

EDITORIAL

World Union

One of the questions I was asked during my recent visit to parts of eastern India was regarding the status of the World Union organization in the set-up of Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Interested elements or ill-informed individuals have raised certain doubts on the matter. Does World Union form part of the Mother's broad scheme to spread Sri Aurobindo's message or is it an independent organization associating itself with the Ashram?

The answer is simple and straight: World Union is a unit like other units started and functioning under the aegis of the Mother with the Ashram as their *centre*. Each unit has been assigned its proper role and scope. Thus, Navajyoti Karayalaya is charged with establishing and furthering the growth of the Way of Integral Perfection on the lines of Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's Teachings, in Orissa to begin with. They function in the fields of yoga, education, agriculture and commerce and are steadily widening their field of activity all over the state. Sri Aurobindo Society was entrusted with the work of propagating the Teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother all over the world and securing resources for the Work undertaken by the Mother—transformation of human life into Life Divine. Sri Aurobindo's Action is a kind of task force to bring Sri Aurobindo's social and political philosophy to the country at large and help find solutions to the problems of collective life in the light of this philosophy. World Union International is a movement specifically initiated to promote the realization of world unity on a spiritual basis as envisaged in Sri Aurobindo's major works, viz. *The Ideal of Human Unity* and *The Human Cycle*. The Mother has also directed that it should function as a platform for all who believe in human unity to meet and work together, irrespective of their religious or spiritual affiliations. That is how World Union International is today conducting its far-flung work, in close cooperation with a large number of international bodies working for this Unity though from different angles. Among the members and active participants of our programmes are followers of different faiths, different Teachers, men with different political ideologies. There are significant areas of human progress and welfare where followers of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother can and do work along with practising Christians, Buddhists, Vedantins, agnostics, communists and socialists. World

Union is just such a platform seeking to build bridges between different groups in the world under a common direction, a universal imperative—*human unity*.

Capital Punishment

"An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" may have been an effective norm for justice in primitive societies. But as humanity progresses, its concepts and standards of justice also undergo a change. Today punishment is no longer the sole end of "justice". A recognition that the erring individual can change and should be helped to change and atone for his misdeed is growing. Justice is now admitted to have a reformatory role. Under these circumstances it is difficult to agree with the advocates of capital punishment as the right course to adopt when the murderer is brought to book. Each individual is a soul that is evolving in a human body. The soul grows on each experience that the instrumental being (body-life-mind complex) undergoes. To cut off a life so laboriously nourished and shaped by evolving Nature—for whatever human reason—is not only an interference with the process of Nature but also with the career of the embodied soul. To keep the offending individual out of harm's way but to let him live so as to keep the door open for him to recognize and correct his wrong turn would seem to be more in keeping with the intention of the creative spirit.

Right to Suicide

In the same way, suicide cannot be permissible under any conditions. Usually the impulse to suicide comes under some acute disappointment, frustration or repentance. If, however, the person manages to survive that stress of the moment, the inherent will-to-be asserts itself. Suicide is an unnatural impulse. It solves no problem: for under the law of evolution, the very difficulty that is sought to be evaded by self-undoing presents itself acutely in the disembodied state of existence and once again in the next incarnation. One cannot lightly throw away an opportunity offered by terrestrial life. The soul within is betrayed and the Intention of Nature defeated.

What about cases of incurable diseases that bring prolonged agony in their wake? Is not euthanasia permissible for them? Sri Aurobindo discusses this question at length and asks: what does the soul feel about it? Does it want to continue despite the physical pain or does it want to be relieved? We do not know, and till we know that—he adds—we have no right to take away its life.

M. P. P.

THE SOUL AND THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

An Aspirant for Unity

When I first started working for World Union seventeen years ago, I laboured under the impression that while I might not have much experience in such an organization I was probably no less qualified than the next person to explain to people how to be peaceful and harmonious.

Let me first say a few words about how I came to work for World Union at all. I had for a number of years been yearning to come to the Ashram—impossible for family reasons. Even when the way finally opened for me, I was happy to be able to tell my relatives in a vague sort of way that I would be touring the East after attending a UNESCO conference on the great religions of the world in Manila at the end of 1959. I don't know what it is about the word UNESCO which transforms violent protests into subdued suspicion. So it was that I found myself listening to what the exponents of Judaism, Buddhism, Catholicism, Hinduism had to say for themselves and their religions. But my real goal was the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, in Pondicherry. I had written to the Ashram explaining why I would be arriving from Manila and for this reason, I suppose, was met by the then president of World Union. Presumably the assumption was that anybody attending such a conference would be interested in human unity.

Though I had had scant dealings with organizations, I was not against the ideal of human unity, so that when I was asked whether I would care to put my writing experience at the disposal of the magazine, and told moreover that Mother had approved the suggestion providing I was willing, there seemed no reason to refuse. Since my aim was to do yoga I thought I should accept any work put before me in the same way as I accepted any food which the Ashram provided for me but which turned out to be infinitely more to my taste than the work was.

I had always considered myself, and had generally been considered a fairly peaceable, easy-to-get-along-with person, but within a very short time I found myself having nightly fantasies of gunning down one of my World Union collaborators: it was the only way I could get to sleep. True, in the morning, awaking unrefreshed, I would think "Surely this cannot be right". But I did not have too much time to spend on the rights or the wrongs of the situation: before I could properly digest my breakfast I had to begin bracing myself for the daily encounter with my colleague. As the height of summer approached it became unbearable. I would sit on my scorching verandah and as soon as he entered the door the whole garden, the intense blue Indian sky, the coconut trees began to swim before my eyes. This too, obviously had had very little to do with the ideal for which I was supposed to be working.

I shall not go into the nature of our differences because though I can say that they had to do with temperament, background, approach to life and everything else under the sun, they had nothing to do with what was really happening.

Let me add that before I had this chance to live out my problems with him I would have crawled on my knees across a desert just to be with anybody who had chosen Sri Aurobindo's path.

So my first experience of World Union work was of disharmony within myself, and consequently with those around me.

How then did I manage to stay in the Ashram?

I suppose there is only one answer. Despite all capers of my ego and the illusion that my personal opinions were of the utmost importance, something deep within me was constantly trying to make itself felt. It was the voice of silence which had no opinions, which knew that the endless discussions and disagreements had nothing to do with it and that it had nothing to do with them: that it already possessed its unity and had never needed to look for it.

Outside, within and without the organization, disunity continued to be the norm. I remember the day on which the Ashram builders began to break down the wall between my house and that of my neighbour's in order to build a second storey on my neighbour's house. My Westerner's sensitive nervous system began screeching, "No, no", though nobody could have better neighbours than I had: three discreet and tranquil bachelors who were not at all interested in looking through the small and temporary hole in the wall at what I might be doing in my garden. What, again I asked myself, was I doing in World Union if I could not bear the possibility of a casual and probably sympathetic glance from my *guru-bhais*? What would I do when the Chinese burst my door open? Why, that was no problem at all; it never is. Either suddenly all the loving kindness which I had saved by not lavishing it on anybody around me would well up and stop the hand of the would-be assassin, or at the worst I would die a quick and heroic death. Anything rather than the slow one of discussing world unity and writing about it and watching it slip away through the hole in my neighbour's wall, or evaporate in the fierce heat which my colleague sent up a few degrees every time he came to visit me.

If I didn't immediately become conscious of the source of unity it slowly dawned on me why there was so little among nations, organizations, groups. They were all made up of people. People just like me. Eck!

Were we all doomed then?

Apparently.

And yet within remained the voice of silence, refusing to comment, entirely untouched by the chaos which it was taking me twenty-four hours a day to keep from being overwhelmed by.

It was even untouched by the First International World Union Conference for which I was, I can't think how, asked to be secretary.

What did my quite uncommenting inner smile make of this international World Union conference? As usual it made nothing of it. It made nothing of anything and made nothing

of nothing. Some frantic and busy outer personality wrote letters. The letters hinted vaguely at all the other interesting people who would be coming ("Lots of people will be coming, you'll see. You'll have a wonderful time."). It contacted people, solicited articles, even helped to book accommodations and was finally seen, on the eve of the opening, carrying on my arm all the dresses of one of the lady delegates through the streets when she abruptly decided she wanted to try the vegetarian hotel after all.

Early on the morning of the first day of the conference, the Member of Parliament who was to make the inaugural speech said to me over breakfast, "You've got my lectern of course." He said it as though it were the first task for the secretary of a conference to secure a lectern.

When I could speak I said, "No." I hadn't yet even counted the hired chairs.

He said, "Never mind. You still have two hours to find one." I could see that from the moment he'd been invited to give the inaugural address he had seen himself doing it with his speech resting on a lectern.

"I'm terribly sorry," I said, "and I'll do my very best."

"Oh somewhere in the Ashram there must be a lectern", he said amiably.

Ours is a well-provided Ashram. Mentally, I began to dash through the whole Ashram but could not remember having seen one anywhere. I wondered if there was one in some corner of Sri Aurobindo's room. I even thought of writing to the Mother to ask if the workshop could make one quickly. I left my breakfast and started my rounds of the school and the library.

"Have you got a lectern by any chance?"

"A what?"

I started trying to explain what it was and realized I couldn't even describe it very well. Each one I approached shook his head pessimistically.

When more than enough time had been given to this problem something sensible erupted in my head and said that the inaugural speech would have to rest on two cloth-disguised dictionaries on top of a table. And it did.

It so happened that the Italian Ambassador in Delhi, who had been visiting Madras in any case, had decided to come to the inauguration. This caused great excitement, as everybody would have liked him to say that his government had sent him. The poor man, very well accustomed to niceties of such a situation, got up and mumbled something about his government being very pleased. It also so happened that the only Italian in the Ashram at that time, who had been asked to look after him, had been stung by a scorpion during the night and was in a foul and unfriendly mood. During the speeches I made a note that the ambassador should be looked after and tried to remember if you called an ambassador Your Excellency. I needn't have worried—everybody was pushing over everybody else to look after him. And if I'd been in any condition to do so, I might have turned my thoughts to world unity.

And then what did my silent self make of all the world unity speeches that followed in the next days? Well there I must admit that not even my conscious mind could make anything of them. Perhaps, it was my old enemy the sun again, but I kept on falling asleep.

I would wake up just in time to hear the German delegate telling everyone how many books he'd written and how well loved he was in his native town. Since he spoke in German there were few to contradict him. He was in fact the most unmitigated and overweight bore of the whole conference, though he had some close seconds. There was the Englishman who insisted on riddling us with guilt for eating the modest, though well prepared conference meals by pointing out every day how much more we were eating than most of the world. But he didn't have a way with him, besides which he managed to eat his share. There were a number of *sadhus* and holy men and such-like who advocated their own mostly passive peace methods which for the most part consisted of such things as squatting in the middle of the road and obstructing traffic. They also managed to work in their pet theories on things such as the sanctity of cows and the nobility of *sati* (ritual immolation of the wife after the death of her husband). Wherever the delegates came from they all seemed particularly anxious that we know about the success of their efforts towards peace and unity. I can't remember anybody mentioning why, despite all these efforts, the world remained so violent, bloody and war-torn.

The conference finally came to an end, as it happens, on a most dismal note. As secretary I had been told that I was to give a "thankyou" speech. This seemed a simple enough matter, and since I'd already put in so many extra hours for the conference and was entirely exhausted it didn't seem necessary to sit up half the night preparing my speech. It wouldn't have made any difference to the unity of the conference or the world if I had, but I certainly might have saved some face. As I stood before the microphone, my addled brain suddenly could no longer remember who or what it had to thank. Exhaustion must have removed my mental conventions and something prevented me from throwing more than a sop to the waiting delegates. Instead I found myself thanking the sound technicians, the guest-house keepers, and all the people who had done the practical work. In case it sounds as though I'm proud of this final speech, nothing could be further from the truth. I spoke incoherently and in great discomfort which was augmented by the sight of my best friend asleep in one of the front rows and also by the entry—in the middle of the speech—by a round, fair-skinned little man in a Gandhi cap. There was a hushed silence which I did not understand, but which infected me so that I too fell into a silence, a bewildered one. Finally I faltered back onto course again. I was later told that I should have recognized the Mayor of Pondicherry and that I had missed my only chance of thanking him publicly for appearing at the proceedings—this, by the way, was his only appearance.

In the days that followed the First International World Union Conference the limp rag that I had become gradually ceased rehearsing the things that I said, had not said, had forgotten to say; the things I had done and not done; the people I should have invited but had forgotten to invite or invited at the last minute and in the wrong way. Blind and fumbling I turned back to the silence within.

Could it possibly have survived?

It had. Miraculously it was intact. I suppose it was then I realized that it must and would survive anything and everything. It had been at peace and undisturbed the whole time. Thus logically, but really and specially because I felt it in my heart, I understood that

this was the source of peace, that this was the source of unity and that it had never spoken for me except perhaps when I was silent.

I'm not quite sure how to end this. The moral is painfully clear. International World Union conferences are no better than anything else for generating peace and unity. But perhaps they are no worse. The illusion may be a little greater, especially in the intoxicating promises of inaugural addresses. Yet peace and unity will only come when we are all living and acting through that silent untouchable core of ourselves which has never lost its unity with the One.

In the meantime we continue to stumble through the absurdities of life, thankful for the respites in reality, that reality in which we shall ultimately find the totality of our being One.

There will be no January issue of *World Union* journal. Instead, a souvenir number in honour of the Mother's Birth Centenary will be released in February. It will be a joint issue. Special advertisement rates for this issue are given in "Focus".

NAGARJUNA AND MODERN THOUGHT

S. K. Bhattacharya

Modern thought in the West has brought about many challenges to our own thinking, and people like Joyce, Proust, Bergson and others have been responsible for a flight of inwardness and a directness of experience which breaks up well-articulated concepts of chronological time. They say that the boy, the youth and the man always experience fundamentally the same thing. The meaning of an incident often does not dawn on one until years after he has experienced and endured it; yet he can hardly ever distinguish the deposit of the years that are past from the experience of the present hour in which he is living. Do not all our experiences take place as it were at the same time? And is this simultaneity not really the negation of time? And this negation, is it not a struggle for the recovery of that inwardness of which physical space and time deprive us? To appreciate the contents of consciousness and interchangeability of polarized experiences in space, let us probe into the philosophy of Nagarjuna and find an answer which may be still relevant in our present day context.

