the Supreme Being, and its aspiration to lead a divine existence upon earth. True religion draws man Godwards and helps him to evolve into a greater being. Atheism on the contrary proves to be a barred in the evolutionary march of humanity, because in its belief in it does not encourage man to ascend the ladder of Being and attain higher state of consciousness; on the contrary it binds him to his lower animal nature. Often a firm belief in it tends to corrupt a man's

* Refer to Essay IX. (b). "The Failure of the Religion of Humanity".

The other reason why the advent of Marxism was inevitable was because Marxian was Materialism driven to its last consequence—because it was the next logical step after Positivism and the acceptance of a man-centered philosophy of life. Grant Materialism and the absolute supremacy of the economic-social ultimate, and the Marxist world-view follows in its wake, with Logical Positivism, Instrumentalism and Rationalistic Utilitarianism and Hedonism bringing up the rear. In their philosophical convictions regarding ends, there is very little difference between the Marxists and the supporters of these other Schools of thought which differ from only on the social, political, and economic level. They all firmly believe in the idea of materially well-provided social beings existing in a perfect economic society. The only really important point on which they entirely differ is the position of the individual in society. Whilst Marxian emphasizes the importance of the Collectivity and denies that the individual, the rival ideologies, without denying the importance of the Collectivity, leave the individual free to develop himself. In the first system man's chance to develop spiritually is denied him—he has to move with the Collectivity; in the other system it is up to him to believe in a spiritual ideal, even though the ideologies themselves do not inculcate such an ideal.

Glorification or Degradation?

The final result of the materialistic world-view was, that God was dethroned and man was put in His place; but for this glorification a price had to be paid—man's spiritual nature and his divine destiny had to be denied, he had to be bridled a rational animal, an economic-social unit. His right to attain union with the Supreme Being and to realise that he was an emanation of this Being, was denied him; as a consequence of this denial, he had to forego his right to attain Supreme Knowledge, Power, Bliss, Freedom and Immortality which really belong to his highest Self, and which it was possible for him to attain only through an inner spiritual growth. Surely a high price to pay for such a glorification, a glorification which was actually a degradation, especially when we view it in the light of present events and see where it has brought us.

If we examine the main trends in Western thought today, we find that we either have a world-view based upon Economics, or a world-view which denies metaphysical support to a values-right through Utilitarianism, or we have one with an erat meta physical, which instead of explaining the nature of the Ultimate Reality, man's relation with it and the purpose of existence, only provides a frame-work for the findings of science; then, we have an ethic that has no ultimate sanction, but becomes only a convention regulated by social utility; a psychology, which is more a sexology than a science that investigates into the nature of mind, consciousness and soul, or a psychology that instead of being a science in its own right has become almost a branch of physiology. Perhaps it is the perception of this very truth that has made R. G. Collingwood remark that psychology today is the fashionable scientific fraud of the age. Though this remark is rather severe, it does express a certain truth: it is directed not against Psychology but against the exaggerated applications given to some limited truths of man's life by certain Schools of Psychology. And lastly we have a religion which instead of teaching men to love God and attain union with Him, concerns itself with externals or with mundane ends. Fortunately there are other trends also which point towards a spiritual interpretation of existence and which are sure to help thinkers in definitely discarding once and for all the materialistic world-view.

If the present non-finalistic non-teleological, materialistic man-centered world-view is not discarded in favour of a theo-centric one based upon a spiritual metaphysics, which can show the purpose of existence and the goal of life, and which alone can sanction a true ethic, a dharma, a law of right action, our civilisation will not cease to descend the downward path it has taken and may soon give way to the worst kind of barbarism—a barbarism fully equipped with the discoveries of science, and with a developed reason serving the ends of the unsublimated lower animal nature of man.
One of the chief aims will be to provide authentic guidance in regard to the many perplexing questions with which the common man is faced in his daily life. This cannot be better done than by the author’s writings, because Sri Aurobindo is not merely a Master of Yoga in possession of the Eternal Spiritual Truths, but also a Guide and Helper of humanity in the trying situations that arise in the course of its existence. To bring home the light of his guidance and to make it directly applicable to the concrete problems of life, a series of questions of common interest along with precise answers based on Sri Aurobindo’s writings will regularly appear in these columns.

Q. 1: The hedonistic theory of ethics judges virtue from the standard of pleasure or satisfaction which it considers to be the goal of all human activity and man’s supreme good. How far can this be admitted as the true aim of our ethical endeavour?

A.: Neither the pursuit of pleasure nor self-satisfaction of any kind, however subtle or even spiritual, can be the law of nature of the ethical being. It is true that the highest good is both in its nature and inner effect the highest bliss. Amusa, delight of being is the spring of all existence and that to which it tends and for which it seeks openly and covertly in all its activities. It is true too that in virtue growing, in good accomplished, there is great pleasure and that for the seeking for it may well be always there as a sub-conscious motive to the pursuit of virtue. But for practical purposes the self-conception is a side aspect of the matter; it does not constitute pleasure into a test or standard of virtue. On the contrary, virtue comes to the natural man by a struggle with his pleasure-seeking nature and is often a deliberate embracing of pain, an edification of strength by suffering. We do not resort to the struggle for the pleasure of the pain and the pleasure of the struggle; for that higher strenuous delight, though it be felt by the secret spirit in us, is not usually or not at first conscious in the conscious normal part of our being which is the field of the struggle. The action of the ethical man is not motivated by even an inner pleasure, but by a call of his being, the necessity of an ideal, the figure of an absolute standard, a law of the Divine.

Q. 2: But the history of the human race shows that the origin of man’s morality and the determining cause of its evolution is not his inner necessity for an ideal but the social need of adjusting his personal claims and desires to those of others in his society. Is not this social need the true origin of morality?

