CHAPTER THREE

JOURNEY TO A WAR

IN TIME OF WAR WITH A VERSE COMMENTARY

In Time of War is another principal political composition of the thirties by Auden. Like, Look, Stranger!, it deals with various political ideas. It brings out the Marxist concept of evolution of man's history in terms of dialectical materialism. The conviction that the social and political structure of any society in any period is determined by the relations of productions is the main theme of the volume. The present composition also deals with the war-situation in China. The fear and dread of Fascism, the violence and terror of Fascists, the expliotation by capitalists and imperialists are the recurring ideas. The verse commentary, particularly, puts emphasis on the necessity of some moral choice and action on the part of the people to get disposed of the crisis of the period. Neverthless, the solutions that Auden arrives at are not necessarily Marxist solutions. Thus, In Time of War marks the beginning of a departure from Marxism to Christianity in Auden's ideology.

The English publishing house, Faber and Faber requested Auden and Christopher Isherwood to write a travel-book about East in 1937. Auden and Isherwood proposed to go to China and write a book on China. They left England in January 1938 and returned at the end of July. They spent nearly about four months in China in the time of war. The Sino-Japanes war was in full swing at that time. They met many people and conferred with them. They visited several battle-fronts. Journey to A War was the product of their China visit. It was published in 1939

in London as well as in New York. The book is an account of their experiences in China. The prose-composition of the book was apparently written by Isherwood. Auden wrote thirty four sonnets and a verse commentary for the book.

In Time of War consists of twenty sonnets with a verse commentary. The work reveals "an extended philosophical essay on the political and spiritual condition of the world at the time of writing."[44] It gives a brief summary of mankind from the beginning of life on the earth. It seems that the speaker of the composition is observing the local scene in China from his own point of view. In other words, In Time of War, is a socio-historical account of mankind in terms of Marxism. Neverthless, it is related to the war-situation in China and the social and political crisis of Europe.

In making of the Auden Canon in 1950, Auden dropped some of the sonnets from the sequence, originally numbered, IX, X, XIV, XV, XX, XXV and XXXI, and the verse commentary. But in the present chapter, the original sonnets from The English Auden are discussed. These sonnets dramatize the socio-political and cultural history of man since the beginning of his life to the present day. It describes man's progress through various stages of economic, political and historical developments. The first twelve sonnets account for the history of man from his creation to the present day. The rest of the sonnets review the phenomenon of chivalry, the rise of phrophets and poets, the process

of civilization in the form of finance, churches, monasteries, scientific discoveries and the rise of democrady. Thus In Time of War makes a philosophical investigation into the various stages of socio-economic structure of human society. It deals with socio-historical analysis of human society. So it gives an account of the rise and fall of religion, the emergence of political institutions, literature, art, modern sciences etc. There are scenes of misery and helplessness of common people. Men become the slaves and victims of political, social and economic forces. Neverthless, the very essence of human life is man's struggle for existence. The common people in any society at any particular period always struggle for progress. Though the solutions that Auden arrives at the end of this work are non-Marxist and bourgeoise, the history of mankind that he elaborates throughout the work can be interpreted as Marxist analysis of history.

The political context of the work is then certainly the Marxist context. Broadly speaking, the various scattered references of social, political and cultural evolution of man, in the sonnets reveal the Marxist interpretation of history. Neverthless, Auden cannot be described as a Marxist poet because the interest that he took in Marxism was not political. His interest in Marxism was mainly intellectual. These interests never became political. Apart from The Dance of Death and On The Frontier, Auden's writings are not seriously affected by Marxism. "His Marxism is much more a conception of human nature

than a political theory."[45] It helps Auden in attempting a correct diagnosis of social sickness and provides him with a programme for action. Thus, Marxism served Auden as a medium of thought to reach at a certain analysis of the social decay of the period, and prepare a certain programme of action for him as well as for his group, the intellectuals such as Stephen Spender, C.D. Lewis, MacNeice Louis etc. The analysis of the period that the Auden-group attempted through the composition of poems provided them with some intellectual relaxation from the tensions and the sore dismay of the period.