In India around 100 A.D. A'svaghosha tried to work out a metaphysics of the indefinite from the ante-metaphysical Buddhism of the older school. He extracted the theory of the soul from soulless Buddhism, which has two aspects in it: as pure "thatness", and as undergoing the cycle of birth and death. The soul in reality means the totality of all things. Things appear in their individual form owing to the presence of the beginningless traces of incipient and unconscious memories of our past experiences in previous lives.

Nagarjuna, on the other hand, works out a theory of pure phenomenalism or nihilism. He holds there is no truth, no essence in any phenomena that appear. As the phenomena have no essence they are neither produced nor destroyed. They are merely appearances. Everything is in relation to some kind of position; but nothing has an absolute position by itself. Nagarjuna enters into elaborate dialectical discussion to show that all our concepts are relative and self-contradictory and, therefore, false. His conclusion, therefore, is the absolute denial of all reality. It is on account of the negative nature of his conclusion that he is called a nihilist or *sunya-vadin*.

In the *Pancakrama* of Nagarjuna the four gradations have been arranged in the following manner: the first is *Sunya*; the second, *Ati-Sunya*; the third, *Maha-Sunya* and the fourth, *Sarva-Sunya*. These are all different according to their cause and effect.

*Sunyan ca ati-sunyan ca maha-sunyam tritiyakam caturtham
sarva-sunyan ca phala-hetu-prebhedatah*

Panca-Krama [Page 20, A]

The first stage, Sunya, has been explained as light (*aloka*) according to Lalita-Vistara; it is knowledge (*prajna*) and the mind (*citta*) remains active in it. It is relative (*para-tantra*) by nature. In this state there are as many as thirty-three impure functions (*dosa*) of the mind; some of these are sorrow, fear, hunger, thirst, feeling (*vedana*), sympathy, self-analysis (*pratyaveksha*), kindness, affectionateness, fickleness, doubt, jealousy. This mental state of sunya has also been called the woman (*stri*) and it has been said that of all illusions the illusion of the woman is the greatest. It is also called the left (*vama*), the lotus of the lunar circle, the first vowel.

The second stage, Ati-Sunya, is said to be the manifestation of light (*aloka-bhasa*), which shines like moon-rays and proceeds from the former (*aloka-jnana*). It is called the right (*daksina*), the solar circle (*sunya mandala*) and the thunderbolt (*vajra*). Forty mental functions of defilement, such as passion, contentment, joy, pleasure, wonder, patience, valour, pride, energy, and greed, are associated with this state.

The third stage, Maha-Sunya, proceeds from the union of *prajna* and *upaya* or *aloka* and *aloka-bhasa* or *sunya* and *ati-sunya*, and it is called the intuition of light (*aloka-palabdhi*) and is of the absolute nature (*parinispanna*), yet it is called ignorance (*avidya*) and is associated with seven impure mental functions of defilement: forgetfulness, illusion, stupor, laziness, etc

Thus, *aloka*, *aloka-bhasa* and *aloka-palabdhi* are the three stages of the *citta* from which there follow the principles of impurities, numbering one hundred sixty in all. They function throughout the whole body during day and night with the flow of the vital wind, which has been said to be the medium (*vahana*) through which the impurities of nature function. It has been said that where there is the function of the bio-motor force or vital wind, nature with all its impurities is also brought along with it, and so long as there is the function of this bio-motor force or the vital wind, the principles of impurity will not cease to function.

The fourth stage, Sarva-Sunya (all void or perfect void) is free from the three-fold impurities mentioned above, and is self-illuminant. It is absolute purity obtained by transcending the principles of defilement. It is the purified knowledge, the ultimate truth, the supreme omniscience. It is a state which can be said to be neither without beginning, nor with beginning, neither without middle nor with middle, neither without end nor with end. It is beyond the categories of either being or non-being, merit or demerit, or even a combination or absence of both.

Thus, in Nagarjuna we have the complete realization of the interchangeability of polarized experiences turned into a precept where time and space and categories do not exist as separate entities.

SAVITRI: VEDA OF THE NEW AGE

M. P. Pandit

I am more than happy to bring to you all greetings from my countrymen in India. I am presently on a visit to your country to speak, to those who are interested, of the message of Sri Aurobindo and his collaborator, the Mother: the possibility of perfection of life for man.

Sri Aurobindo was a multifaceted personality. He was a scholar, a revolutionary, a social thinker, a poet, a mystic, a yogi, and a philosopher. Yet he always protested when anyone described him as a philosopher; he said he only formulated his spiritual realizations and experiences in intellectual terms for the understanding of the rational mind of humanity. But he was a poet from his very childhood, which he spent in England. He wrote his first poem when he was thirteen, and he always made poetry a channel for the communication of his spiritual experience. He would not agree with those who said art is for art's sake. He also questioned the notion that poetry should not be made an instrument for philosophy. He said poetry and the other arts could be channels for any experience of consciousness. To him, poetry was a powerful means for registering some deep experience in consciousness, a mode for giving concrete form to certain experiences at the spiritual and psychological levels. Unless experiences are concretized in word, they do not manifest that power which they have intrinsically.

He said further that poetry which records and holds the experience of the poet can also serve as an instrument to awaken the same experience in one who reads it. That is precisely the role of the mantra, the potent word, the word spiritual for which the Indian spiritual tradition is justly celebrated. A mantra is not something that has been concocted by the human mind, not a collection of letters, syllables, or words arranged at the whim of a composer. It is the *mot juste*, the exact word that comes out of the depths of one's consciousness, carrying a connotation, a content of truth that could not be expressed otherwise. That is the character of Vedic poetry in India. Each word is capable of unrolling vast spiritual experiences.

It is in this spirit that Sri Aurobindo regarded and cherished poetry. He recorded some of his major experiences in the form of beautiful sonnets, works published posthumously under the title, *Last Poems*. If one reads them and has a receptive mind, he can grow into these experiences.

This is an edited transcription of a talk given at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina on 28 March 1977.

And the major achievement of this poetic genius of the twentieth century is *Savitri*. I know that my host, Dr. John Collins, has made a deep and an organized study of this great poem, and I look forward to further acquainting myself with his work. As an introduction and a background, a panoramic view of the epic might be helpful.

Savitri is an epic in English of over 23,000 lines. It has grown during fifty years of Sri Aurobindo's life. It has undergone many revisions, some portions as many as twenty-one. There were days in the last year of his life when the flow of inspiration was such that he dictated 400 lines at a stretch; these constitute an important portion of 'The Book of Fate'. The story of the epic is not something original to Sri Aurobindo. There is a legend of Savitri in Indian mythology thousands of years old.

Therein, is a king called Aswapathy who has no issue, no child. And as was the custom in those days, he goes to the forest, renouncing his kingdom, and enters into a period of austerity, praying to the divine goddess to bless him with a child. And after ten or twelve years of severe austerities, the divine goddess is pleased to grant him a boon: that she herself will be born to him as his daughter. In due time a daughter is born, and she is named Savitri in honour of the goddess who blessed him.

She grows to womanhood, but such is the force of her divine personality that no suitor comes to claim her hand. Her father advises Savitri to choose her own mate, and eventually her choice falls upon a prince living in a forest with his exiled parents, who were once king and queen of another kingdom. When she announces her choice, a divine sage who is present, Narada, tells her that the prince, Satyavan, is to die a year thence. But she refuses to alter her decision and they are married. And at the end of twelve months the king of death indeed presents himself and claims the soul of Satyavan. But Savitri pursues the god of death and entreats him to return her husband; but he is adamant. As she follows, they come to a zone where there is a large river which no human being can cross. Yet by the sheer force of her purity of character she crosses the river, confounds the god of death, and prevails upon him to return her husband.

Now this, in short, is the legend of Savitri, narrated in the mythology of India in a number of versions with minor variations to emphasize the power of chastity.

Sri Aurobindo saw something more in the legend. The names of the main characters gave him a clue. In Sanskrit, Aswapathy, the king, means the lord of force—*aswa* is force, *pathy* is lord—one who has mastered his life-force, who wields spiritual force; and he alone is able to receive the divine grace and contain it. Satyavan, the prince—*satya* means truth—is one who carries the truth. And that is man; man is the being who carries the soul of truth in himself, having descended into this domain of ignorance and death. His father is named Dyumatsena, the lord of the shining hosts. He represents the divine mind which has lost its celestial kingdom of light, become blind, and been exiled because it too has descended into the realm of ignorance and falsehood. Savitri means that which is derived from the sun of Truth; it is a force, the grace of God come to redeem man from subjection to death, to conquer immortality for man. These are the significances of the main characters in the poem.

Aswapathy, the king and father of Savitri, is an unusual monarch. He is given to deep

contemplative movements; he is aware that changes of consciousness are taking place in him continuously, revealing areas of consciousness that are not normally open to man. Sri Aurobindo describes him as "Protagonist of the mysterious play/In which the Unknown pursues himself through forms". He is "a colonist from immortality" to this "little plot of our mortality" in order to establish the reign of truth. One day, overcome by this introspective mood, he enters "where the wings of glory brood". He stumbles upon the truths of creation, the graph of the creative pattern of the universe. Nature is surprised, stripped of her defense, exposed to the human eye. Many secrets of life in the universe become clear to him. He pursues the quest further and arrives at the true, divine centre of his being, the soul, where he feels at one with all others. Having arrived at this fount of all wisdom and power in himself, he extends his consciousness till "The island ego joined its continent". He becomes one with the whole universe. As a result, he experiences thoughts from others finding expression on his lips, his own thoughts running into the corridors of others' minds, he feels his heart beating in unison with the heartbeats of others. The emotions—the joys and griefs and pains and victories—of other people flow through his own heart and he is one with them.

This identity of consciousness that he has arrived at with the rest of the universe gives him an unusual power to shape the lives of men. Himself outwardly aloof, he still has power to control, to direct life-movements of others. It is on such an occasion of inner discovery that he happens to see a whole stair, a pile of worlds. He is seized with a desire to explore and acquire the knowledge of this series of worlds, issuing from the ground of earth, for humanity. He cuts the cord of his mind that ties him to earth and soars high above in his subtle-being, alone into the unknown, watched by Infinity. As he crosses beyond this earth-zone, he enters into a subtle physical world where he finds a new realm of harmony, a prototype of our own world. Everything that is on earth is there in its idealized form. He is fascinated; it is a world of beauty. Is the truth of life here, he wonders. But he finds that there is no movement, everything is at a standstill; it is like a still picture because it is a typical world where there is no evolution, no progress. So he sees that the truth of life can't be in this stationary world.

He continues his quest and enters another plane of existence, the world of little life, where life flows in small streams. Here are those little beings and spirits of life who plot against man unknown to him. They are the elementals in the life-world who cause confusion, accidents, and illness on earth and thereby enjoy themselves. It is they who, as spirits, mislead man through mediums and have a laugh at his expense. Aswapathy watches them, is amused, and goes ahead. He finds that the wave of life rises higher as he goes further, but still it comes down. He is intrigued and wonders why the force of life cannot rise continuously, why there must be death where there is life. He wants to find the secret, so he moves on.

He then comes across the greater beings and gods of the world of life who inspire large movements of ambition and heroism on earth. He admires these beings, but he is out to find the secret of the fall of life so does not dwell there long. Eventually he comes to a place where he sees a small, dark pit, and something tells him that here is the truth, the secret of the fall of life. He looks into that pit of night, and with courage plunges into it.

He finds beings with fearful visages on all sides ready to swallow him, beings "whose very gaze is a calamity". But he has the saviour name on his lips, and without being cowed down, he advances. He comes to a region where falsehood sits on a throne as queen, and human good and evil appeal to her as disputants of right. Egoism and ignorance are in attendance upon the queen of falsehood. Aswapathy is invited to join the court, but naturally he declines and moves on in that cave of darkness. Then he sees a ray of light coming from the opposite direction. It gives him heart, and he moves toward it. He sees that the single ray of light coming into the pit acts as a stab on the breasts of the beings of darkness. They writhe in pain when a ray of light touches them.

He passes out of the cave and enters into the little kingdom of the mind. Here the mind is just getting organized. There is the schoolmaster, human reason, sitting on a bench with pupils all around, asking everyone to accept his systematization. He invites Aswapathy to join his class, because he offers perfection and order. But Aswapathy does not listen. He proceeds and comes to realms where masses of thoughts, perceptions in the thought-realms, are seen; not single thoughts, but masses. He goes still further and comes to a zone which is the Self of the mind. He finds when he is there that the whole world looks like a shadow, and only that immutable Self seems real. Even movement appears a falsity. This is a capital experience in spiritual life which has held prisoner many mystics who conclude therefrom that the world is an illusion, that the static Self is the ultimate and sole reality. But something in Aswapathy tells him that this is not the ultimate. He waits; and in due time the greater glories of spiritual consciousness—light and power and joy—descend upon him. The "eagles of omniscience" and the currents of omnipotence crowd about him. And he comes across greater domains of the spiritual mind where the fair-footed goddess Inspiration moves, where Illumination lights his way, and where Intuition leads him upon the path of truth.

He goes ahead and ultimately comes to a region where the demiurges are at work creating the universe continuously. He perceives that the universe is not created once and is finished, but is a continuous creative movement. The demiurges are busy fashioning and maintaining the worlds. He goes still further and sees the many demiurges give place to a two-in-one reality—the positive and the negative, the dynamic and the static, the bipolar reality in one body. And as he watches, he realizes there is a single Existence. It is a divine puissance, a divine power which has a form and yet no form. He is convinced that the source of the universe is here, that all power and glory from here proceed. He wants to bring that glory down to earth. Why should it stay only on the summits of creation; let that glory and light be brought down on earth for man. He recognizes this divine power as the Divine Mother of the universe, and he prays to her. She counsels him to ask not the impatient prize, for truth descending too soon might break the earth; but to leave it to Nature in whom all things will be fulfilled in their appointed hour. But he asks how one who has seen her face can "rest content with mortal days". How can her children be left doomed for ages, leaving things to Nature? He pleads, and the divine puissance—who is worshipped in the East as the Divine Mother, the creative energy, the conscious force—gives him a boon, saying that the

divine grace will take birth on earth and redeem man from death. Aswapathy returns to earth satisfied.