A.: It is true that this social need is the obscure matrix of morality and of man’s ethical impulse and that in the outward history, the evolution of man in society may seem to be the determining cause of his ethical evolution. For ethics only begins by the demands upon us, something other than his personal preferences—vital pleasure or material self-interest; and this demand seems at first to work on him through the necessity of his relations with others, by the demands of his social existence. But that this is not, is shown by the fact that the ethical demand does not always square with the social demand, nor the ethical standard always coincide with the social standard. On the contrary the ethical man is often called upon to reject and do battle with the social demand, to break, move away from, reverse the social standard. His relations with others and his relations with himself are both of them the occasions of his ethical growth, but that which determines his ethical being is his relations with God, the urge of the Divine upon him whether concealed in his nature or conscious in his higher self. He obeys an inner ideal, not an outer standard, a divine law in his being, not a social claim or collective necessity.

Q. 3: What are the progressive stages of the growth of man’s moral nature?

A.: Our ethical impulses and activities begin like all the rest in the infra-rational and take their rise from the subconscious. They arise as an instinct of right, an instinct of obedience to an understood law, an instinct of self-giving in labour, an instinct of sacrifice and self-sacrifice, an instinct of love, of self-coordination and of solidarity with others. Man obeys the law at first without inquiring the why and the wherefore, without seeking for it a sanction in the reason. His first thought is that it is a law created by higher powers than himself and his reason and he says with the ancient poet that he knows not whence these laws spring, but only that they are and endure and cannot with impunity be violated. What the man’s impulses and impulses of society make us understand, so that the will may come to use the ethical impulses intelligently and turn the instincts into ethical ideas. It corrects the crude and often erring ethical instincts, separates and purifies their confused associations, shows them as best it can their relations, tries to arbitrate and compromise between their conflicting claims, arranges a system and many-sided rule of ethical action. And all this is well, a necessary stage of our advance; but in the end these very ethical ideas and this intelligent ethical will which it has tried to train to its control, escapes from its hold and soar up beyond its province. Always, even when enduring its rein and curb, they have that inborn tendency.

Q. 4: Why does the developing ethical impulse in man finally refuse to follow the dictates of his reason?

A.: The ethical being of man like the rest is a growth and a seeking towards the absolute, the divine which can only be attained securely in the supra-rational. It seeks after an absolute purity, an absolute wisdom, an absolute truth, an absolute strength, an absolute love and self-giving, and it is most satisfied when it can go them in absolute measure, without limit, curb or compromise, divinely, infinitely, in a sort of godhead and transfiguration of the ethical being. That of course is chiefly connected with what it best understands, the apparent process, the machinery, the outward act, its result and effect, its circumstance, occasion and motive; by these it judges the morality of the action and the morality of the doer. But the developed ethical being knows instinctively that it is an inner something which it seeks and the outward act is only a means of bringing out and manifesting within ourselves by its psychological effects that inner absolute and eternal entity.

Q. 5: By what standard does the developed ethical being measure the value of his actions?

A.: To the developed ethical being the value of our actions is not so much in their apparent nature and outward result as in their help towards the growth of the Divine within us. It is difficult, even impossible to justify upon outward grounds the absolute justice, absolute right, absolute purity, love or selflessness of an action or course of action; for action is always relative, it is mixed and uncertain in its results, perplexed in its occasions. But it is possible to judge the inner being to the eternal and absolute good, to make our sense and will full of it if the action can be judged as a condition of our possession or its intuitions and inspirations. That is what the ethical being labours towards and the higher ethical man increasingly attains to in his inner efforts.

Q. 6: What is the true essence of ethics and how is it fulfilled?

A.: Ethics is not in its essence a calculation of good and evil in the action or a laboured effort to be blameless according to the standards of the world,—those are only crude appearances,—it is an attempt to grow into the divine nature. Its parts of purity are an aspiration towards the insensible purity of God’s being; its parts of truth and right are a seeking after conscious unity with the law of the divine knowledge and will; its parts of charity and charity are a movement towards the infinity and universality of the divine love; its parts of strength and manhood are a striving for the perfect surety of the divine strength. That is the heart of its meaning. And its high fulfillment comes when the being of the man undergoes this transfiguration; then it is not his actions that standardize his nature but his nature that gives value to his actions; then he is no longer laboriously virtuous, but naturally divine. Actively, too, he is fulfilled and consummated when he is led or moved either by the infra-rational impulses or the rational intelligence or the divine knowledge and will and will make conscious in his nature; and that can only be done, first by communication through the intuitive mind as it purifies itself progressively from the invasion of egotism, self-interest, desire, passion and all kinds of self-will, finally through the supra-rational light and power, no longer communicated but present and in possession of his being. Such was the supreme aim of the ancient sages who had the wisdom which rational man and rational society have rejected because it was too high a truth for the comprehension of the reason and for the powers of the normal limited human will too bold and immense, too infinite an effort.
SRI AUROBINDO AND HIS ASHRAM

BY DILIP KUMAR ROY

In our last issue we published "Syncretist" s refutation of the charges made in a article in the local press" the article which appeared in "SWADES" on 29-10-47. At that time Mr. Roy, a student of Sahajananda, wrote that, "The article is a mere repetition of the same old story, and it is unnecessary to comment on it." But the charges have not been withdrawn, and the issue has not been settled. The same ill-conceived article has been circulated by his "Swades" under the pseudonym "Sumitra." It is there that Dilip Kumar Roy, the writer of the article, has taken up the cudgel and has attacked the "Syncretist" with all the force of his argument.

