

"expropriatory" taxes. But to try to create conditions, which will make industrial investment even nearly as profitable as investment in anti-social speculation, will be to pay homage to the speculator and black-marketeer and to attack the problem from just the wrong end. Prospective profits in the field of industrial investment are not unduly low today. What has to be done is, first, to remove the well-known bottle-necks and material barriers to industrial investment in our country, and secondly, to launch a devastating crusade against black-marketing such as will make any attempt to seek profits in that field an adventure too hazardous to be worth undertaking.

Militarism, and the cluster of conditions attracting investment along anti-social speculative channels to the detriment of genuine productive invest-

ment,—these are the two features of the existing milieu on which attention has to be concentrated in drawing up the strategy for fighting the inflation in India today. It is only those who are not prepared to face a fight against these two evils, for some reason or other, who are driven more and more to rely on measures such as drastic curtailment of expenditure on long-term development projects—measures which may bring us temporary comfort for the present, at a heavy sacrifice of the future. If and when these two evils are combated and a plan for economic construction undertaken, the problem of inflation, connected with the problem of financing that plan, may still persist—but it will be a problem which, in its social and economic character, will be very much different from the problem of inflation that we face today.

Book Review

DECADENCE by Prof. C.E.M. JOAD (Faber And Faber)

REVIEWED BY M. G BAILUR

In a most valuable and recent addition to his long list of books on philosophy for the man in the street, Prof. Joad has sought to diagnose the peculiar malaise of our times. I do not propose to go at any great length into his analysis of the sources from which he thinks "decadence" flows. But if I have followed him rightly, he considers that, at various times throughout recorded history, as now in our own, men have ceased to regard the values of Truth, Goodness and Beauty as objectively real, and this scepticism, or what he calls the "dropping of the object", has not only permeated their behaviour but has produced a particular kind of intellectual and artistic activity which he calls decadent. He calls it decadent in the sense that, according to him, it is uncreative, has no end beyond itself and can subsist only by living back upon itself until overtaken by its own inevitable exhaustion.

I have found the line of his

thinking a fascinating one, and the examples he cites from history and from the modern world of art and literature, which add enormously to the interest of the book, would appear to bear out his claim that loss of faith in the ultimate objective reality of values results in frustration and in a sense of emptiness. Such a civilisation, lacking any inner stimulus and creative urge, succumbs in the end to the forces of decadence and the loss of nerve which it has itself generated.

I have no wish to quarrel with Prof. Joad's history. But here are two separate questions involved, one historical, the other logical. On the historical view, it is possible, I think, to show that there is a certain recognisable pattern in the sequence of historical facts, for example, decadence ensuing from loss of faith in values. It may be that belief in the objective existence of values does really in the end furnish important ballast, an in-

ference which Prof. Joad himself does not explicitly draw and which is not warranted by anything we can observe in periods marked by a wide prevalence of respect for values. Where, however, one is tempted to join issue with him is his tacit assumption that logical proof of the objective reality of values has thus been demonstrated. To accept a belief because it has proved profitable from the human point of view may appear pragmatically justified, considering that we have no other point of view, but its logical status remains uncertain, and Prof. Joad for all his tireless endeavour to re-instate values in the world of objective fact, does not make it any more certain.

The classical period in art and literature furnishes the clearest evidence that a rounded conception of perfectibility, of values firmly and inaccessibly fixed, could no more avert the seemingly inevitable relapse into stasis and petrification than solipsism

could avert decadence. I believe that, if we are to seek a logically satisfying basis for the view that values are objectively real, independent of human 'prehension', we must abandon any attempt to construct propitiatory proofs out of the possible misfortunes of unbelief. One is arrested at once by two rather familiar fallacies in Prof. Joad's arguments. The first is that if you cannot prove a proposition, then the opposite is true. The second is more plausible but equally fallacious; it is plausible because the hidden confusion of terms is not at first sight apparent.

Prof. Joad, for instance, brings in the supposed parallellism of our sensation of temperature in juxtaposition to our feeling for beauty. He contends that, considering that there can be two different guesses about the temperature of a room when the subjective circumstances of the two percipients are differently conditioned, the judgment that the temperature is such and such is a value judgment of the same logical order as our feeling for beauty, because there was a time when there were no thermometers and no means of objectively verifying it. The confusion is as to what really is to be inferred: the fact of temperature or the ascertainability of its degree. In assessing the degree of temperature, the fact of temperature is assumed and need not be proved, and can be established, if questioned, independently of one's feelings. It is only when degrees of temperature, not normally susceptible of computation by the senses, are concerned, does the issue seemingly arise. Yet it is a false issue.

Without some method, or standard, or instrument of measuring temperature, to say "the temperature of the room is so and so"

is logically absurd, thermometer or no thermometer. One can understand a person saying "it is very warm", and another saying "it is rather chilly", with regard to the temperature of the same room, but in either case they do not profess to make a statement as to the external fact of the room's temperature, but are only describing their bodily feelings. If both were holding their fingers to a candle flame, they would be less likely to differ. But philosophers disdain examples where clarity is possible and would rather seek those where confusion is easy. It is great fun to oiler analogy the ambiguous temperature of an ordinary room and forget that high temperature burns and low temperature free-

zes, facts which could be known independently of a thermo-meter.

Now beauty, apart from the percipient, has no link of an ascertainable kind with the objective world. It is apprehended by the senses, but can be apprehended in no other way ascertainable by the remotest inference. I do not think that Prof. Joad himself considers the analogy he has offered as in any sense an argument proving anything. With much of its general outlook, it is easy to be in immediate sympathy, but to share with, him his concern, on purely pragmatic grounds, for the preservation of values whose denial he considers fatal to civilisation, does not involve a logical assent with his thesis.

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