The next part of the epic begins with a beautiful description of the six seasons, for we have six seasons in India; and one of the classical requirements of an epic is that Nature in all her seasons be represented. "All Nature was at beauty's festival"; it is the high-tide of spring and everywhere there is expectancy. And it is at this hour that Savitri is born to Aswapathy. As soon as she takes birth, there is a quickening of aspiration, of the poet's muse, of the creative energies all around; there is a sense of fulfilment. And the angels guard the missioned child.

She grows up, and wherever she goes, in whatever she says, there is an effusion of sweetness and love, a greatening and an elevation of consciousness. Nobody dares to claim her hand, so Aswapathy tells her to go forth and find him with whom she is destined to fulfil the purpose of her birth on earth. Alone in her chariot she leaves the palace early in the morning, before it wakes to find itself empty. She goes through forests and deserts, to palaces and villages, through fields and orchards; for many days she travels.

One day when she is about to cross from one woodland into another, she spies a young man standing at the edge of a forest. She stops her chariot. He advances, wondering who this woman could be. He says to her that he knows that gods come, at times, to earth, and asks if she is one of them and if she will tell him by what name she is known among men. She tells him her name and asks who he is. He answers that he is Satyavan, and that he was born and brought up in the forest, a friend of the plants and birds and animals, in a small hermitage by his exiled parents. They look into one another, their souls recognize each other and unite. She steps down from the chariot, picks a few wildflowers and with deft fingers weaves a garland, puts it on his bosom, and bows to him. That is the emblem of her word given, of their marriage, and she promises to return as soon as possible.

On the same day she was returning to her father's kingdom, the heavenly sage and divine minstrel, Narad, descends to earth. As he gazes down, the whole earth looks "like a glowing bowl/Tilted upon a table of the Gods". He sings the glories of God, the heroism of the soldiers of the Divine, and the victory of truth; he is joyous. But as he enters the earth-zone where pain, suffering, and unhappiness abound, his mood changes. He no longer sings of the glory; he sings of fate and he thinks of pain. He sees the kingdom, the palace and court of Savitri's father, Aswapathy, rising into the skies, and descends there, where he is welcomed to the full court-assembly of the king. He is given an honoured seat, and just then the princess Savitri enters, flushed and beautiful. So the sage turns and, as if he did not know, asks from where she has come. Her father motions to Savitri to answer, and she says that she has met Satyavan and has given her word to him. The moment she says Satyavan's name, a dark figure passes before Aswapathy's eyes, chased by an arrow of light. He understands its import, but he says nothing. Narad also notices and remains quiet. But the queen notes this hesitancy and asks the sage why he does not bless her daughter at that propitious moment. Still he says nothing. The queen becomes agitated, and asks that he say if there is something wrong so that her daughter can change her choice if necessary. As she importunes him, the sage finally replies by saying, "What help is in prevision to the driven?/ Safe doors

cry opening near, the doomed pass on./ A future knowledge is an added pain." Still, since she insists on him telling them what he sees, he says, "Twelve swift-winged months are given to him and her;/ This day returning Satyavan must die."

The sentence falls like lightning on the whole assembly. The queen-mother asks her daughter to alter her choice, but Savitri refuses. Then the queen forgets her royal dignity, and arraigns God and cosmic justice. She asks, if the innocent suffer for no fault of their own, where is justice? If there is a God, how can such a fate occur? How can pain exist in the world if God is omnipotent? Narad offers a long explanation which is the essence of "The Book of Fate". He says, "Pain is the hammer of the gods to break/ A dead resistance in the mortal's heart". If there was no pain, man would not bother to work or progress; because there is pain, he grows. Pain is thus a necessity for evolution. He explains what fate is, and underlines the free choice open to man: "The soul in man is greater than his fate"; "Man can accept his fate, he can refuse."

So "The Book of Fate" is an illuminating commentary on the subject of free-will and determinism. In Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, both free-will and determinism are truths that govern the life of man. Determinism governs the material plane, but as one moves in consciousness to subtler levels of existence, the rigidity of fate slackens. Man is increasingly free as he rises on the scale of evolution. It is an important truth. Each of us has a certain large determinism, a fate, but we have in our hands, if only we have the will, the power to overpass this fate. "The Book of Fate" in *Savitri* gives us a sense of that free choice.

The court adjourns on this note. The next day Savitri is taken by a royal company to the forest, to her husband, Satyavan. Each day, though a princess, she works in the small hermitage serving her husband and his parents. But one night, at the side of her husband, she is internally overcome by grief. She knows, though Satyavan does not, that each passing day brings the destined death nearer. She is deeply depressed. Then she hears a voice from the heights of her own being, "Why camest thou to this dumb deathbound earth. . . ?"; "Arise, O soul, and vanquish time and death." She answers, "My strength is taken from me and given to Death", and that she will follow her husband in death. The voice asks, "Is this then the report that I must make/ . . . before the Eternal's seat", that she who was sent to win immortality for man returns, her mission unaccomplished? She is stung to the quick, and asks what she can do. The voice says, "Find out thy soul, recover thy hid self". Savitri returns to normal consciousness and finds herself in her usual surroundings, still next to Satyavan, but her will is made: "She looked into herself and sought for her soul."

Savitri then enters into an inner exploration of her consciousness, even as her father had earlier done. She goes from level to level of being in consciousness, though she is obstructed by the denizens guarding the ebony gates of the inner universe. But she forces her way with a light within, and passes through the dark worlds. When she emerges, she sees a brilliant company of sages, seers, and gods rushing in her direction. She watches them, fascinated, and asks who they are and where they are going. They tell her that they come from her own birthplace, and are carrying succour to suffering humanity. Savitri asks them the way to her birthplace. They reply that she must find and go through a certain cave, wherein she will find a flame.

Savitri then begins the first ascent. She encounters a lofty figure, a woman with her feet planted on "a sharp and wounding stone/ A divine pity on the peaks of the world". Her face is worn, tears are in her eyes. She says to Savitri, "I am thy secret soul", the Mother of sorrow and grief. Because of her, man can endure suffering. Each time man suffers, a divine spirit suffers also and gives the strength to bear the suffering. But Savitri observes, "thine is the power to solace, not to save". She passes on, and sees the Mother of might, seated with a trident in her hand, "Her feet upon a couchant lion's back". There is a gleam in her eyes, laughing "heaven-fire". The woman says, "I topple down the thrones of tyrant kings" and "To the strong I bring the guerdon of their strength"; she guards the truth. Savitri acknowledges this but notes that strength without knowledge, power without light does not save. She says further, "One day I will return, a bringer of light . . . Thy wisdom shall be vast as vast thy power". Savitri proceeds and enters a tranquil air where, in a beautiful light, sits the Mother of light who helps man to understand. Savitri says, "Because thou art, the soul draws near to God . . . And knowledge walks unslain in the pit of Night." But, she adds, the light of the intellect is not enough.

Onward Savitri moves and finally comes to the Mother of love; for the ultimate power that will save the world is love. Not knowledge or strength, but love is the greatest power in creation. Savitri comes to a narrow passage through which she enters, and there in a dark cave is a flame. She looks into the flame, and in it sees her own image. The human Savitri and the divine Savitri in the flame look upon each other and become one.

When she wakes, Savitri finds an inordinate strength in her being; she is now equal to the demands of fate and waits confidently. When the appointed day arrives, she is ready. She asks her husband's mother if she can accompany Satyavan to the forest when he goes to fetch fuel, and permission is readily given. Hand in hand, Savitri and Satyavan enter the forest, and he points out to her the birds and animals and trees that are his friends. After some time, he takes out his axe to do his work, and singing a chant, he begins to wield it. Suddenly he is stricken with pain; it subsides and he resumes. But then it returns, and he flings away his axe. He turns to Savitri and cries, "a pang/ Cleaves through my head and breast as if the axe/ Were piercing it and not the living branch./ Such agony rends me as the tree must feel. . . ." He falls into the lap of Savitri, saying, "Lean down, my soul, and kiss me while I die." But even as "her pallid lips pressed his,/ His failed".

She becomes aware of a third presence. Savitri looks up and sees the black figure of death. Relentlessly he draws the soul of Satyavan from his body, and with it moves away. Savitri leaves her physical body, and in her subtle-being follows. It is a unique procession—in front, the soul of Satyavan, then the god of death, followed by the subtle-being of Savitri. As they move ahead, the original greyness of Satyavan's soul is gradually shed, and it becomes luminous. They pass through subtle worlds to a place where there is no path. For a time, Savitri loses sight of the other two, but she doggedly pursues and again finds them. Death turns back and tells Savitri that she is a creature of earth and must go back, that she has no business in these realms. But she answers that she will only return with Satyavan, and not without him. The Lord of Death refuses, and says that her love is only an illusion; that when she goes back to earth new loves will spring forth and she will forget the old one.

She does not listen but persists in following them. Then Death tells her that there really is no God-or Truth. She need only look below at the earth for proof. And he conjures up a vision thereof. She is shown the unrolling of history with its events and ideologies, each system claiming to be the sole truth. Dynasties arise and disappear in a continuous movement; all perishes. And then he asks her if she can now see that there is no truth in life, that everything ultimately rests in him, all finds its refuge in death. So, he concludes, she should leave Satyavan to him.

Then ensues "The Debate of Love and Death", which discusses the extant philosophies, ideologies, and approaches to truth. And ultimately, seeing the persistence of Savitri, Death demands that if, as she says, she has a divine mission and power, that she reveal it: "O human claimant to immortality./ Reveal thy power, lay bare thy spirit's force". She does not answer, but "In a flaming moment of apocalypse/ The Incarnation thrusts aside its veil." A light emanating from her being surrounds and besieges the figure of the King of Death. He calls upon his ally Night for help, but Night recedes; so too Hell. He looks to the Inconscient for support, but it fails. And, like a moth, the King of Death is "eaten by light".

In the next book, a radiant god urges Savitri in sweet tones to come to realms of bliss and peace eternal. She sees the being is nothing but Death with its mask torn off, and declines the offer. The god continues to try to convince Savitri to accept the opportunity to live in this highest realm that few beings can reach, but then "She heard a million creatures cry to her" from earth. Again she says she must return and asks: "Thy sweetness give to me for earth and men". It is then that the radiant god says, "Thy thoughts are mine, I have spoken with thy voice. . . . All thou hast asked, I give to earth and men". He bids her to go back with Satyavan to accomplish their mission. As he speaks, Savitri finds herself plunging downward; approaching the green belt of earth, she feels its warmth. And soon she wakes again upon the earth. Satyavan is asleep in her arms. As she looks at him, he opens his eyes and asks if it all was a dream. Savitri replies, "Our parting was the dream;/ We are together, we live. . . ."

And as they are returning to the hermitage, they hear the noises of a vast company in the forest around. The queen and the king (who has by now recovered his sight and his throne by a boon Savitri won from the God of Death) have come with a party in search of Savitri and Satyavan. They meet, and Dyumathsena lovingly chides them for being so late returning. Then a wise man amongst the retinue, finding a radiant glow on the face of Savitri, asks her the secret of that glow. She replies, "Awakened to the meaning of my heart,/ That to feel love and oneness is to live/ And this the magic of our golden change/ Is all the truth I know or seek, O sage." Wondering at her words, the whole company returns as the moon shines splendidly in the skies, and the night "in her bosom nursed a greater dawn".

The epic opened with the symbol dawn, and ends with the promise of a greater dawn. For no night is final; night always nurses dawn in her bosom.

This is an outline of the epic that is *Savitri*. It may be considered a testament for the new age, summing in itself all that the human spirit has achieved so far, and giving a direction to the future, offering hope to the questing spirit of man.

THE MORIBUND STATUS OF MEDICINE AND THE HEALTH DELIVERY SERVICES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Henry Winthrop

1. The New Muckrakers

Exposures of professional immorality, unethical professional behavior, professional irresponsibility and professional incompetence have been on the increase in recent years. I am referring, of course, to these events in American settings. These exposures are examples of what may be said to constitute the rebirth of the muckraking tradition in American life.

There are several unique features of what we might call "the new muckraking". Among these features the following should be emphasized. (1) Our new muckrakers tend, *on the average*, to be even more scholarly than those who were so active in our own muckraking era at the turn of the century. They tend, as in the past, to be more often either (a) highly competent, investigatory journalists, (b) free-lance writers with deep and tenacious interests in certain, specialized areas or (c) intellectually impassioned individuals who are unlikely to be in academic life but who exhibit active research interests relevant to the public interest—research activities that are conducted in new types of research institutions in the private sector, such as Ivan Illich's Center for Intercultural Documentation (CIDOC) in Cuernavaca, Mexico. In connection with the preceding considerations, it should be emphasized that the non-academic muckrakers of the early twentieth century showed considerable erudition in their muckraking activities. After all, Upton Sinclair, Lincoln Steffens and Ida Tarbell—to mention only one trio of early muckrakers—were no slouches at scholarship. But the muckrakers of recent years have had to exercise their scholarship within settings that have been much more complex than those that faced our turn-of-the-century muckrakers. The result is that the exercise of scholarship is now more contextually difficult, more time-consuming, and more demanding intellectually. In addition, the modern muckraker has to possess a far wider range of skills than his predecessors. Without these skills he cannot cut through to the facts that so many others wish to conceal.

Returning to some of the unique features of modern muckraking, let us also note the following. (2) There are more muckrakers today than there were at the turn of the century. (3) There are many more specialized settings through which the modern muckraker has to plow than was the case for his forebears. (4) There are now more institutional barriers to efforts at getting at the truth in our complex society than was the case in the first two decades of the twentieth century. (5) There is now a larger, a more sophisticated and a more concerned audience for the muckraker than ever before. The modern, non-tabloid newspaper that

publishes for an intelligent and civic-minded audience, such as *The New York Times* and *The Christian Science Monitor*, and the serious, public-spirited TV documentary lend him more support than he could have obtained from the mass media in the early part of this century.