The charge brought against Sri Aurobindo is that he has been a "Syncretist" and that he has been responsible for the so-called "Syncretism" in India. Roy, in his article, has attempted to refute these charges and to show that they are unfounded.

Roy begins his article by saying that the charges made against Sri Aurobindo are unfounded and that they are based on a misapprehension of his teachings. He goes on to say that the charges are based on a misunderstanding of his work and that they are not justified.

Roy then goes on to say that the charges are based on a misapprehension of his work and that they are not justified. He goes on to say that the charges are based on a misapprehension of his work and that they are not justified. He goes on to say that the charges are based on a misapprehension of his work and that they are not justified. He goes on to say that the charges are based on a misapprehension of his work and that they are not justified. He goes on to say that the charges are based on a misapprehension of his work and that they are not justified. He goes on to say that the charges are based on a misapprehension of his work and that they are not justified. He goes on to say that the charges are based on a misapprehension of his work and that they are not justified. He goes on to say that the charges are based on a misapprehension of his work and that they are not justified. 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By "LIBRA"

The celebration, in Europe and America, of the bicentenary of Goethe's birth began on June 28 and will continue up to July 11. A notable contribution to the large amount of Goethean literature seeing the light during this festival is the following specially written article which draws attentions to an aspect of the great German poet not often emphasized.

Goethe and Shelley were by far the most gifted poets of their age. Nor does their similarity end with the high excellence of their poetic gifts. Although different in various respects owing to outward circumstances as well as to Goethe's being much more complex and versatile, they had a remarkable kinship in the power of what may be termed "mythical or poetic love." In Shelley this power can be seen at all; in Goethe it had to be discerned from amidst a multitude of qualities—the balanced Greek intellectuality, the humanism of the Renaissance temper, the Modern Man's Faustian rebelliousness and curiosity—but it is the central power of the poet in him, and to overlook it is to miss the intensest point in his psychology and the deepest source in his self-expression.

Panthéism and the Eternal Feminine

Goethe was a pantheist: he declared that Divinity is not outside of the universe but that a Divine Substance underlies all phenomena and the forms of outward Nature have an inward animating Spirit which is perfected and which in its Wholeness carries all phenomena as phases of its perfection. In that Wholeness it is a tremendous mystery—the Absolute of the philosophers, "the incomprehensible, utterly unimaginable highest Being" of which Goethe used to say, "If it were to ascend to Edelkraut. But between the Absolute and the relative, the Divine was for him so active a Presence ordering from inefable eternity the universe in time. While Goethe the poet found in the Absolute little matter for thought the active orderer of things was not simply a thing but a force that created the world. And for Goethe the feminine was the central truth of the universe in time. The sun is here—Allas, my eyes are blinded! The moon is there, I cannot bear his radiance. Knows so it is when all the self is minded. To the sun and all it is my confidence. And who is this god that fulfills all I demand? Odysseus draws not from the sun's embers, but from the sea's. A sea of fame, passion, past concealment! We thought to light a candle, fire immortal. Weeps we, exquisitely in unknown glowing sea: Is it hate or love that these print gates open out? That ocean full of all gates of tears? Awakened we shrink and turn to earth once more, Hiding our faces in our childish tears.

The ring of the mystical intuitions here is no doubt authentic; but like Jean Goethe sought the empathies with wings that were not quite genuine. Suffering "the fall precipitant," he was obliged to make it the first article of his credo that man is born to look at the things, not as at light:

Thus be the Sun behind me, not before! I turn and gaze, my heart aches with wonder, Where the wild torrent down the rock cliffs rushes. From hedge to hedge it leaps in joyous thunder. Fiercely in a thousand swirling streams it gushes. Bursting in foam, taming the pour on high. In, in camelades, scintillating The million-colored boat that cannot die! Through change unchanging, new its pure with flying In full clear light, now faint where the twilight flies. While still the coolness and the fragrance hover. Torrent and rainbow! So our efforts seem. Follow that thought, that image and discover Our life lies in the changing colored gleam.

This surely is one of Goethe's marvellous poetic victories; but it is also an expression of his spiritual defeat. Indeed he had felt the Divine, however passionately, cannot be the same as God. And Goethe, who had a feel and sense of the Sun, was always vaguely yearning after the Eternal and the Perfect and straining through all phenomenal objects to glimpse the Ever-lastimg Moment of flawless rhythm which is the Time-experience of God, the calm of His celestial Day, in which the shift and squamation of the world are elevated and transfigured into the divine archetypes behind its imperfect course of history. "In the true symbolism," Goethe writes elsewhere, "the particular represents the Universal not as a dream or shadow, but as a living commentary revelation of the Unfathomable;" but by the definite embrace of the Earth in preference to the Sun as his domain, he lost something which mundane Nature really hid and which was the soul of poetic philosophy could supply, clutch as it might at love as the harmonious supra-symbol of the Eternal.

Physical Interpretation of Sunflowers

But he could not keep it on the "pure oriental level. What was to the Persian mystics and the Indian Vedas a powerful symbol became for him mere real than the Truth itself, for, while they regarded woman as only an earthly simile of the Divine, to be enounced as an object of lust and worshipped only is the spirit for the sake of the Reality behide, Goethe looked upon woman as not a soul but a visible sunbeam. Though Pantheism thus took on the color of a sacred nation, the initiation that he experienced more deeply than the dying into the Life of the Sun, led his physical interpretation of Sunflowers behing his imperfect course of history. "In the true symbolism," Goethe writes elsewhere, "the particular represents the Universal not as a dream or shadow, but as a living commentary revelation of the Unfathomable;" but by the definite embrace of the Earth in preference to the Sun as his domain, he lost something which mundane Nature really hid and which was the soul of poetic philosophy could supply, clutch as it might at love as the harmonious supra-symbol of the Eternal.

