

A life harmonious, good and beautiful

The birth
Centenary of
The Mother of
Sri Aurobindo
Ashram falls
on February 21

"O OUR Mother, O Soul of India, Mother who hast never forsaken thy children even in the days of darkest depression, even when they turned away from thy voice, served other masters and denied thee, now when they have arisen and the light is on thy face in this dawn of thy liberation, in this great hour we salute thee. Guide us so that the horizon of freedom opening before us may be also a horizon of true life in the community of the nations. Guide us so that we may be always on the side of great ideals and show to men thy true visage, as a leader in the ways of the spirit and a friend and helper of all the peoples".

This was the invocation with which the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram greeted India's

emergence as a free nation on August 15, 1947.

It was Sri Aurobindo, described by Tagore as "the Voice-Incarnate of India's soul", who had put dynamism into India's aspiration for freedom. He left the political arena when he was inwardly assured of the country attaining the goal. But the important role India must play in building the future of humanity was a theme to which his utterance returned again and again even when he was engrossed in his Yoga.

And the Mother too was never tired of reminding the people that "India is the country in which the psychic law can and must reign and the time had come" for that. Besides, this was the only salvation possible for the country "whose consciousness has unfortunately been falsified by the influence and domination of a foreign country, but which, in spite of everything, is in possession of a unique spiritual heritage".

Sri Aurobindo made Pondicherry the seat of his Yoga in 1910. The Mother met him upon her first visit to Pondicherry in 1914 and at once knew that her mission was the same as his. In 1920 she returned to Pondicherry, this time to collaborate with Sri Aurobindo in his Yoga. She never left the place again.

Although the Mother was born in France, she was French only in regard to her citizenship. Her parents had settled down in Paris just a year before her birth, coming from the Middle East — of an Egyptian family with a historic past.

But such a background does not go farther than satisfying our curiosity for the Mother once said, "I belong to no nation, no civilisation, no society, no race but to the Divine. I give obedience to no master, no ruler, no law, no social convention but to the Divine."

She found that the present reality, in all its social, political and conventional aspects, was a distortion of Truth wrought by falsehood. But the Truth was in the process of manifestation despite all signs to the contrary. In fact, the very evolutionary afflatus that was inherent in the creation would not allow things to be otherwise. As Sri Aurobindo puts it, "An eternal perfection is moulding us into its own image."

But, enamoured of falsehood, man could certainly delay the process. Here is the relevance of the spiritual awakening of man. But such an awakening ought not to inspire man to renounce life. Life must be transformed.

Sri Aurobindo explains his vision of transformation for the satisfaction of seekers in his great works like "The Life Divine" and "The Synthesis of Yoga". Here is an outline of the vision given by the Mother for the benefit of children:

"There is an ascending evolution in nature which goes from the stone to the plant, from the plant to the animal, from the animal to man. Because man is, for the moment, the last rung at the summit of the ascending evolution, he considers himself as the final stage in this ascension and believes there can be nothing on earth superior to him. In that he is mistaken.

In his physical nature he is yet almost wholly an animal, a thinking and speaking animal, but still an animal in his material habits and instincts. Undoubtedly, nature cannot be satisfied with such an imperfect result; she endeavours to bring out a being who will be to man what man is to the animal, a being who will remain a man in its external form, and yet whose consciousness will rise far above the mental and its slavery to ignorance.

"Sri Aurobindo came upon earth to teach this truth to men. He told them that man is only a transitional being living in a mental consciousness, but with

the possibility of acquiring a new consciousness, the Truth-consciousness, and capable of living a life perfectly harmonious, good and beautiful, happy and fully conscious. During the whole of his life upon earth, Sri Aurobindo gave all his time to establish in himself this consciousness he called supramental, and to help those gathered around him to realise it".

Sri Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry was a scope created by the Mother for those seekers who aspired to participate in the realisation of Sri Aurobindo's vision. To help children grow in their awareness of the true purpose of life, she created the Sri

Aurobindo International Centre of Education. Here, the students were not subjected to the formula of following a rigid course of studies and passing certain tests which was "an obsolete and ineffective way of knowing if the students are intelligent, willing and attentive". The emphasis is on the integral development of the child, giving him more and more freedom as he grows up in choosing the subjects he would study, and stressing the fact that education was meant for the growth of consciousness and not to meet any immediate narrow end.