The new muckraking tradition has, I believe, been most effective in describing the departure from professional ethics in some of our major professions and the betrayal of the ideal of serving the public interest that so suffused the characters of The Founding Fathers. The current venality and corruption of lawyers is now quite notorious and well-known to members of the American public. They have been apprised of this fact not only as a result of the Watergate hearings but also as a result of a rash of newspaper exposures of hundreds of venal and corrupt lawyers all over the nation—both in government and in private practice. This change of professional status, from the integrity and civic virtue of the legal profession in the early history of the republic to one with a pronounced image of rascality and trickery, is a sad fact of American life today. It has resulted in great public resentment of the legal profession, described by the syndicated columnist, George Will;¹ a resentment so great that several American figures who were seeking the nomination for President in 1976, took to emphasizing *that they are not lawyers*. One of these was Jimmy Carter, the former governor of Georgia, a farmer and an engineer. It has also resulted in something much worse, namely, loss of faith in the integrity of both politicians and public servants, cynicism and skepticism over party platforms, political promises and efforts at platitudinous optimism and, finally, an unwillingness on the part of approximately 50 percent of the electorate to vote in our national elections.

But it is to be noted that the public reaction is one of *resentment only*. This is because the taxpayer feels victimized and cheated and not because he is aglow with a passion for justice or outraged at the lack of professional ethics among many lawyers, particularly those in the federal and state governments. The American had been deluged previously with knowledgeable and well-researched examples of the lack of ethics on the part of many attorneys, but he has remained indifferent to the literature of exposé. Three well-known examples of volumes in this area are by Mayer,² Bloom³ and Goulden.⁴ These have hardly made a ripple in outraging the American over the lack of professional ethics in the legal profession. The American public did not begin to voice its outrage seriously until Watergate and the hundreds of other exposures of corrupt lawyers all over the nation, that followed thereafter. Current American concern reflects more chagrin over being duped than a functional and positive sensitivity to, and demand for, ethical behavior among members of our major professions.

But the venality, immorality, irresponsibility and incompetence of many American physicians is, I think, more important and more interesting than the corresponding vices among attorneys. This is because the traditional and popular image of the lawyer has always been a negative one while the traditional and popular image of the physician has been a distinctly positive and respectful one. This, of course, is ceasing to be the case as national exposure of the unethical behavior of many physicians is being brought more and more into public view. As of this writing the venality, corruption and incompetence shown by American physicians and other members of the healing professions, who have bilked Medicaid—the government program that provides health services to the poor—has just been exposed

as a major national scandal. Not only has the country been robbed of billions of dollars for health services never given or given sloppily and unprofessionally, but the poor themselves, the "beneficiaries" of Medicaid, have been deprived of the medical care which they both needed and sought.

Gross⁵ has provided perhaps the best treatment of the venality, incompetence and irresponsibility of many American physicians, gathering this material chiefly from medical journals and reports themselves. One result of the increasing public recognition of this medical incompetence and irresponsibility is the record number of malpractice suits that are now filling up the American courts. Efforts to reduce or eliminate physician incompetence and irresponsibility would be more to the point. But professional *esprit de corps* stands in the way. Nevertheless, *some* progress is being made as may be seen from an occasional feature story in an American newspaper.⁶

Gross has written what is, perhaps, to date the best, most extensive and thorough, most knowledgeable, most dispassionate and most scholarly volume on the inadequacies of the medical profession. Although his volume, *The Doctors*, will impress most laymen, there will be some contemporary readers who may hold the opinion that Ivan Illich's⁷ recent volume, *Medical Nemesis*, is the front-runner in this type of critical literature. It is not important, of course, to decide this issue here. As I have already remarked above, Gross drew his material almost exclusively from medical journals and official medical reports, particularly the Trussel reports published by the School of Public Health and Administrative Medicine of Columbia University. Gross has limned just about the entire spectrum of sins and vagaries of modern medicine. By quoting from doctors criticizing other doctors, Gross finds the medical profession hoisting itself by its own *petard*. After the volume became a best-seller, I was told that some outraged members of the AMA arranged for a debate on TV, to challenge the author's claims. Although I, myself, missed this TV program, my informants have told me that Gross literally "made a monkey" out of the representative of organized medicine. I find no difficulty in believing this description of the outcome, given to me by my informants. I cannot imagine how any apologist for organized medicine could possibly fail to be "snowed" by the vast erudition Gross reveals in his book, a project that took him several years. In addition, he was in a position to draw upon other examples of his medical erudition, while he was on TV—examples from his vast storehouse of ammunition, that he may not have included in his volume at all. His reading has apparently been so extensive that, in order to produce his book, he must have had to winnow away a good portion of the factual material that he had accumulated.

As a result of the fact that the masks of virtue are being removed from the faces of many medical practitioners, they are seeking to weasel out of the public and professional consequences of their unethical activities and professional misbehavior by a variety of defense mechanisms so puerile as to be almost unbelievable. It is interesting to note just a few of the ways in which members of a professional group in American life seek to cover up the public exposures of corruption and lack of integrity upon the part of those among them whose betrayals have been brought to light. Let me illustrate what I mean, by electing to discuss *only the medical profession* in this connection. Its reactions are, I believe, re-

presentative. The misdeeds and abuses by physicians have been perpetrated chiefly under Medicaid⁸ (which we have already briefly characterized) and Medicare.⁹ Medicare is the health insurance legislation whose provisions are carried out under the Social Security Program administered by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW).

2. Unethical Medical Practices: How They Are Defended, Excused and Rationalized

Physicians and others testifying recently before a congressional committee whose investigators unearthed the abuses now prevalent in Medicaid, have tried to soft-pedal the unethical aspects of their behavior by *indirectly* blaming the federal government for their misdeeds. They have first of all charged that the patient burden is too great for the few clinics that receive governmental reimbursement for their services and that this forces them to engage in sloppy and unethical medical practices. Among such practices are improper and incomplete medical examinations and hastily written prescriptions based upon guesswork—prescriptions from which physicians receive “kickbacks” from the pharmacists to whom they refer their patients. They insist, of course, that in order to reduce the impossible patient caseload that has been thrust upon them, the federal government should establish more clinics. They also blame the federal government for not creating more jobs for government investigators so that the government can look into the behavior and practices of the medical staff of clinics that handle a substantial volume of Medicaid patients and, thus, presumably prevent abuses before they occur. Finally, they assert the legislation governing Medicaid is so full of loopholes that the government must, itself, be blamed for throwing the temptation to engage in unethical and unprofessional, medical behavior in the path of physicians.

This last argument is an index to the ethical insensitivity of the wrongdoers involved. It is like an argument to prevent auto thefts that used to appear on American TV. The TV argument urged car owners to lock their cars and make sure that they did not leave their car keys in their cars in full view of passers-by. Such negligence, the argument ran, throws temptation into the path of youngsters who are interested in stealing cars. By leaving car doors open and leaving keys in full view, the owners are creating what the Catholic Church would call “the occasion for sin”. When, thereafter, young thieves are caught, the situation must be blamed on the moral negligence of car owners.

Such an argument would have been laughed at and scorned in the recent American past. The fact that it is made today and taken seriously by TV viewer-listeners is an indicator of the feebleness to which moral sensitivity has currently sunk in American life. The car owner is, of course, guilty of failing to take care of his property. An insurance company could immediately claim that the car owner had been negligent. But that failure would never lead to theft in a community of honest citizens. The real, moral issue is being clouded by this TV ad. A moral outlook and a penchant for honesty do not disappear when those who possess such virtues face a situation in which dishonesty may be easily practiced without fear of discovery. Discovery of car theft tends to be substantially reduced, since the stolen cars are usually sold to garage owners who overhaul them behind closed doors, so that they cannot be identified. They then sell them to used car dealers.

Equating the negligence of the owner in not taking care of his property with responsibility for the dishonesty of the thief, is patently absurd. Our point is that the argument of Medicaid physicians trying to exonerate themselves of moral blame, by pointing to the poor legislation now governing Medicaid, that tempted them to practice unethical and unprofessional medical behavior, is analogous to the argument of the TV ad. It is equally absurd.

The unethical, immoral and illegal behavior of physicians and medical laboratories, receiving Medicaid payments from HEW, has been so scandalous that denials of such behavior have been few and far between.¹³ It is not the behavior that is denied but chiefly the responsibility for it. What those who are charged with it do is to deny responsibility, by asserting that they did not know what others were doing who sent patients to them and they were therefore "set up". Almost all cases of Medicaid fraud involve denials of personal guilt and claims by the physicians who have been accused of unethical behavior, that the fraud was perpetrated by the schemes of other individuals—schemes that they had not realized were being used and schemes of which they were the intended victims who would be charged with guilt should such schemes be discovered.

The greatest scandal now occurring in the medical profession, however, is not the immorality discovered in Medicaid and Medicare. It is in the discovery of how widespread incompetence is among medical practitioners in *private* practice. It has been brought to national attention via the mass media but particularly in special documentaries on TV. So widespread is this incompetence and professional irresponsibility in private practice that many legal suits have been filed against physicians for money damages. These suits have been filed by patients who have been harmed in one way or another by the misdiagnosis or improper therapy of their doctors or by unnecessary or incompetent surgery at the hands of surgeons. As a result insurance companies covering doctors against possible malpractice suits have been forced to raise their premiums to record highs. Many physicians have taken to blaming attorneys or the courts for the present situation. In particular, they feel attorneys encourage such litigation because of the handsome fees they can derive from the high damages that may be awarded. It should be noted, however, that attorneys, judges and juries—when participating in malpractice suits—find awards for patient-litigants almost always on the basis of the medical facts involved. Courtroom rhetoric and histrionics do not play very effective roles in situations of this sort. For this reason the claims members of the medical profession are making in their own behalf should be taken with a grain of salt.

We began this section by stating that it would be interesting to examine some of the ways in which professional groups react to the exposure of incompetence, irresponsibility, corruption and lack of integrity of some of their members. Such corruption and lack of integrity is a clear-cut betrayal of the democratic ideal that rests upon the trust we have that each group and all individuals will do what is expected of them in relation to the public interest. Let us then examine the reactions of physicians to the exposure of incompetence, corruption, lack of integrity and irresponsibility of which a considerable number of their members are guilty.

Some physicians and surgeons have reacted to the malpractice situation and the high insurance premiums now required, by giving up entirely the practice of medicine or surgery,

or both. Others have decided to institute class-action suits to bring about a change in the legislation governing malpractice, hoping as a result to reduce not only their liabilities and thereby the size of the insurance premiums to be paid, but also ensuring that no public spotlight will be focused on their professional activities. In many cases the insurance companies are refusing to insure physicians and surgeons at all, with respect to certain types of illness and surgery, because of the legal record of guilt that has been established in numerous court cases and the large number of suits that have been settled in favor of the plaintiff-defendant. Such class-action suits can be classified as remedial only.

Only a few years ago, in a novel, the public was given a highly insightful and dramatic picture by Lipsky¹¹ of the nature of malpractice suits, the types of claim and litigation that are involved, and the pronounced *esprit de corps* among physicians that makes it so hard to prove malpractice in medicine. Malpractice suits can, of course, be abused, and the possibilities for such abuse are dramatized in Lipsky's novel. However, true and serious lapses from medical ethics and from professional skill and behavior also occur—lapses which have considerably harmed many patients—and it is such lapses that have brought on recent malpractice suits in which damages have been found for the plaintiff. Lipsky's novel brings home forcefully the types of lapse and irresponsibility that *may* occur, quite apart from whether any given plaintiff's charges may be true or false, accurate or substantially distorted and quite apart from whether a suit filed comes from an injured and well-intentioned patient or a litigious one.

However, the most widespread reactions on the part of many physicians have been preventive in intent. Some doctors now refuse to discuss a patient's condition with him at all or refuse to identify or label it for him. Instead, they assume an authoritarian stance and expect the patient to honor unquestionably his doctor's diagnosis, to do what he is told with respect to medication or self-care at home, to take off-the-cuff advice with respect to a change of diet, cessation of drinking or smoking, etc. This holier-than-thou attitude results in strange professional behavior, since many physicians—such as Alvarez,¹² Vickery and Fries¹³ and Rothenberg,¹⁴ to name but a few—go out of their way to discuss the explanation of, and treatment for, illness or surgery and do this on a large scale by writing books on the subject. These are intended strictly for the layman as patient.

In fact, the American Medical Association itself recommends that dialogue with laymen concerning illness be instituted at all times, and has done so through a volume edited by Bauer¹⁵. In fact, the classic and popular work on medicine and biology, by Kahn,¹⁶ was written largely for laymen. There is, in fact, a vast, medical literature on communication with laymen. Consequently we can assume that the physician who likes to play at being a dictatorial god is probably somewhat unsure of himself professionally, mediocre in diagnosis, afflicted with a preference for assembly-line, off-the-cuff treatment of patients and prefers to deal with poorly educated, emotionally dependent, fearful and worried patients. These can be counted upon to be seen, auscultated, medicated and not heard. In fact these physicians try to compensate for poor diagnosis by overprescribing a variety of *materia medica*. They not only overmedicate their patients but medicate them unnecessarily and often improperly. These latter indictments are the substance of a recent and important volume by Illich.¹⁷

Other doctors seek security in having to defend themselves against *possible* malpractice suits by running a dozen or more clinical tests, via their own or outside laboratory staffs. Some physicians declare that the results of some of these tests cannot always be interpreted unambiguously. A number of physicians hold that at times many of the tests routinely given to patients are unnecessary and critics of Medicaid have asserted that a number of them are given almost wholly to generate additional income. Still other doctors allow relatively poorly trained laboratory personnel or nurses of limited background to report the results of clinical tests, so that if these should later prove to have been profoundly erroneous, they can disclaim incompetence and merely take responsibility for *relying* on an incompetent nurse or laboratory assistant. This, they feel, will put them in the clear, since they mistakenly believe that they cannot be held legally responsible for relying on a nurse or laboratory assistant who subsequently proved to be incompetent. We also find that many physicians do not want the pharmacist who fills their prescriptions to identify the contents on the bottle or container label. Most of the prescriptions, according to Illich,¹⁸ are unnecessary, reflect more a money-making habit than a medical necessity and, in many cases, produce side-effects that are worse than the original complaint that brought the patient to the doctor in the first place. Illich claims that the medical profession is producing a larger amount of iatrogenic pathology than it is dissipating.