I. Letter to Wedel, May 10, 1812.
2. Faust: Part II, Scene I, 1/4708-713. The verse-translation quoted in the article are by Miss F. M. Stendell and "Love Dickenson" to whose admirable book Faust and Fulfil the present article owes several suggestions.
Goethe—The Sufi Unfulfilled

Continued from page 8

“The Desire of the Moth for the Star”

This is not to say that Goethe did not feel the transcendental phase of human emotion: in his relation with Charlotte von Stein he did feel it unmistakably:

For, all that men within their earth-bound limits
Learn of high bliss and call by holy names... The light that only in their loneliness thought,
Burns for the wise, for poets in their dreams, Their heavenliest—I too in my best hours
Found it in her and found it there for me.

But the consummation part of him was too vehement in its demands to bear the strain of Charlotte’s idealism. Finding no satisfactory solution to his liaison with her, he fled to Italy where, in Rome, he gave vent to himself in “the sweet flower gardens” of Armenia in sensual experiences which formed the undercurrent of some of the most antimotic of his Roman Elegies. But he was not satisfied with this heartless sort of enjoyment, either. He wanted true love, and on returning formed a union with the young and pretty Christine Vulpius which he fully afforded him that, without at the same time starving his passions.

It cannot be denied that he combined with human love a superhuman longing and, even at his most earthly, felt “the desire of the moth for the star.” For, men and women he saw as but human fronts and faces of the world-creative Divine Polarity of God the lover and God the beloved, the Eternal Masculine and the Eternal Feminine. All this hectic yearning of the flesh, he therefore held, points to a consummation in which the human lovers lose the cravings of their separate limited egos and fuse into an ecstasy in which Matter falls off like a withered garment and Spirit, with the Divine Polarity ever implicit in it, shines out pure of the aberrations of the earthly Eros. It was to this strange dematerialization that he gave, in Shelleyan fashion, the name Death: so that Death signified to him not merely the cessation of terrestrial life but the flight to a heavenly consciousness in which “all failure shall grow to achievement.” The more brute fact of death meant only the casting off of one material body for another, a reanimation of the soul for still further progress:

Like water it wanders, The spirit of men: It comes from the sky, To the sky it goes. Then down once more, Dream down to the earth, It changes, it flows.

In a letter to Weiland Goethe writes with reference to Charlotte von Stein: “I cannot explain to myself the significance of the power which this woman has over me, unless by metempsychosis. Yes, we were once man and wife.” The same idea he expresses in an exquisite poem to Charlotte herself; for, had he not too strong an intuition that nothing could be which did not in one form or another exist before to prepare for its present condition and that if the human soul were an “entelechy”—that is, in Goethe’s own words, a piece of eternity which the few years of its connection with the body does not age—it would be absurd to think of it as not having had its own definite soul-nature from the beginning of time, developing its possibilities of manifestation on earth through many births? Death, therefore, was, from the natural point of view, a transition to another plane of being, with a subsequent return to this; but in the high esoteric sense, it stood for the Shelleyan trampling of life into fragments, the trampling of that imperfection which

like a dome of many-coloured glass, Stains the white radiance of Eternity.

To make the brute fact at the same time a celestial truth was, in Goethe’s eyes, the aim and end of living. His own failure, owing to the downward trend of his passions, to realise the light of the Divine had led him to the conclusion that man is condemned never to dwell in the ideal and perfect Consciousness, the Solar Glory, while alive; striving is all his lot, never achievement. But when the fetters of the body are broken, surpass Goethe, there must be possibility of attainment: the very futility of the effort borne towards the Divine implied for him fulfillment elsewhere, in a sphere of consciousness in which, in the esoteric sense, the pure Shakti, the one supreme Creatrix, is in everlasting union with the supreme Ishwara, “the Untouchable” —“the Unbreakable.” To penetrate into this benighted condition was, in his philosophy, however, Love, and the soul’s preparation for this leap into the Infinite with the help of “the unknown Eros” which, in Shelley’s phrase, “sustains the world from below and kindles it from above” was the height of wisdom leading to the grand finale of human life—the divine death.

Thus we find him striking in one of his mystical poems a note such as has been sounded with an equal poignancy and richness by only Wagner at the close of Tristan and Isolde:

Tell no man, tell wise man only, For the world might count it madness, Him I praise who in his loneliness thought, Thirsts for death and dies in gladness. Thou west got and thou beguilest In dewy love-nights long ago; Now a stranger love shall seize thee When the quiet lamp burns low.

Thou art freed and lifted, taken From the shadow of our night, Thou art drawn by some new passion Towards a nobler marriage-wreath. Distance cannot weight thee, sorrows Where the far enchantment calls, Till the moth, the star-fire’s lover, Drinks the light, and burns, and falls.

Die and grow! Until thou hearest What that word can say, The world is dark and then a wanderer Who has lost his way. Tragedy of Spiritual Unfulfillment

But the divine death thus glorified a not achievable, as the spiritual experiences of all ages unanimously show, without transcendance of the temporal symbol of Eros. No shuffling off the mortal coil can kill the roots of desire, nor lead to godlike Bliss until they are killed. As Goethe himself recognised, in order to partake of that Bliss the human entelechy must be made fit for it while still alive. It must die and grow every minute if finally with the physical dissolution it is to die into God. But, it may be remarked, once the fitness for God’s Bliss is reached, the very necessity of physically dying for the sake of entering the delph is removed. When the true Yogic One, he only continues the state of blissfulness which was his during life; for “he in whose heart the knot of the heart-strings has been rent asunder,” says the Katha Upanishad, “enjoys the Bliss of Brahman even in this body of clay.” Goethe, however, could not snap the cords of human attachment by diving deep into his psyche in constant meditative adoration of the Supreme. Perhaps his most magically Sufi address to Love the Universal Mediatrix is:

Thou mayst choose a thousand forms to hide thee, Yet, All-beloved, I shall know thee there; Thou mayst take enchanting veils to shroud thee, Yet, thou All-present, I shall feel thee near.