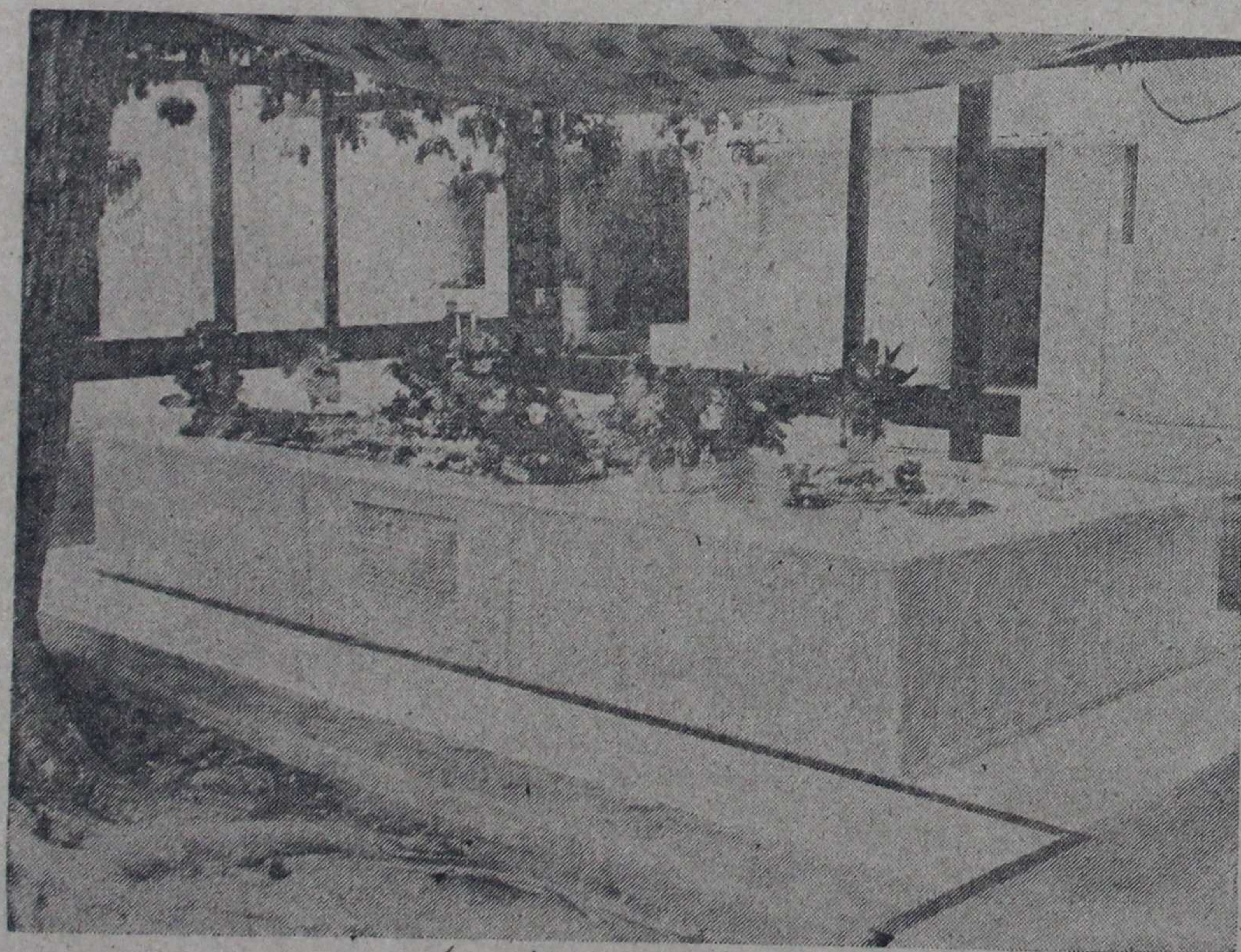
However, the external institutions that grew around the Mother are not sufficient to describe her work on earth. It is the field of consciousness where she and Sri Aurobindo worked primarily, for every worthy conquest must be made at that plane before its signs can manifest in the physical plane.

In their Yogic mission. It is to pave the way for what Sri Aurobindo describes as the Descent of the Supermind that they worked. "At present mankind is undergoing an evolutionary crisis" and the solution to the crisis lies in man consenting to collaborate with the forces of Truth. That alone can tide him over the crisis.