Finally, many physicians do not want educated patients—college graduates, teachers, well-read businessmen, lawyers, etc.—for two reasons. (1) This type of patient usually insists on having the doctor discuss his conditions with him, something that the authoritarian physician is reluctant to do and (2) this type of patient is likely to read medical literature—some popular, some professional—in order to understand his illness and help himself. Here again, the authoritarian physician balks because to him this increases the likelihood of a malpractice suit if, in fact, his assembly-line procedures result in incompetent or irresponsible diagnosis and treatment that will be so recognized subsequently by the patient.

Reinforcing the attitude of refusing to discuss the patient's condition with him, is the myth and hypocrisy kept alive by medical organizations, that *only doctors* are capable of making judgments related to the practice of medicine. The layman, it is argued, cannot understand a medical textbook or medical literature, cannot follow a diagnostic line by reasoning and cannot apply what he reads to himself. Clearly this is poppycock.

It is first of all contradicted by the fact that medical doctors, themselves, write books and syndicated columns for the layman. They, thus clearly assume that laymen can comprehend medical writing. Further than this is the fact that the argument would make no sense if applied to the physician himself. Before he earned his M.D.—while, in fact, he was in medical school—he was *still a layman*. Yet his medical school teachers assumed that he could understand his own textbooks. Surely if he could do so as a layman, then we have every right to assume that other intelligent laymen can also read and understand medical textbooks and medical literature. Finally, the superiority complex of the physician who takes the attitude I have mentioned, ignores the fact that he learned some of his medical knowledge from some Ph.D.'s—not M.D.'s—who taught certain courses in medical school.

The chances are then that the argument about medical understanding being possible

only to M.D.'s is a facade both for professional insecurity and intellectual pretentiousness.

The intelligent patient who reads is likely to become more aware of medical incompetence and irresponsibility and is a high malpractice suit risk. The authoritarian practitioner in many cases tells this type of patient to take his business elsewhere. In this way the assembly-line type of physician relieves himself of malpractice worries. One result is that his clientele tend to be chiefly poorly informed patients with little education and no propensity to stop looking at the physician in an idolatrous fashion. The poorly educated patients that the authoritarian physician prefers, then become well-trained and well-conditioned sick animals. But they cease to be human beings when in the hands of the authoritarian-type physician who is concerned less with healing than with making money by assembly-line methods of treatment.

It is difficult for young and healthy Americans to realize what incompetent and irresponsible physicians can be guilty of. Let me cite a few illustrative cases that have come to my knowledge. (1) I have learned of a woman suffering from glaucoma whose ocular pains—before anyone knew what her condition was—were diagnosed as headaches and who was told to go home and try to get more sleep so that these headaches would disappear. (2) A case was brought to my attention of a schizophrenic who had threatened suicide for months and who was told over and over again to behave herself and grow up. At the same time the girl's parents were told that she was just trying to get attention and she should be ignored so that she wouldn't be spoiled. Subsequently she did commit suicide. (3) Nothing could be more infuriating than the case of a male who was treated for many years for a sinus condition and who was subsequently told by both a careful radiologist and by the author of a well-known, medical textbook on otolaryngology, that he did not have a sinus condition at all and had never had one. (4) Finally, there is the case of a woman who was told that she was perfectly normal after a glucose-tolerance test had revealed that she gave the standard, blood-sugar curve for severe diabetes.¹⁹ In this last case another six years passed before the true condition was correctly diagnosed by another physician who was more competent and responsible than the first one had been.

Much of the incompetence and medical irresponsibility now being widely reported in the U S A reflects the fact that the typical run of medical schools over the last two to three decades had exercised inadequate admission standards, inadequate training, or both. But the real point of the preceding discussion is the childish and contemptible ways in which physicians are responding to the discovery of the incompetence, lack of integrity and lack of responsibility, exhibited by not less than 10 percent of the profession, as revealed by a variety of studies. The AMA, itself, reports that 5 percent of all practitioners are alcoholics, drug-addicts, or mentally unstable. Most members of the medical profession handle the spotlight that has been cast upon the behavior of their errant minority by such mechanisms as Freudian denial. Some of those who are guilty of incompetence and irresponsibility seek flight from the profession, seek to shift the responsibility for their immoral and incompetent behavior to others, or try to avoid the care of thoughtful, knowledgeable and educated patients. *Whom the gods destroy, they first make mad!*

3. Immoral Aspects of Our Health Services Delivery Systems

The individual physician is not the only party who may behave improperly within the context of health care and medical treatment or react childishly and irrationally to criticism. Thousands of *individuals* affiliated with groups concerned with either the prevention of ill health or with groups and organizations connected with its treatment, react irrationally to moral criticism. So, too, do organizations concerned with health insurance, hospital care or the determination of the costs of the delivery of health services. In general, many individuals connected with the healing professions in some way or other, or groups connected with health maintenance organizations, are often utterly insensitive morally to human, health needs and are often dishonest and corrupt in meeting them. So true are the many verified charges and indictments along these lines, that one is forced to conclude that either American democracy has been sadly betrayed when it comes to guaranteeing life and the pursuit of happiness or our polity is in need of drastic, social reconstruction, or both.

Corruption and dishonesty upon the part of substantial numbers of individuals, groups and companies connected with the provision of health services—and the medical profession is only one component in this mix—is not something new but the appearance of individuals who have been willing to blow the whistle on the unethical shenanigans of businessmen and professionals connected with the healing arts, is of relatively recent vintage. One of the leading "whistle-blowers" in this area has been Herbert S. Denenberg. Denenberg, the Pennsylvania insurance commissioner during the early 70s was at one time a professor of Insurance at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Finance and Commerce. He has been a longtime critic of many insurance-industry practices, an advocate of insurance reform and a consultant to federal and state agencies and consumer groups.

In 1972 Denenberg²⁰ wrote an article exposing the corrupt practices and fraudulent advertising of the mail-order, health insurance industry. The basis for his attack can be summed up in six charges against companies that sell mail-order, health insurance. (1) They offer narrow coverage but make it sound liberal; (2) the companies make sure premiums are eaten up in expenses and (especially) profits; (3) these companies scare people, especially the elderly; (4) the companies have well-known, highly trusted personalities endorse their policies;²¹ (5) mail-order companies use phony recommendations; and (6) insurance exploiters need political influence.

The State of Pennsylvania in the early 70s was preparing what was called "Regulation 25". Regulation 25 was intended at the time to regulate advertising for life, health and accident insurance. Regulation 25 was also intended to prohibit the following practices, in order to reduce the amount of fraud involved in the advertising of mail order insurance firms.

"1. The use of an initial come-on premium of \$1.00, which jumps much higher after the first month. No longer will companies be allowed to juxtapose such figures as \$10,000 (worth of coverage) and \$1.00 (monthly premium).

"2. Statements about large benefits, say \$50,000, without an explanation that the clai-

mant would probably have to be in a hospital bed for five years to get the entire promised benefit.

"3. Use of recommendations and endorsements for the coverage without indicating that the insurance company has paid the person to recommend or endorse the product.

"4. Use of language or symbols that suggest the company has some connection with a government agency.

"5. Language that suggests the policyholder is getting the benefits of group coverage when such is not the case.

"6. Failure to explain fully a policy's exceptions, limitations, and exclusions.

"7. Use of such language as '\$1,000 a month when you go to the hospital' without explaining that such a benefit is payable only if the policyholder goes to the hospital and stays there for at least a month.

"8. Imposing application deadlines with each offering that are designed to pressure readers into making a quick decision. A given company running an ad with, say, an October 1 deadline could not advertise another deadline date set for less than ninety days later.

"9. Advertising 'no medical examination is required' and failing to obtain a written medical history, yet denying payment under the terms of the policy for preexisting conditions.

"10. Failure to state clearly when benefits begin.

"11. The regulation also imposes a general rule, which says that advertising copy 'shall not contain words or phrases, the meaning or understanding of which is uncertain to the common man, or clear only by implication or through familiarity with insurance terminology' " (page 33).

Denenberg has gotten into political trouble for his whistle-blowing with respect to mail-order, health insurance. But the important point in this connection, however, is the fact that mail-order, health insurance companies have not come under attack from the American Medical Association and that many physicians continued to work full-time or as part-time consultants for mail-order, health insurance companies even after the intent of Regulation 25 became known to the profession. Denenberg's honesty has, in fact, produced a swarm of enemies led by the organized medical and legal professions. All this does not suggest a high-level sensitivity to unethical practices in connection with the delivery of health services.

Denenberg²² has also severely attacked the immoralities of our national health services delivery system which he has called "the sorriest show in town". He and others have marshalled the evidence for (1) that system's waste of taxpayer billions through profiteering, avarice and lack of cost control; (2) the mismanagement of health service delivery by individual organizations like Blue Cross; (3) the medical profession's protection of incompetent and dishonest physicians whose number, according to a study made by the AMA itself, at a conservative and cautious estimate, constitutes about 10 percent of the profession; (4) the tendency of our health service delivery system to concentrate on increasing the income-making opportunities of doctors and hospitals and on standards aimed at making things convenient for them, while neglecting, at the same time, the very *raison d'être* of

health care, namely, the prospective consumer of health services and health insurance policies; (5) the excessive domination of the healing and insurance professions by politics rather than by the public interest; (6) the health service system's unwillingness to let the consumer play a substantial role in the decisions governing health-service legislation and standards; (7) the improper and inadequate self-policing of the medical profession with respect to incompetence and corruption in its midst; and (8) the system's indifference to quality control of health services.

Denenberg has also assembled some of the evidence for (9) the system's protection of assembly line, health-service routines by mediocre or incompetent physicians who are more interested in making money than healing, while that same system exerts little or no pressure on practicing physicians to keep abreast of, and employ, new medical discoveries and treatments; (10) the system's tendency to ignore the fact that if medical malpractice suits were filed by the countless victims of dishonest or incompetent, medical care, there could be more than 15 million such suits; (11) the system's tendency to ignore the fact that numerous studies have shown that more than two million unnecessary surgical operations are performed every year; (12) the tendency of the medical profession to prescribe materia medica unnecessarily, thereby producing a great amount of iatrogenic ill health and the equally abhorrent habit of American doctors to prescribe new and untested drugs which side-effects were not only unknown but which side effects subsequently produced such major tragedies as the deformed Thalidomide babies; (13) the failure of different physicians treating the same patients for different conditions, to coordinate the drugs they prescribe, resulting in interaction effects that have generated new pathologies and, in some cases, produced death; (14) the failure to preserve health conditions and freedom from infection in many hospitals and the tolerance by hospitals of unhygienic environmental conditions and faulty, disease-producing nursing services; (15) the toleration by the AMA of lowered admission standards in a number of medical schools and the employment of part-time, adjunct professors from the local community—adjunct professors who often succeed in affiliating themselves with medical education through political power, influence and pressures; and many other professional and health-service conditions too numerous to mention here.

Denenberg²³ has examined some of the legislation that has been proposed for national health care and the health care areas and health care standards currently up for reform. Present health care standards, says Denenberg, are less than marginal in the following respects: (1) there is a shortage and maldistribution of health care personnel and facilities; (2) costs for health services are rising too steeply, hitting levels that deprive too many Americans of limited income of health services that they need, and are proving to be more inflationary than most of the goods and services regularly demanded by Americans; (3) health service delivery systems treat people when they are sick, instead of trying to keep them healthy; (4) the mechanisms designed to guarantee the quality of health care have been sorely inadequate; (5) many unqualified doctors are treating the public and supplying needless, expensive and sometimes dangerous health care; (6) hospitals are wasting billions through inefficient management and status-seeking expansion; (7) doctors are unaware of the excessive nature of their charges for health care, of the impossible burden these charges are upon

patients of moderate income, of the poor and of minority groups—a situation that results in part from the fact that most medical students come from families that are financially well-off and white; and (8) we have a health care system that provides a markedly different quality of medical care to different economic, demographic and racial groups.

We can state at this point *some* of the many reforms proposed by Denenberg for all the deficiencies of the American health-services delivery system. In Denenberg's own words:

"1. All health care providers should increase the number of consumer representatives on their boards of directors. Consumer control, I am convinced, is the key to all other reforms. We must also explore new ways of obtaining and facilitating consumer participation and input.

"2. Monitoring of incompetent and dishonest doctors must be stepped up. If the professional societies prove unable to clean their own houses, someone else must be given the task. My own conclusion is that self-policing will not work and that we must seek alternatives now.

"3. State licensing boards must be reconstituted and standards toughened. An initial license must not continue to provide a lifetime consent to practice. Licensure must be combined with ongoing methods to determine a physician's present competence. And licensing boards also must have consumers added to the ranks. Special interest representation should be phased out altogether.

"4. Both state laws and professional attitudes must be changed to permit and, indeed, encourage the maximum use of qualified paramedicals and other auxiliary personnel.

"5. Hospitals must be made into efficient businesses, meeting the real needs of the community instead of their own status goals. Extravagance, duplication, and ineptness can no longer be tolerated. To make sure all planned hospital construction is needed, each state should pass comprehensive certificate-of-need laws with adequate staffing, budget, and authority.

"6. Medical schools must try to increase opportunities for blacks, women, and other minorities.

"7. Incentives, or disincentives, must be put into effect to increase the number of physicians, paramedicals, and other health care providers practicing in inner-city and rural areas.

"8. Similar incentives, or disincentives, must be used to increase the number of primary care providers.

"9. Doctors should prescribe drugs only when medically necessary, and they should prescribe expensive brand-names only if generic equivalents are not available. Doctors also should become aware of the costs of the drugs they are prescribing" (pages 17-18).

Denenberg²⁴ has recently surfaced in another capacity, bringing him once more to public attention, but this time in the role of consumer advocate and protector rather than insurance commissioner. However, he is flaying to a large extent the manufacturers of products injurious to health or manufacturers who produce material whose labels are medically unsound, like those on wood-alcohol products. In this sense Denenberg is still concerned with health care.