In the pure springing of the tall young cypress, All-stateless, I know thee well the while, In the pure lute-leader’s hallowed, laughing glee, Thou, All-beguiler, I behold thy smile.

And when the fountain lifts her jet and opens, All-playfullest, I gaze upon thy gloe, And when the cloud-forms change their changing fashion, All-mirage-natured, I am sure of thee.

Gay in the meadow’s flower-embroidered raincoat, All-starred-brightness, I can see thy face, Where the light-handed eye clings and clusters, All-clamberer, I catch thy eager grace.

When the new morning flames upon the mountains, All-gladdener, gladly I welcome thee, And when the pure sky arches out above us, All-heart-enlarger, I know it breathes of thee.

If sought I learn by outward sense or inward, All-lorded teacher, I learn it all through thee, And when I name the hundred names of Allah, There echoes with each one a name for thee.

But this most inspired address of his to the Eternal Feminine is dramatically typical of the spiritual unfulfillment of his whole life, because it was after all an apotheosis of his attachment to Marianne Von Willemer! The only other tragedy equally typical and regrettable is Shelley’s passionate confusion of the Divine Beauty which so urgently beckoned to his soul, with the human all-too-human Emma Viviani.


7. The Divan of East and West: The Singer’s Room—“Sacred Longing.”
8. The Divan of East and West: Book of Zuleika—last poem.
NEW TRENDS IN WESTERN THOUGHT

THE MYSTERY OF MAN’S MIND
HAS BIOLOGY BEEN ABLE TO SHED LIGHT ON IT?

By HAMILTON FYFE
John O’London’s Weekly

WHAT separates Man from all other creatures that live and move in the universe? By what was the separation effected? How did Man come into being? What made Man become aware of himself, able to exercise imagination, to think abstract thoughts. That Man did so is the most striking fact in history. It made possible his victories over Nature, his dominant attitude towards animals, his ability to build up and hold as “Mansions” his fate. Most of us never tire of talking up the marvellous works of Man, the excellence of his attainments, his godlike gift of reason. But the source of these wonders remains mysterious. The evolutionists have not merely left the problem unsolved; they have, it would seem, deliberately avoided it.

From Darwin to Our Day

Darwin stated bluntly in THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES, “I have no doubt that the primary mental powers any more than the body have the origin of life itself.” Later in THIS IS MAN, he admitted that “the investigations as to how the principle of the nervous powers and moral dispositions is the greatest difficulty which presents itself when we consider the origin of mankind”. He did not, however, probe into this difficulty. Intelligent, he said, had been “most important to Man; it made him the most dominant of all living creatures”. But how intellect came into the make-up of mankind he did not attempt to explain.

Alfred Russell Wallace, the oldest of Darwin’s all evolutionary writers, was so baffled by the impossibility of finding an explanation that he fell back on the theory of special creation. Self-conscious Man was, he said, not allied to any species showing the faintest trace of self-consciousness. Whence could this divine attribute have come? “Only from a divine Being,” Wallace answered. Only supernatural inter- vision could account for the soul of Man. The higher qualities of the human mind were not evolved, but grafted suddenly by the Almighty Creator on the mind of Wallace’s fellow-scientists signed and tapped their foreheads. When he died, his theory died with him. We remember him gratefully as a pioneer of science. His old age into a fundamentalist theology is almost forgotten.

Another famous nineteenth-century biologist, Professor G. J. Romanes, pondered long over “the inarticulate nature of the mind of Man” and gave it up at last as an insoluble mystery. Almost all later writers on Evolution have left it alone or dismissed it as Joseph McCabe did, as a “HISTORIC MIND” with the remark that “possibly Man’s intelligence developed through his having been forced to leave the trees and assume a weighty position and view the forestsmen as hands”. Which would not, in any case, account for his becoming aware of himself. Haekel, in THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE, was no more helpful. He thought we might find the solution of the enigma that intellect was a gradual development, but who were “not in a position to enter more deeply into the question.” Another eminent writer on the subject, Du Bots-Reymond, told the world: “We shall never know any more about it”. James Harvey Robinson, in MIND IN THE MAKING, confessed that we have no means of knowing when and where the first contribution to civilization was made and with it a start on the arduous building of the mind. Arnold Toynbee, in his monumental STUDY OF HISTORY, says bluntly: “The mutation of sub-Man into Man was accomplished in circumstances of which we have no record.”

Does Sir Arthur Keith’s “New Theory” help?

Now when I read the announcement that Sir Arthur Keith was to publish A NEW THEORY OF HUMAN EVOLUTION (Watts, 21s.) I felt very hopeful that fresh and clear light would be thrown by the human anthropologist on this dark gap in our knowledge. That expectation has been disappointed.

The value of his New Theory lies in its suggestions as to how “primal Man” during a million years or so grew into something very much like what we are to-day, and how during the last 9,000 years (the Post-primal period) humanity has continued to develop on primal lines. For example, Sir Arthur holds that the primates, living in separate in-breeding social units or groups, lived peaceably among themselves, but were in contact with all outsiders. They were not bound by ties of kinship, but by the fact that they shared the same territory. They strove to enlarp their territories, to become larger units by absorbing others, and so to form nations. Hence the nation building of recent ages, hence the inclination to hate rather than like “foreigners”, hence the patriotic attachment to a country and not to a tie of common ancestry.