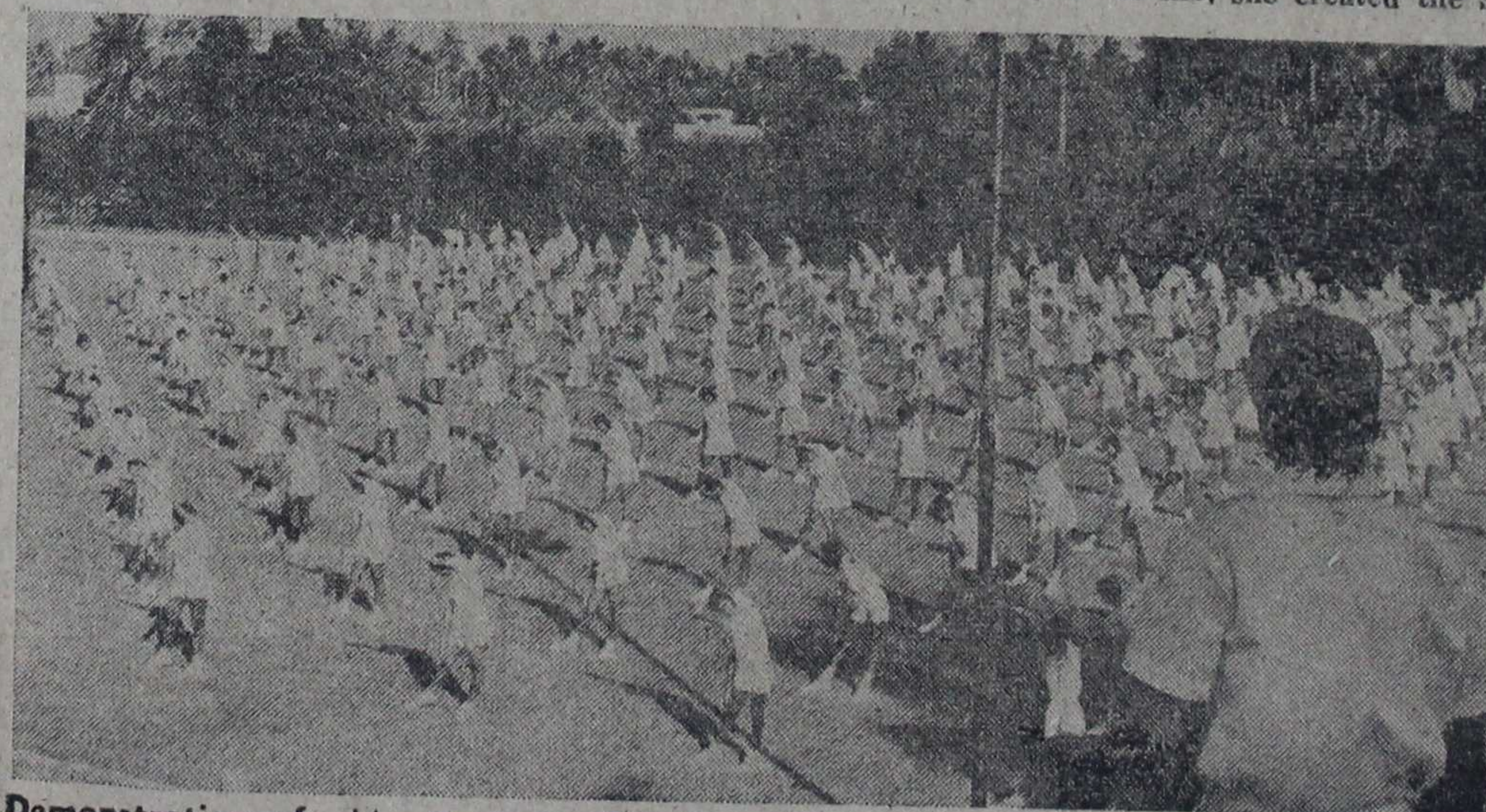
The Mother left her body on the 17th of November, 1973. But she continues to be a living reality for whosoever is open to her guidance.



Sri Aurobindo Ashram



The samadhi of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.



Demonstration of Mass-exercise by the students of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education.