All the foregoing material, then, provides a sample of *some* of the features of the American health services delivery system and illustrates some of the unethical, immoral and unprofessional behavior of individuals, professions, groups and insurance companies connected with health care. The unethical, immoral and illegal practices now so rampant also constitute evidence of a betrayal of the ideals on which this great country was founded. At the same time they provide evidence of a growing, national indifference to what democracy and the public interest require in a society growing increasingly complex. Whether the political and legislative barn door will be closed before the public health-care horse has been led out, remains to be seen. Without more citizen intervention and more consumer control, national health is likely to worsen. Except for that small sector of the middle class that can boast of a good, annual income and an accumulated, net worth that will, itself, generate a liberal amount of unearned income from savings and investments, American health care is gradually being priced out of the market. This is a tragedy that can be reversed only if there is a national will to do so. Here the organized voter and consumer can always fight back not only through the effective use of the vote and class-action suits, the alert use of consumer and other voluntary organizations, but also through the intelligent, political use of the *initiative*, the *referendum* and the *recall*.

The problem of ensuring honesty, integrity and social responsibility from that small sector of the medical profession whose members seem to be almost wholly interested in making money and only marginally interested in alleviating human, physical suffering and allaying its attendant fears, will remain with us for some time to come. Medical members of this materialistic and pecuniary hard-core are also the kinds of physicians least likely to keep up with the progress of medicine. Likewise the problem of ensuring health-care services for all is probably not going to be easily resolved in the years just ahead, largely because of the strange twist given to the notion of free enterprise by members of the AMA and the obsession with retaining and increasing wealth and power on the part of the insurance industry and other health-related businesses and professions.

Even the annual checkup, we should note, is now being recognized as largely unnecessary and useless, with the exception of blood-pressure tests, skin tests for TB, pap smears for uterine and cervical cancer, examinations for glaucoma, and a few others. But *most* of the clinical laboratory tests are not very good diagnostic prognosticators and even AMA leadership²⁵ has begun to recognize this fact. The routine examinations given in annual checkups cost Americans \$15-20 billion dollars and are largely a waste of their money. Says one West Virginia physician, "The investment pays off for the doctor, not for the patient". The insistence by most members of the medical profession on having their patients take many of the unnecessary routine tests given in the clinical laboratory, is in a sense another departure from professional integrity. It is the profitability of these tests which is now paramount and not their predictive value.

That these problems are still continuing with us and are hardly being abated, can be seen from some of the books and much of the periodical literature that was coming off the press at the time of this writing. The most distinguished, recent volume in this connection has been *Medical Nemesis* by Ivan Illich.²⁶ Illich, broadly speaking, asserts that major im-

provements in modern health have not come about primarily from improved medicine but from other factors, and that the number of diseases that can be cured by medicine are nowhere near as great as the growing medical budgets would make us believe. In addition, he spends a great deal of time providing evidence of the vast amount of iatrogenesis; that is, illness caused by doctors, now in our midst and which is on the increase because of the moral and scientific irresponsibilities of many modern practitioners. Two very critical and insightful articles on the deficiencies of the world's most prestigious profession, which appeared in the summer of 1976, were by Paul Starr²⁷ and Peter Singer.²⁸ The first of these deals with "therapeutic nihilism"; that is, with our current disbeliefs in the effectiveness of modern medicine and the expression of such disbeliefs in *Medical Nemesis* and in the works of Thomas Szasz, R. D. Laing and Erving Goffman. The second examines the relative advantages and disadvantages of private and public control of health care services. I mention both of these only to indicate that the controversies over health-care are still with us and are involving concerned parties more intensely than ever before.

Will these problems be resolved in the very near future? It is hard to say. There is no particular reason for assuming that the motivational dynamics and moral stature of many buck-chasing, assembly line physicians will diminish in the next few years, in spite of the continuing exposure of ripoffs and social irresponsibility practiced by a substantial number of physicians in whom both the public and the government have reposed their misplaced trust. With increasing social complexity and the bureaucratization of health care services, the situation is very likely to get worse. But just as many governmental leaders will not encourage the immediate application of government controls on our existing price structure, insisting only upon congressional support and executive powers to keep standby controls just in case—so, too, similar standbys are available if the medical profession fails to reform itself and health care service professions fail to measure up to their social responsibilities.

We have already mentioned what these standbys are. They consist of the political and intelligent use of the *initiative*, the *referendum* and the *recall*. With these political weapons a coalition of both citizens and their representatives in government can ensure new legislation that will effectively reform medical practice, effectively control the relationship of government and community to the health service professions, and make certain that the medical profession, as a moral measure, will reform itself. When it comes to providing adequate, responsible and effective health care to the American community, the only appropriate attitude of government and citizenship, is perhaps best summed in the famous words of former President Truman, "The buck stops here."

Notes and References

1. George Will, "Lawyers Held in Low Esteem", *The Tampa Tribune* (1 December 1975) Section A, page 10.
2. Martin Mayer, *The Lawyers* (New York: Dell, 1966). 575 pages.
3. Murray Teigh Bloom, *The Trouble with Lawyers* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968) 351 pages.
4. Joseph C. Goulden, *The Superlawyers: The Small and Powerful World of the Great Washington Law Firms* (New York: Waybright and Talley, 1972) 408 pages.
5. Martin L. Gross, *The Doctors* (New York: Dell, 1967) 718 pages.
6. One of these appeared at the time of this writing. See Frank Bentayou, "Law Helps Board Evaluate Doctors", *The Tampa Tribune* (1 December 1975) Section B, pages 1-2. The article deals with a new law passed by the 1975 legislature and is intended to identify incompetent doctors and improve their skills or remove them from practice. It has been estimated that there are 3,500 incompetent physicians in the State of Florida. The estimate was said to reflect the thinking of physicians in Florida and was mentioned by a member of the State Board of Medical Examiners.
7. Ivan Illich, *Medical Nemesis: The Expropriation of Health* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976) 294 pages. For some reactions to this volume on the part of a number of more conservative members of the medical profession, see the following: John Wykert, "Is American Medicine Killing Us?" *House & Garden*. 148, number 9 (1976) pages 94-5, 193. The early roots of Illich's arguments in *Medical Nemesis* will be found discussed as "The Crisis of Medicine" in a previous volume he published. I am referring to the following volume: Ivan Illich, *Tools For Conviviality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973) 135 pages.
8. For a brief account of both the Medicaid and Medicare programs and the distinction between the two, see the following: *Medicaid, Medicare: Which Is Which* (Washington, D. C. : Medical Services Administration Social and Rehabilitation Service; Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1976) 28 pages.
9. For a brief explanation only of Medicare, see the following: *A Brief Explanation of Medicare* (Washington, D. C.: Social Security Administration; U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; DHEW) Publication No. (SSA) 75-10043 (1975) 12 pages.
10. The scandalous corruption of medical services under Medicaid and the fraud that has cost the taxpayers billions of dollars was briefly digested for the American public in the following one page article: "Congress Catches Up with Medicaid Ripoff," *U. S. News & World Report* 81, number 11 (1976) page 55.
11. Eleazar Lipsky, *Malpractice* (New York: Warner Books, 1973) 301 pages. A graduate of Columbia Law School, Eleazar Lipsky has found success in two exacting professions, law and literature. Not surprisingly, his novels reflect not only his extensive courtroom experience but also his four years as an assistant district attorney in New York's Homicide Bureau. His novel, *Lincoln McKiever*, was a Literary Guild selection in 1953. His book, *The Scientists*, was a Book-of-the-Month Club selection in 1959. In addition to his professional and writing activities, he has served as chairman of the board and director of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, chairman of the Commission on International Affairs of the American Jewish Congress, and member of Congress Court, World Zionist Congress.
12. Walter C. Alvarez, *How to Help Your Doctor Help You* (New York: Dell, 1955) 284 pages. Dr. Alvarez was Professor of Medicine at the Mayo Foundation, University of Minnesota, and was Consultant in Medicine, Emeritus, to the Mayo Clinic. If distinguished physicians like Dr. Alvarez have always been willing to talk things over with laymen, one wonders at the cheek, egocentricity and aloofness of those mediocre physicians who wish to treat their patients in as high-handed a fashion as some snobbish and sadistic army officers like to treat the men under them.
13. Donald M. Vickery and James F. Fries, *Take Care of Yourself: A Consumer's Guide to Medical Care* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1976) 269 pages. This volume, incidentally, was referred to favorably in connection with the theme of the *U.S. News & World Report* article mentioned in footnote 10 above.
14. Robert E. Rothenberg, (ed.), *Understanding Surgery* (New York: Pocket Books, 1970, 6th printing) 717 pages. This volume is based upon the collaboration of eight contributors who are surgical specialists in a large variety of fields.

15. W. W. Bauer (ed.), *Today's Health Guide: A Manual of Health Information and Guidance for the American Family* (American Medical Association, 1965). 624 pages. This volume was written and edited after consultation with more than 200 practicing physicians and specialists, dentists, veterinarians, clergymen, chemists, physicists, nurses, educators, engineers, safety experts, writers and reviewers. Their names are listed in a section of the volume, entitled "Contributors".
16. Fritz Kahn, *Man In Structure and Function* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946) 2 volumes, 742 pages. Translated from the German by George Rosen, M.D. This volume was published in German in 1939 by Albert Muller Verlag, under the title *Der Mensch Gesund und Krank*. Almost thirty years have passed since then and the critical reader has to realize that the progress of medicine during this period makes some of the material and explanations in the volume out of date. For this reason the critical reader can check the content of the Kahn volume against later volumes like the following: The American Foundation, *Medical Research: A Midcentury Survey (1955)*: Volume I, *American Medical Research: In Principle and Practice*, 765 pages; Volume II, *Unsolved Clinical Problems: In Biological Perspective*, 740 pages. It goes without saying, of course, that there are semi-popular surveys of modern medicine, later than these two volumes, so that Kahn's work can be tempered at all times by the reader who refers to recent summaries of medical progress.
17. Ivan Illich, *Medical Nemesis. Op. cit.*
18. *Ibid.*
19. For a brief discussion of the standard blood-sugar curve, see the following: Jacques Wallach, *Interpretation of Diagnostic Tests: A Handbook Synopsis of Laboratory Medicine*, second edition (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970) 1529 pages. See in particular the section entitled "Oral Glucose Tolerance Test (GTT)", pages 71-72.
20. Herbert S. Denenberg, "Those Health Insurance Booby Traps", *The Progressive* 36, number 9, (1972) pages 29-33.
21. Among the celebrities these companies have used on TV—most of whom were probably completely unsophisticated in actuarial matters—are the following: Art Linkletter, Jack Benny, Paul Harvey, George Fenneman and Lawrence Welk.
22. Herbert S. Denenberg, "Dr. Strangelove Joins Alice-in-Wonderland in Quest of a National Health Plan", *The Progressive* 37, number 5, (1973) pages 17-22.
23. Herbert S. Denenberg, "Health Care For All: The Wasteland", *The Progressive* 38, number 4 (1974) pages 15-18.
24. "The Horrible Herb Show", *Time* 108, number 11 (1976) pages 70, 72.
25. "The Annual Rip-Off", *Time* 108 number 4 (1976) page 54.
26. Ivan Illich, *Medical Nemesis. Op. cit.*
27. Paul Starr, "The Politics of Therapeutic Nihilism", *Working Papers for a New Society* IV, number 2 (1976) pages 48-55.
28. Peter Singer, "Blood, Markets and Medical Care", *Working Papers for a New Society* IV, number 2 (1976) pages 56-64.

REVIEW

Until You Die, by *Bhagawan Shree Rajneesh*. Poona, India: Rajneesh Foundation, 1977. 261 pages.

Like the book on Zen stories, reviewed in these columns earlier, this volume deals with the Sufi Way. The author takes up Sufi stories, ten of them, and using them as pegs, presents his approach to life and things. As always, he is scintillating in his wit, puncturing many a notion with rapier-like thrusts of his intellect, widening the mind of the reader on every page, at times in every paragraph.

What is Sufism? It is not a religion as commonly supposed, not a church. It is an attitude. One becomes a Sufi, says the writer, "by dropping from the head to the heart". He explains: "The head moves outwardly; it is an opening to the other. The heart opens inwardly; it is an opening to yourself. When your life-energy falls from the head towards the heart, you become a Sufi." Further: "Sufis sing, they don't give sermons, because life is like a song and less like a sermon. And they dance . . . The whole life is a dance, vibrating, throbbing with infinite life."

To be a Sufi you have got to die—to your ego-self. And that is the demand of every true spiritual path. There are many profound observations in these pages which are sure to help the seeker, whatever his path. Even an agnostic will think twice before airing his views if he reads these expositions. Here are a few of his hints for cultivating the art of life, whether material or intellectual or spiritual.

Do not judge. Every judgment is wrong because the whole world is so deeply interconnected that unless you know the whole you cannot know the part . . . All judgments are false because they will be partial (page 35).

God is not a static point: God is the total movement of life, of existence—if you want to walk with God, then you have to move continuously (page 39).

Knowledge is not knowing. Knowing is a constant movement; knowledge is a dead, accumulated thing. Knowing is part of your being; knowledge is just part of your memory, and memory is nothing but a biological computer (page 53).

Truth is not something stationary. It renews itself continuously. Truth is eternal because of eternal change (page 67).

Each individual has to hew his own path. You are a unique signature of the Divine. No general methods can help you. You have to walk and create the path (page 70).

Change has to proceed from inside. You can change the outside, but nothing will change if the inside remains the same. The inside will create, again and again, the same

pattern—whatsoever the situation outside—because man lives from the inner to the outer (page 131).

Heaven and hell are not geographical; they are not places, they do not exist in space. They are attitudes. They are psychological; they exist in inner space . . . you always carry your hell or your heaven around you (page 134).

There is a rational, a scientific spirit throughout these expositions. Speaking of consciousness in things, he remarks: Just by observation you change a tree, its behaviour . . . Electrons change immediately when there is an observer. The Whole is alive—a vast ocean of life and consciousness. Even a rock is not dead (page 142).

And there are many other things, concepts, precepts, "doses" of psychological antibiotics. One may feel here and there that Bhagawan Shree Rajneesh could be a little more charitable to personalities and to some of the traditions of old, but it is all meant well; he is impatient with the lethargy of mind and all the cant and hypocrisy that pass for religion and morality in our society and it is that that makes even his pungency enjoyable, even certain sweeping generalizations excusable.

There should be more books of this kind to set society on the move.