Of course, all this will be contested by those who are convinced that the Human Race did not begin in a number of places at once, but agreed from a single centre, and that early Man was not ill-disposed towards his neighbours. It will infuriate everyone who maintains that the human race gives those far-off millennia improved out of all knowledge. The notion that men began to walk on two legs instead of four because they had to lift their arms to swing from branch to branch is opposed to the idea that they made the change when they had to come down to earth because of drought. Contrary to modern historical thinking is Sir Arthur’s belief that nations are formed because great masses of people long arend by for nationhood. So he is certain to find his New Theory challenged from many quarters.

Yet this is certain also: no one will twit him with being dull. There are sparks on almost every page. The book is immensely interesting, as a study of Man since he became self-conscious, but it scarcely touches the question of how did it become self-conscious? Sir Arthur attributes Man’s “evolutionary success” to his great brain, but “we are far from being in a position,” he says, “to explain the rise of the human brain. Into its instinctive centres there was a direct passage from the ape stage to the human stage, a magical feature which made all connected with life seen not only desirable but beautiful, but what the nature of the natural changes which gave the human brain these magical qualities may have been, we do not know.”

So there it is again—the awl that we are up against a blank wall. Sir Arthur leaves the unsolved mystery of Man just where it was.
DEBATES AND CONSTRUCTIVE THINKING
THE BASIC FUNCTION OF THE EDUCATOR

BY R. N. KHANNA

In our educational institutions there is nowadays evident a universal tendency to give a fillip to the debating faculty among the students in order to sharpen their intellect and thus make them leaders of men. One despairs to see how uninstructively we ape the worst and obloquy and ideas of the West.

It is to be questioned, first, whether the ability of taking up any point and arguing it credibly may not be regarded as a defect of learning in the nominal make-up of students. Debating does sometimes make a debater a megaphone, a weapon of offence and defence. But any system of education that aims only at this and ignores the fundamental problem of the development of human personality is foredoomed to end as mere moonshine and frippery.

The Hall-Mark of Intellectual Enquiry

Even in the debates held in our colleges the echo of Art for Art’s sake is heard in the hollow argument of argument’s sake. The champions of a particular side seldom believe in the soundness or rightness of the cause they espouse. That does not constitute justification for the matter of that, the audience either, because what is to be seen, spoken, or argued. The eloquence of the speaker is the capacity of the speaker. The speaker also is more concerned with winning laurels and adding a feather to his cap than with dissecting the subject. What is the result? For the students debate is merely an elevated pastime. They enjoy more the antics and pranks of the speakers than the cogency of his arguments. The speaker, also, on his part, is more concerned with carrying his argument through than with any constructive line of thinking.

The foremost pre-requisites of intellectual development is the habit of not allowing our bodily needs, our vital hunger, passions, jea-

lonies, rivalries and even our mental prejudices to obses and obscure the entire argument. Whenever the ego with its narrow parochial and competitive spirit finds an adequate outlet through the vehemence of the polemic stream of reason gets turbid and is left unrefined, or more precisely, complete exhaustion of egotistic activity is the hallmark of intellectual enquiry.

Psychologically speaking all these debates, chicaneries, dodges and counter-dodges constitute a surface agitation only and do not touch even the fringe of the deeper layers of consciousness. It is merely a continuance of the water with a stick, as a great voice remarked very poignantly. The people who organise these debates betray a woeful lack of insight into the human psyche.

But if our students are really to possess some solid acquirements, then an insight into the soul, which is the matrix of creativity, is imperative.

The Problem of Human Personality

In the West the problem of human personality has always abode all at
tention, because the psychologist has not penetrated beneath the surface to understand it. It is that something, with which is always the same behind the ever-changing flux of ideas, opinions, thoughts and desires, passions, hum.

In the apparent human being three threads seem to be inextricably interwoven and it is difficult to disentangle them for practical purposes— we mean the physical, the vital and the mental. In our haste we focus our attention on anyone of these and explain away the other two as its formations or deformations. But an eye that sees these things carefully and in their totality cannot fail to discern these elements in the texture of our humanity.

But none of them, nor even all of them together, can be said to constitute the human personality. Metaphysical consideration apart, it is the matter of experience that Life and Body are the raw material and are constantly given shape, direction and meaning by something behind them.

It is true that the growth of man means the efflorescence of the Mind principle and its increasing dominance over the violent energies of the Life principle and, through the mind, of the vital, even the physical. The mind seeks to organise the multitudinous vital impulses, holding them in check while releasing others always endeavouring to subjugate for the accomplishment of its own ideas.

But the mind itself needs a master to organise its perceptions and harmonize its conflicting ideas, otherwise it is bound to get amoral and its lesser passion, the passive recipient of the ideas that will perpetrate an escape or take their exit. It is this inner architect whom the seer-poet in
to the verily mind-bending of Sri Auro-

bindo's:

In the uncertain glow of human mind,
Its sea of unharmonised thought,
Crueldom's mountain-lined, Crowded with deep prophetical grots.

The Divine Psyche

With the advance of biological research in tracing the course of evolution the element of the fortuitous seems to have shrunk to the vanishing point. The consciousness of evolution gives unmistakable signs of a definite goal towards which things are moving. Bergson puts a very approximate question. ‘A very inferior organism in as well adapted to its environment as the human race could meet all its needs in the course of time but it would not be a conscious organism. It would not have a will. It would not have the power of memory. It would not have the power of reason. What would be its ultimate goal? Why would it not go on living?'