M. P. Pandit

FOCUS

WORLD CONSTITUTION AND PARLIAMENT ASSOCIATION, INDIA BRANCH

After the Second World War, the number of non-governmental organizations around the world have increased rapidly and some of them are playing an important role in various fields of life. They endeavour to highlight the manifold problems confronting man and his world today, which problems cannot be solved on a national basis. They encourage necessary international cooperation, interdependent global actions and the emergence of planetary thinking which aid the evolutionary process towards human unification.

To Our Members and Friends

Formation of the India Branch

The first meeting of the India Branch of World Constitution and Parliament Association was held at 11:00 A.M. on the 16th of October 1977 in the conference hall of the Y.M.C.A. youth hostel, New Delhi, when twenty-six persons were present. Shri Puran Singh Azad, the convener of the India branch, proposed Shri A. B. Patel, the co-president of the World Constitution and Parliament Association, to preside over the meeting. This was seconded by Shri J. C. Bhardwaj, and Shri Patel took the chair. Shri Azad said it was a matter of great pleasure that the preliminary meeting of the India branch was held under the chairmanship of Shri A. B. Patel, who happens to be the association's co-president. He further stated that the 16th of October is the birthday of Mr. Philip Isely, secretary general of the World Constitution and Parliament Association, who is the main architect and force behind this marvelous movement, and by the holding of this meeting today we pay a great tribute to this great son of the earth. On the request of Shri A. B. Patel, Shri Azad moved the following resolution which was adopted with acclamation. "We, the members of the India Committee of the World Constitution and Parliament Association, pray for the long life of Mr. Philip Isely, the secretary general of the association, and wish him many happy returns of the day to enable him to fulfil his ideal of the formation of the democratic federal world government for which he has dedicated his life."

Shri O. P. Dawar requested the convener of the meeting to give a brief account of the deliberations of the World Constitution and Parliament Association and other organizations at Innsbruck whereupon this was done by Shri Azad. He added that the drafting of the Con-

stitution for the Federation of Earth was commenced in the year 1968 and completed in 1974, when it was circulated to invite the comments of interested individuals and organizations belonging to about thirty countries. On the receipt of their comments the second edition of the constitution was prepared and circulated along with a call to the constituent assembly. The constituent assembly met at Innsbruck from the 16th to the 29th of June 1977 and, clause by clause, discussed the second edition of the constitution, which was then finalized and approved there. All the people whom Shri Azad met during the tour of Europe were in agreement with the provisions of the constitution passed at Innsbruck. Organized publicity in support of this constitution is the main activity which is to be undertaken to popularize the ideal of the federation of earth and to obtain support from various quarters.

A member of the audience asked Shri Patel to throw light on his organization, World Union. Shri Patel informed the meeting that he is the general secretary and treasurer of World Union, a member of the World Federal Authority Committee of Oslo and of the Planetary Citizens Organization, New York, and other organizations working for world unity or world government. All these organizations stand for the federation of the earth. Regarding World Union he said that Sri Aurobindo had entertained five dreams: (i) the freedom of a united India; (ii) the resurgence of Asia; (iii) "a world-union forming the outer basis of a fairer, brighter and nobler life for all mankind"; (iv) "the spiritual gift of India to the world"; (v) raising human consciousness to a higher level. In World Union we are working for the fulfilment of Sri Aurobindo's third dream, world union.

In support of the ideal of world government, Shri A. B. Patel read the following statements of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Mahatma Gandhi said: "Nationalism is not the highest concept. The highest concept is world community. I would not like to live in this world if it is not to be one world. Our objective is one world; we have to work for it and for the brotherhood of humanity." Jawaharlal Nehru: "I have no doubt in my mind that world federation must and will come, for there is no other remedy for the world sickness." Shri Patel added that it is more or less a prophecy which will, he is sure, prove true.

Shri R. K. Sood suggested that brochures and other literature should be published which would highlight the various important provisions of the Constitution for the Federation of Earth to enable the general public to know the aims and objects contained in it. Shri J. N. Puri suggested that a questionnaire should also be attached, to be filled in and sent back to the Indian branch by persons who are sent brochures, in order to assess public opinion.

Shri Amitabh Kundu said there would be general agreement with the aims and objects of the association. The issue is to obtain public support by contacts with like-minded persons, organizations and parties; and by the removal of their doubts, if any.

Shri Daya Shanker asked how the finance will be provided for the work of the organization. Shri Puran Singh said that it will have to be financed by the members themselves, and if we are sincere in our efforts and the work is done constructively by us, the finance required for the purpose will automatically come as contributions from the persons having sympathy with the objectives. He added that some of the participants from India promised at Innsbruck to contribute certain amounts to the World Constitution and Parliament Association. However,

Mr. Isely has said that any money collected by the India branch could be kept for the organizational work in India itself.

Shri K. C. Bhattacharya wanted to know about the further work to be done by the association. Shri A. B. Patel advised that he proposes to send copies of the constitution to universities for discussion in their study groups and also to bar associations and the members of Parliament to obtain their views and comments. Shri Azad made a generous offer to publish the Constitution for the Federation of Earth serially in his newspaper, *National Solidarity*, and would send copies to many public men and invite their opinion in support of the cause.

It was decided to hold the next meeting of the India branch on the 3rd and 4th of December 1977, at the time when the Indian Parliament will be in session. Shri Azad was requested to make necessary arrangements in consultation with Shri G. Murahari, the deputy speaker of the Lok Sabha, who has already accepted the presidency of the India branch.

Presentation of the Constitution

On the 20th of October, three copies of the Constitution for the Federation of Earth were presented at the United Nations for the attention of Dr. Kurt Waldheim, the secretary general, and of Mr. Lazar Mojsov, current president of the General Assembly. The presentation was made by a delegation of eleven persons representing the World Constitution and Parliament Association in a thirty minute meeting with Mr. Robert Muller, deputy to the under secretary general.

The Constitution for the Federation of Earth was sent by air mail on 21 October 1977 to all 160 national governments, with a letter of transmittal addressed either to the head of state or the head of the government. The constitution was mailed from the United Nations in New York City. In the case of India the transmittal letter was addressed to Shri Morarji Desai, the prime minister of India. This letter reads:

“We have the honour to present for your consideration and action the draft of the Constitution for the Federation of Earth, which was adopted at the World Constituent Assembly, held in June 1977, at Innsbruck, Austria.

“This constitution for world government is now submitted to the nations and people of earth for ratification, in accordance with the terms of Article XVII, beginning on page 38 of the enclosed draft, and as requested in the universal call for ratification, which is also enclosed.

“To assure the survival of humanity on earth, and to establish a framework within which world problems may be solved for the good of all, we urge you to take the appropriate steps immediately for implementing the ratification procedure.

“We shall look for your reply soon.”

The letter has been signed, “Most sincerely, for Peace and Humanity”, by Philip Isely, secretary general of the World Constitution and Parliament Association. Along with the letter has been enclosed a copy of the “Universal Call for Ratification of the Constitution for the Federation of Earth”.

Shri A. B. Patel, during his last tour to New Delhi in October, had presented a copy of the constitution to Shri B. Nahar, the secretary of the Janata Party, and to Vice-President Shri B. D. Jatti on 19 October 1977, and to Prime Minister Shri Morarji Desai, to Defence Minister

Shri Jagjivan Ram and former Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi on the 21st of October—and to others also.

**NATIONAL SEMINAR PROGRAMME
“WORLD UNION—CONVERGING PATHS”**

With reference to the general information given in the October and November “Focus”, we have now received the programme details given below.

Sunday, 8 January 1978
Indian Medical Association Auditorium
Alur Venkata Rao Road, Fort, Bangalore 560024

Registration of delegates		0800—0830 hours
Inauguration		0830—0915 hours
<i>Session One</i>		0930—1100 hours
Chairman	Shri Haneef Jawaid	
Rapporteur	Smt. Bhuvanewari Ramaswamy	
Subjects	(a) The Finite Earth—How to Utilize Global Resources for One World (b) The Politics of Man—The Jungle of Political Systems	
Speakers	To be announced	
<i>Session Two</i>		1100—1230 hours
Chairman	Prof. M. V. Ramachandran	
Rapporteur	Prof. S. Ramakrishna	
Subjects	(a) How to Build a World Culture (b) The Economics of Contentment	
Speakers	To be announced	
<i>Lunch</i>		1230—1330 hours
<i>Session Three</i>		1330—1500 hours
Chairman	Dr. B. N. Lingaraju	
Rapporteur	Dr. D. Sundara Rao	
Subjects	(a) Learning the Future—The Education of Man (b) Books for One World	
Speakers	To be announced	
<i>Session Four</i>		1500—1630 hours
Chairman	Sri G. Sermabsivaih	

Rapporteur Dr. H. S. Lakshminarayana
Subjects A Constitutional Framework for One World
Speaker Shri A. B. Patel, general secretary, World Union International Centre,
Pondicherry 605002

Session Five 1630—1800 hours
Chairman's and Rapporteurs' Conference
Variety Entertainment for Other Delegates

Concluding Session 1800—1930 hours
Presiding: Chairman of the Reception Committee
(a) Lectures (i) "The Spirit of Man—The Grand Unity" by Sri
P. V. Rajagopal
(ii) "How to Live the New Way" by Sri Sri Thandaveswara
(b) Adoption of the statement of the seminar—read and proposed by
Dr. H. S. Lakshminarayana
(c) Chairman's remarks
(d) Vote of thanks

The seminar committee has decided to invite a number of prominent persons to participate in the seminar.

ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITY

World Union Centres

North Calcutta The North Calcutta Centre holds its monthly meetings regularly. It held its 38th monthly meeting in May, 39th in June, 40th in July, 41st in August, 42nd in September and 43rd in October 1977. The July meeting (the 40th) was presided over by Shri Purnendu Prasad Bhattacharya, who spoke about the spiritual aspects of a world government. Monthly study circle meetings are being held on the second Saturday of every month. The last one was held on 8 October and was conducted by Shri Purnendu Prasad Bhattacharya when he discussed subjects such as the Sanskrit language, education, health, *swadhyaya*, and human unity. He also discussed the Mother's Centenary celebration. It was decided that study circle meetings will be conducted by Shri Bhattacharya. Regular weekly circle meetings, on Wednesdays, are being conducted by Shri Sujit Kumar Palit.

During one of the meetings, new committees for the centre, valid for the next three years (up to 30 June 1980), were formed. The new executive committee of the centre consists of Shri Susanto Mitra, chairman; Shri Sujit Kumar Palit, vice-chairman; Shri Tripti Kumar Sinha, secretary; Shri Gour Mohon Chatterjee, treasurer; Shri Hemendra Nath Kar, convener; Shri

Partha Kar, w.a. to the secretary; Smt. Sati Das, w.a. to the secretary; and seven members. A women's wing sub-committee was formed with Smt. Amita Bose as organizer; Smt. Sati Das assistant organizer; Smt. Leela Sinha, assistant organizer; Smt. Rotna Bose, assistant organizer; and Smt. Debrani Bose. A youth wing sub-committee was formed with Shri Shibnath Chakraborty as organizer; Shri Gossian Chandra Das, joint organizer; and Km. Ranu Das, joint organizer.

Monthly study circle and weekly circle meetings were conducted by Shri Sujit Kumar Palit. (It is from September 1977 that these meetings will be conducted by Shri Purnendu Prasad Bhattacharya.) Members of the women's wing of the centre observed 15 August to pay homage to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo by offering a befitting musical symposium.

The 42nd monthly meeting of the centre was held on 20 September, Shri Susanto Mitra presiding. The meeting commenced with the Mother's music and reading of hymns, by Shri Sujit Kumar Palit, from the Upanishads. In "A Movement for Conscious Participation in Man's Evolution Towards Unity" Shri T. K. Sinha emphasized that it is a spirit of the World Union movement and suggested that the field for the activities of World Union is very wide in which progress through higher consciousness can happen in all spheres of life—in the individual life and in all spheres of society, politics, economy, culture, arts and so on. The proposed world government, with successful pre-arrangements, was a great opportunity for World Union members to play their due role. Shri Samar Basu's speech on the life of Sri Aurobindo's yoga, the World Union movement and world government, was interesting and instructive. Km. Ranu Das read her article, "On the Spirit of World Union Day".

The message of Shri A. B. Patel, the welcome address by Shri T. K. Sinha, the speech by Shri Purnendu Bhattacharya, the speech by Shri P. C. Sen, M.P. and chairman of the Janata Party of West Bengal, were recorded in a tape at the special convention conducted by World Union Eastern Region on the 12th of September 1977 at Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Calcutta, and it was played at the meeting for the information of the members. Shri Robi Ghosh sang a devotional song. The meeting terminated with the reading of a prayer by Shri Sujit Kumar Palit along with group concentration.

The 43rd monthly meeting of the centre was held on 24 October, Shri Ajit Bose presiding. With devotional songs by Km. Ranu Das and Smt. Anita Bose, group concentration with the Mother's music and reading of hymns by Shri Sujit Kumar Palit, the proceedings of the meeting commenced. Shri Samar Basu mentioned that the centre's effort for the development of the individual and for spreading the truth of the movement in a wider field deserves praise. Shri T. K. Sinha read his article, "Bejoya". In it he mentioned Durga Puja as man's onward march through evolution, acquiring gradually higher cosmic powers in body, life and mind. He informed the members of the recent visit of Shri M. P. Pandit, the chairman of World Union, to Calcutta during the period of 16-18 October 1977 when he delivered talks at Sri Aurobindo Bhavan on the 16th, Sri Aurobindo Path Mandir on the 17th, and Uttarpara Joykrishna Library on the 18th. The last was the place where Sri Aurobindo had delivered his famous Uttarpara speech. All the talks of Shri Pandit were tape recorded and his Uttarpara speech tape was played at the meeting. Shri Satya Bose spoke on the early life of the Mother. Shri Anita Bose and Smt. Krishna Palit read their own poems.

West Bengal Regional Centre The regional centre celebrated World Union Day on the 21st of August 1977 at Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Calcutta. The get together started at 10:30 A. M. with participants who were members and guests from various World Union centres of West Bengal. The central hall on the first floor of Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, where the function was held, was charged with the presence of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Shri Sanat Bodok and Smt. Manika Bhattacharjee of Uttarpara Centre sang "Bande Mataram", the audience standing. Shri Purnendu Prasad Bhattacharya took the chair for the first session of the meeting. Group concentration was held with the Mother's tape recorded music. Shri Sujit Kumar Palit chanted a few selected hymns from the Upanishads. He delivered his brief speech welcoming all the participants, The North Calcutta Centre was the host centre for the occasion. Shri Sanat Banerjee sang a Vedic song.

The major item of the first session was the student's oration event on the subject, "Community Living As a Factor for World Union". Eight students participated and delivered their respective speeches. The participants were (i) Anindya Sarkar (Baranagore Centre), (ii) Shri Prodip Panja (Uttarpara Centre), (iii) Km. Ranu Das (North Calcutta Centre), (iv) Shri Avijit Dutta (Calcutta Centre), (v) Km. Krishna Bhattacharjee (Konnagar Centre), (vi) Shri Proloy Paul (Baranagore Centre), (vii) Km. Bulbul Saha (Calcutta Centre), (viii) Shri Mantra Bhattacharyajee (Baranagore Centre). Shri Purnendu Prasad Bhattacharya, as president of the session, summarized the speeches in his concluding address. He traced the history of our national liberation movement and pointed out how the idea of community living had arisen in the minds of great thinkers and political leaders. Thereafter Shri T. K. Sinha declared the first session closed, and the members had refreshments.

Shri Sailendra Nath Roy Chaudhuri presided over the function of the second session. He reiterated the tasks before the World Union movement and invited young people to come forward to help it. Shri Samar Basu delivered a thought provoking speech on the idea of world government as envisaged by Sri Aurobindo and reported briefly on his recent visit to Innsbruck, Austria, where the World Constituent Assembly was held last June.

Thereafter a literary conference was held conducted by Shri Purnendu Prasad Bhattacharya. Dr. Sisir Kumar Ghosh inaugurated the session and spoke briefly on the future literature. Shri Sujit Kumar Palit and Shri Krishna Palit read selected verses from the works of Sri Aurobindo, the Mother, Shri Nolini Kanta Gupta, Srimat Anirvan. Shri Mohon Mittra read his poems and Shri T. K. Sinha, Smt. Krishna Palit, Kumari Tanju Mukherjee and Shri Sujit Kumar Palit and Shri Purnendu Prasad Bhattacharya also read their poems. In the cultural programme songs were sung by Shri Robi Ghosh, Smt. Kheyali Ghosh, Shri Sanat Bodok and Shri Manika Bhattacharyajee, while Shri Mantra Bhattacharyajee and Shri Shankar Bhattacharyajee played on sitar and tabla respectively.

The concluding programme was a musical competition. It was a garland of tributes to Sri Aurobindo with a commentary written by Shri Tapan Ghosh. Shri Hemendra Nath Kar and many other friends took part in the programme. The meeting terminated with a vote of thanks by Shri T. K. Sinha.

The executive committee meeting of the regional centre was held on November 13, 1977 at 11:00 A.M. at Sri Aurobindo Patha Mandir, Calcutta, when Shri Samar Basu presided. It

commenced with three minutes of group concentration. The proceedings of the last meeting of the executive committee were confirmed. Shri Purnendu Prasad Bhattacharya was unanimously coopted as member of the executive committee under appropriate procedures. The names of presidents, guests speakers and participant speakers, for the two day convention to be held on the 10th and 11th of December, 1977, at Sri Aurobindo Bhavan, Calcutta, to observe the Mother's Birth Centenary celebration were confirmed. The substance of the five resolutions passed in this connection is: (a) The cultural programme during the evenings of the 10th and 11th of December 1977 be offered by North Calcutta Centre in collaboration with either the Sodepur Centre or the Baranagore Centre or the West Bengal Regional Centre; (b) that a brochure be printed with pictures of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, a brief life sketch of the Mother, invitation letter and themes of discussions of the seminar subjects; (c) the price of the brochure be Rs. 1.00 per copy, and free copies of the brochures be sent to all centres in India and abroad and to Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry; (d) 1,100 copies of the brochure be printed for which the estimated cost is Rs. 1,000; (e) the source of funds for the convention and brochure publication be individual donation, it being noted that Shri Susanto Mitra has offered to donate a respectable amount.

It was proposed to hold a council meeting of the regional centre on the 27th of November 1977, and the meeting concluded with a vote of thanks by Shri T. K. Sinha.

Chandernagore The monthly seminar of the centre for September was held at Ushangini Balika Vidyalaya for senior girls on the 25th of August 1977, Shri S. S. De Sarkar presiding. After the opening song by Shri Indu Prakas Bandyopadhyay and two minutes of group concentration, Dr. Baral spoke briefly on the aims and objectives of World Union, as there were several new members in the meeting. He also described how World Union participated in several activities around the world. After this, one young professor, Shri S. K. Bhattacharya, spoke on Sri Aurobindo and his philosophy. Shri Purnendu Prasad Bhattacharya, chairman of the World Union Economic and Cultural Council, was the speaker of the day, talking about the World Union Economic and Cultural Council—its aims and objectives. He mentioned the Innsbruck conference and the preparation for forming a world government through ratification of the world constitution by different nations. World Union has started thinking of creating a new horizon in education in different areas of West Bengal on the basis of principles enunciated by Sri Aurobindo. He invited those who were present to participate by asking questions. Dr. S. S. Mitra, Shri S. K. Bhattacharya and Smt. Nihar Kane Mitra responded to the request, asking questions mainly on the shape of the world state as conceived by Sri Aurobindo and the utility of such a development when the United Nations Organization is in existence. Shri Purnendu Prasad Bhattacharya answered the questions and thanked all the participants.

Bangalore Shri Y.M. Narasimha Murthy spoke on 2 October 1977 to a meeting arranged by the World Union Bangalore Centre on the subject, "Humour in Human Relations". The synopsis of his speech is given hereunder.

"Humour in life dates back to the role of court jesters of kings, who [thereby] relieved the anxiety and strain of administration. Tenali Ramakrishna and Birbal are excellent examples of court jesters.

“To understand human relations, it is essential to understand differences between the human being and the animal. Animals have certain very noble qualities. Animals, though wild when hungry, are noble when hunger is satisfied. There is no vanity or ego in animals. A sense of direction and time are highly evolved in animals. We are human when we integrate with us some of these noble qualities: love and leave anger, work and leave hunger, laugh and live longer. Don't feed your greed and speed. Living without planning is like swimming without knowing. Beware of your mistakes; if not, be aware of your mistakes. We shed tears to secure a job but refuse to sweat when we get one.

“Humour knows no difference of sex, creed, caste or nation. It is an integrated factor with life. Life without humour is not worth living. There are many instances where humour has averted disastrous situations.”

Uttarpara The 50th monthly seminar of the centre was held on 8 October at Amarendra Vidyapith, Shri S. K. Gupta presiding. The subjects discussed in the seminar were: (i) “Vidya Sagar—an Educationist, a Social Reformer and Parent of the Destitutes”; (ii) “India's Spiritual Thinking and Sri Aurobindo”. Shri Tarak Das Mittra, an erudite thinker of the locality, spoke on the first subject and Shri Niranjan Chakravarty and Shri Samar Basu participated in the discussion of the second subject. Shri Shyamal Kumar Chatterjee paid homage to Vidya Sagar by reading out his poems and Shri Pradeep Kumar Panja spoke on Vidya Sagar as an educationist. Both of them are members of the youth wing.

In his learned talk Shri Tarak Das Mittra elucidated his appraisal of social conditions—the superstitions and beliefs of the people and unhealthy conventional thinking of the social leaders prevailing in that part of the last century when Vidya Sagar came forward to fight against all social injustice of which illiterates and ignorant persons became victims. He also estimated how Swami Vivekananda was influenced when Swamiji (Vidya Sagar) was his student. “For the progress of the individual as well of the society as a whole”, Shri Mittra concluded, “his whole life would have to be intensively studied and lived by modern teachers and those taught.” Shri Niranjan Chakravarty elucidated the history of spiritual thinking in India dating from the Vedic age, with special reference to the Upanishads and the Gita and several Puranas, while Shri Samar Basu stated the development of the thinking and its impact on the progress of mankind, to result in the establishment of a divine life on earth as envisaged by Sri Aurobindo. Shri Sanat Bodok sung a devotional song before the commencement of the seminar.

Sri Aurobindo Siksha Samsad The Fifth Teachers' Convention of the Sri Aurobindo Siksha Samsad was held on Sunday, the 9th of October, 1977 under the auspices of the Tamluk Hamilton High School, Tamluk, Midnapur. The convention conducted a seminar, “True Education and the Role of Educators”. That was the last in the series for the year 1977. Two seminars on the same subject were held previously in February and March 1977 in the districts of Hooghly and Twenty-four Paraganas respectively. After the opening song and group concentration the convention was started at 3:00 P.M. Shri Kaloboron Chatterjee, ex-headmaster of the institution, took the chair after offering flowers to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Shri Samar Basu read out the message received from Shri A. B. Patel. Shri Kshitish Chandra

Karmakar, rector of the school, welcomed the assembly. Then Principal Gopal Chandra Kar inaugurated the seminar. Prof. P. N. Sarkar, Prof. Arabinda Palai, Shri Paritosh Mukherjee and a swamiji of Shri Ram Krishna Ashram, Tamluk, participated in the seminar. In his introductory speech Shri Basu elucidated the reasons for selecting this subject and pinpointed a few guidelines of discussion, so that the seminar would be concluded within the specified time.

Khar (Bombay) The World Union Khar Centre has sent to us a list of engagements kept and talks given by Shri M. P. Pandit, chairman of World Union, in Bombay. He addressed several meetings under the auspices of World Union in cooperation with Sri Aurobindo Society, The Theosophical Society, the Sanctuary of Peace and Harmony, and Friends of Yoga Society. The list gives visits during September 1976, December 1976, September 1977 and the dates of the talks and the subjects. The Khar Centre writes that all the talks were well attended and the audience represented a cross section of the Bombay public. The speaker was asked several questions at the end of each talk. In addition to the talks the members had also opportunities for individual and group discussions. All World Union members actively cooperated with the members of Sri Aurobindo Society in organizing all the programmes of Shri M. P. Pandit which were many during the year 1976 and 1977.

Baranagore Shri Chuni Lal Goswami, secretary of World Union Baranagore Centre, took an opportunity to address several meetings during his Puja vacation when he was away from Calcutta, and spent a fortnight in the district of Birbhum. He organized meetings and group discussions about Sri Aurobindo, the Mother and the World Union movement. His wife, Smt. Soobha Goswami, a musician, and his son, Sumit Goswami, participated. There was a meeting at Mayureswar on the 22nd of October evening and Shri Goswami spoke on the different aspects of Sri Aurobindo's teachings and on the World Union movement. Shri Bijoy K. Kundu presided. A meeting was organized on 27 October at Bakreswar Dham when the principal of the institution, Shri Nrisingha Prosad Bhattacharyajee, presided. The young group expressed keen interest in World Union. A meeting was also organized on the 2nd of November evening, when Shri Goswami spoke about world unity and on the scheme of World Union Cultural and Economic Council. On 6 November evening World Union Sodepur Centre held its monthly meeting and also a monthly meeting of World Union Cultural and Economic Council.

Butwal World Union Butwal Centre held regular meetings every Saturday in the month of October. Shri S. N. Bhende spoke on the 1st and the 8th of October on the subject of the law of karma and subjects related to it, and emphasized that it is a must for a man to preserve the thoughts of oneness and brotherhood towards others, including one's family, office, society, state, and the world; and then explained what one has to do to reach that level of consciousness: he said that one has to do the needful in thought, word and deed. Shri Dube also spoke on the subject. On 22 and 29 October the members of the centre met in the M. R. M. Camp with others of like-minded organizations. Reading of spiritually inspiring extracts highlighted the occasion. The members of the other organizations apprised the president of World Union Butwal Centre that they would be attending World Union meetings in the future.

Chakradharpur World Union Chakradharpur Centre organized the first Singhbhum district convention of World Union and Sri Aurobindo Centres on 6 November 1977 at the premises of Sri Aurobindo Society Centre, Chakradharpur. Dr. P. R. Chandra, chairman, World Union Chakradharpur Centre was the convenor and Shri Samar Basu, coordinator, World Union Eastern Region, participated as the main speaker of the convention. On the arrival of Shri Basu, the members of Shishuchakra welcomed him and he hoisted the Mother's flag; with this solemn function the convention started.

In the afternoon session Shri Basu congratulated the organizers of the convention and spoke on the five aspects of the Mother's Birth Centenary celebration, being swadhyaya, education, health, the Sanskrit language, and human unity. He also suggested that each centre should run a study circle at least twice a week. In the evening a mass meeting was held when Shri Basu spoke on the subject, "The Formation of World Government and the Role of World Union Based on Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy". Shri Prashant Chakraborty, secretary of World Union Chakradharpur Centre, gave information about the formation and activities of this centre. Group songs were offered by young members and the programme was concluded with a vote of thanks by Shri B. B. De Choudhury, secretary of Sri Aurobindo Society Centre, Chakradharpur.

On the next day Shri Samar Basu addressed the local girls' high and middle schools on Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's ideals, and suggested that the staff and students observe the Mother's Birth Centenary through an essay competition and elocution tests.

The United Nations Association of Livingstone, Zambia

Mr. Arvind Devalia from Sri Aurobindo Ashram is now working in Zambia. On 1 September 1977 he spoke to the Livingstone branch of The Theosophical Society on Sri Aurobindo's yoga, followed by a short meditation. The same group gathered on 8 September to hear 40 taped minutes of Sunil's music. Then, on October 19, 1977, a public meeting in Livingstone was addressed by Arvind Devalia on the United Nations and the United Nations Association; those present resolved to form a Livingstone branch of the United Nations Association. He was elected to its committee.

Mr. Devalia reports he has met many people there who are interested in Pondicherry and who read the *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Mother India, World Union*, and literature on Auroville.

THE MOTHER'S BIRTH CENTENARY SPECIAL ISSUE

For readers of "Focus" who do not receive the journal, we repeat that there will be no January issue of *World Union* journal. Instead, a souvenir number in honour of the Mother's Birth Centenary will be released in February. It will be a joint issue.

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