For Bergson this ‘thrusting force' is like some vital surge and hence he uses the word ‘Effervescence' to the skillful employment of means to the one end, the preservation of life. But the evolution of the ever-increasing and gradually sentient Life out of inert matter and, further, the evolution of conscious Mind out of subconsciously life and, in Man the mental being, is, a prerequisite of life were to emerge from the ‘twisted mentality into some plenitary supernal light and the habit of the “transformist” that this flux is a spark out of the flaming heart of the eternal that mounts upwards to higher and higher planes of being, consciousness and bliss.

But for a long time this tiny spark chooses to remain screened and exits its forward, may rather up

ward pressure, indirectly. It is this psyche that impels us to edify, purify and ennoble our nature. This is the Godhead pent in the more, the infinitesimal infinite, which in Sri Aurobindo's words, though appearing as

A little life wearing the flesh for robe,
A little wold winged through void to run
in reality.

Deathless, outmeasuring Space, out

shining Time.

This is the essential personality and all else is environmental, fleeting and can be thrown out at will. This personality of a man is the inner control which imposes itself on Mind and Body. Here is the idea that is ready to judge a man by his physical, vital or even mental appearances. A bear man may become fat and vice versa. A person who flies into a rage at the least provocation may become ice-cold, a man of exalted and vagrant habits can change into a frugal man. Similarly a man adhering to a particular set of ideas or ideals, may abandon them altogether and pursue others, discovering their insufficiency. There is nothing permanent about it. Our every way of thought is subject to change. These are surface details and none of them may bear the essential stamp of the personality. And yet there is something ever growing in us which sheds off sometimes even the ingrained traits as the serpent casts off its slough and grows a new skin. It is this that maintains a certain direction, in the development of a human being in spite of the numberless deviations, retrogressions, and periods of dor

money. So our basic problem is of detecting this inner being, hearing its voice, following its dictates, exalting all that shrudows and clouds and quiescing its full emergence.

The Creative Art ‘Par Excellence’

It is this indwelling deity that has to be awakened by the educationist. This innate reality is a dynamo that produces and creates. It transmutes our dross into the pure gold of divine outflowing. The first essential is the stilling of the passions and the making of the mind calm and so that no ripple disturbs it. This will, on the negative side, necessitate banishing the egotis

tic motives or ambitions, the spirit of display, the desire to gain advantage over the opponent and, on the positive side, receiving intimations from the deeper and higher well-springs and allowing them free passage without any intermixture of the lower nature.

This will be the creative act par excellence, the true source of constructive thinking. Such thoughts wing their way to the innermost sanctuary and kindles the flame of aspiration in the hearer's heart. All effective thought and word originate from a certain pose of the mind in which no desire, no passion is permitted to assail and disturb it and perfect inner harmony is an indispensable pre-requisite of any new and original light.

These ideas may appear antique and invite ribald laughter, but an effective thought and word will galvanize the common humanity will inevitably make us to plunge deeper into the human psyche.

Some sort of aksis (Yoga) has to be practised by those who aspire to initiate new thoughts-currents and movements. The more we quieten our imagination and repress our dreams, the more will this hidden person come to the front and raise all our powers and faculties to their summit of possibility and so pave the way for an integral development. As Sri Krishna Prem puts it: ‘The truth is that the reintegration and reordering of the human psyche about by Sadhakas has the effect of releasing unsuspected powers that were lying latent in the heart of the Sadhaka, as indeed they are in the hearts of all'.

AN APPEAL

To the Editor, “MOTHER INDIA”

Sir,—I am a voluntary social worker of many years’ standing, both for human and animal welfare.

In all probability you may have read or noticed my name in letters which have appeared in the press.

One of the difficulties I find is lack of public interest and support in no manner to the possibilities to dumb creatures on the open road in full view of passing people.

Therefore I am very desirous of knowing if, among your readers, there are any willing to form a club for exchanging opinions about this evil and giving suggestions for carrying out preventive measures.

Industrial Assurance Bldg.,
Churchgate, Bombay.

Yours truly,
MRS. E. KHAN,
What will happen to China is the question now on everybody's lips. The politician has no answer to give. The historian can only look with a heavy heart at the miserable plight of ancient China but assure no definite future for the Chinese and wishful thinkers, speculate in a hundred ways; but they lead nowhere.

In the meanwhile news has come that the communist armies of Mao Tse-tung's fleet are thrusting southward more and more. All negotiated peace talks—like that of Admiral Nimitz, the American Chief—have failed once again in Chiang K'ai-shek's Capital. But can Chiang with only his brave comrades stem the tide that comes sweeping from the North? It is very doubtful unless Providence comes to their succor. For, communist China has not only a fanatic, compact and ruthless military machine, it is Russia, but the active support of the powerful Soviet government. That is why we can say that the communist victories were made possible by Stalin's turning over to Mao Tse-tung the entire military equipment of the Japanese army of one million the Chinese won in Manchuria. The hope that Mao might prove another Tito has been dashed in the Chinese grief. The Chinese have lately about standing shoulder to shoulder with the Soviet Union and using trade with the West just for strengthening the communist economy still further. Against Mao nationalist China, after continuously fighting with the Japanese for more than eight years, physically exhausted and economically crippled, has her ideal and her dream of the future as the only comrade in arms.

The West's Policy

While she is thus placed, other nations, especially the western democracies, follow a policy of not "to precipitate a crisis but wait and see." The overall situation in China is undoubtedly very fluid and precarious: so much so that other nations naturally shrink from the idea of stepping in to aid her. To help China at this stage is an immense burden of risk and responsibility. Neither the U.S.A. nor Great Britain is prepared for that. Britain perhaps wanted to show her sympathy, as it is reported after the "Amethyst" incident, towards nationalist China but when it was found it was not far without the help of America. Actually a British writing in the Statesman has strongly urged the Chinese to take advantage of Democracy to come forward and help China take her ideal. Many in other countries feel in the same way.

American Trade Union leaders recently called for "prompt and adequate aid" to Chiang and agitating against trade with Red China. Not that anybody wishes to condone the corruption into which the Nationalist government had sunk: surely Chiang must be criticized for his autocracy as well as for letting commercialism be rampant and the masses be neglected. All these evils must be checked: but at the moment more urgent call is to thwart the impending Communist totalitarian regime and roll it back from China.

Russia's Strategy

The official policy of the U.S.A. seems to be firm with regard to the Marshall Aid countries. Accordingly, the three powers put up a stiff fight on the Berlin issue and ultimately succeeded in forcing Russia to lift the blockade. But one may ask, why did Russia at all agree to give up Berlin? It was not compelled, but prompted by a change of heart that suddenly came upon the Russian militarists and diplomats. It seems to be only a change of strategy; to open a second front, which it is already apparent to open with a second and more vulnerable one, and where the western powers would have no choice to make any assistance, even if given, immediately effective. The U.S.A. has to continue through the main stream of China and Burma and proceed as far as it is possible. This has not come as a surprise, for it was expected that if Russia met a stiff opposition in Europe, it would turn her attention towards Asia.

If Communist triumphs in China and South Russia, the Red China will redeploy its force, having gained control over immense man power and other resources, in Berlin and create fresh troubles in Europe.

What Should Be Done?

Thus if we are to think in terms of ideals and truth, instead of local and temporal advantages, we must think in terms of situations in a global perspective. Russia may be allowed to keep her own form of Government and ideals confined within her borders but she cannot by any means be allowed to force them down the throats of other nations and other countries. There she must be met with the strongest possible resistance.

If the Communist nations, America and France put their hearts together and give all they can—goodwill and material aid (on certain conditions which could be worked out and accepted by the nations concerned), they can perhaps save China whose people are still alive and whose soul is ever at work, the China of Luots and Confucius, the China that has made such a profound contribution in the field of humanity's noble achievements; more than a philosophy and a religion.

The Owl's Banquet

BY "MINERVA"

What is heroism? Balzac gives a very splendid illustration. "George Sand," he tells us, "is said to have finished one novel at 2 a.m., then taken a fresh sheet and started another. That is heroism." *

Balzac himself had plenty of the "heroism" in him. Consider his achievement. As Campbell Nairne puts it: "In twenty years he wrote more than seventy full-length novels, in addition to a vast amount of miscellaneous writing, and nearly every one of these novels is a masterpiece! Think what it means to make up the most impressive literary monument that has ever been raised by one man. Many artists have created a world within the world, but none of these extraordinary kingdoms have the scale and amplitude of Balzac's." *

Then there is the colossal era he took over his writing. To quote Nairne again: "Flaubert is commonly regarded as the arch-type of the martyr of literature, the man who sacrifices everything for their art. But Flaubert's world was the very limit of the most just did not involve greater labours than Balzac's freest proof-correction. Stefan Zweig describes the process in his book, Balzac (Gollan, 1934). "Balzac wrote the first draft at a furious pace, working as a rule between midnight and dawn. The next morning he would reread it in the morning and during the day it was set. Next morning Balzac would receive the proofs—printed on long, wide sheets with vast margins for corrections and alterations. If he was dissatisfied he attacked the manuscript text like a carpenter, finishing charging at the solid phalanx of the proofs. A sable-thrust with his quill and a sentence was torn away, the context flung to the right, a single word was squared and bashed to the left, whole paragraphs were wrenched out and others plugged in. We cannot wonder that the proofs were rejected and refused to set up more than an hour of Balzac a day, even when they were offered double wages. Balzac treated his second set of proofs in such a way. Often he demanded five or six "revises", and each went back in the same state as its predecessors." Zweig says that in the case of some of his books he reread the proofs-sheets as many as fifteen or sixteen times.

"It bore to the heart of all this proof-reading himself, and sometimes it swallowed up a large proportion of the money his publisher had advanced — money of which he was desperately in need. Why did he take such pains? The majority of critics have not known, and even Balzac himself had never altered a comma. The answer is perhaps to be found in Flaubert's meditation on the life of St. Bergote (who has been identified with Balzac himself). Every act of artistic creation, Prospero was to raise a man to a plane on which he obra gods live who govern another world ours — a world he may have known before birth and to which, perhaps, he will return." *

In view of the strange and secret founts of art, how egocentrically inexplicable that remark of Napoleon's: "Tell me that we have no literature now in France, I will speak to the Minister of the Interior about it." Art cannot be produced by legislation or socio-political means. What Napoleon needed was not an official policy with house-efforts but a Minister of the Interior of Man's Being! *

Art, besides being a mysterious activity, is also highly individual in the same that any attempt to make it fit a particular pattern of the State is the most likely to be killed — least of all can it flower and flourish if it has to toe a political party-line, as it has to do in present-day Russia. James Agate in his Ego 7 remarked: "Soviet Russia has not produced a composer fit to lick the hoofs of the Cherub list...I prefer Tchaikovsky's plays to dramas about communal wash-houses." For instance, Agate had no desire to see the recent splendid features of Chekhov: what he insisted on was the inadequacy of a narrow cramping preoccupation with attitudes towards art, an attitude determined either by a fixed doctrine or by the weather-cock of party-tactics. To what ridiculous weather-cock of party tactics can we not be returned in the following fact: the stories of the well-known Russian writer Zodchankin were recommended for a 100,000-copy edition on June 22 and then attacked and prosecuted on August 14 of the same year 1946! The fixed doctrine of Marxist socialism recently "Bolshevized." the whole world by denouncing one of Russia's greatest writers in the name of Dostoevsky, as a decadent unworthy of being read because he was "tainted with international cosmopolitanism."

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