Marxism is a scientific system of philosophical, economic and socio-political thought, produced by Marx and Engels. One of the principal components of Marxism is the concept of "historical materialism". It is as well the theoretical and methodological basis of sociology and other social sciences. According to Marx and Engels the history of all hitherto existing society, is the history of class-struggles. The primitive communal system was the first socio-economic formation of society. It is preceded by the feudal system. Feudalism follows the slave-owning system and it preceds capitalism. The economic system of feudalism, for all the variety of its forms in different countries and at different times, has one typical feature: the principal means of production, the land, is in monopoly ownership of the ruling class of feudal lords. The political structure of feudal society differs at various stages of its developments from separate tiny states to highly

centralized absolute monarchies. The fall of feudalism gives rise to capitalism. Capitalism is based on private ownership of the means of production and the source of capitalists' enrichment is appropriation of surplus values. Thus, Marx elaborated his main idea of the natural historical process of social development by explaining the economic sphere from the different spheres of social life and the relations of productions from all social relations. Marx and Engels argued in the Manifesto of the Communist Party that the fall of capitalism and the formation of the new social system were inevitable. They pointed at the historical mission of the proletariat as the revolutionary transformer of the old society and the builder of the new society. Marx defined proletariat as "the class of modern wage-labourers, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour power in order to live".[46]

Though Marxism does not seem to have seriously affected the writings of Auden except the plays like, The Dance of Death, On The Frontier and The Ascent of F6, In Time of War gives an account of the scattered references that may be related to the Marxist concept of historical materialsism. Sonnet I begins with the creation myth where the material world is progressing effortlessly:

> "So from the years the gifts were showered; each
> Ran off with his at once into his life:
> Bee took the politics that make a hive,
> Fish swam as fish, peach settled into peach"
>
> (EA, p.251.)

Finally "there came a childish creature"; it refers to the emergence of man in the animal form. It should be asserted that "the creation myth is here completely secular".[47] In contrast with the vegetable~~s~~ and animal world, man is a uniformed creature. He is capable of creating different civilizations: "On whom the years could model any feature,". As he is not easily classificable he is compared to "a leopard or a dove". Though he "was continually mistaken", he was still capable of shaping his own future. So he "chose his love".

Sonnet II shows how man was exposed to the world outside. Human beings struggled against nature for their existence and "they knew exactly what to do outside". Their authentic relationship with the world of nature (animal world, plant etc.) brought progressive change in them. But, in the beginning, in spite of their hard efforts, they did not understand anything. The dogs did not aid them and the stream became dumb:

> "... they could not understand
> The dogs now who, before, had always aided;
> The stream was dumb with whom they'd
> always planned."
>
> (EA,p. 251.)

Thus, while facing a number of difficulties and dangers of nature and at the same time being utterly ignorant of nature, "they wept and quarrelled" "freedom was so wild". Even then, the natural dangers and punishments did not stop, they grew

wilder. The sonnet portrays the primitive man's life when he had to face the natural calamities constantly. The primitive man was "not in a state of Being, but in a state of Becoming."[48]

Sonnet III continues to portray the primitive life of man and his struggle with nature. His struggle is to understand her and consume her. He could follow the things by smell. He did not have any knowledge about direction: "only a smell had feelings to make known, / Only an eye could point in a direction". The birds and animals that he hunted as food did not have any names. It were these primitive people who must have given names to the birds and animals that they hunted. He courted his bride "to rapture with a sound", and maintained the creation process. He was sometimes amazed to see an entirely new thing in the nature, and he shook his head "with hate for things he'd never seen".

Sonnet IV deals with the progress of primitive communal system of society. The primitive system of society was slowly transformed. People came together and began to live in tribal groups. There is a reference to a young tribe in the second stanza of the sonnet:

> "Beyond him his young cousins in the city
> Pursued their rapid and unnatural course,
> Believed in nothing but were easy-going,
> And treated strangers like a favourite horse."

(EA, p.252.)

The young generation "persued rapid and unnatural" progress.

They treated the strangers "like a favourite horse". This suggests that the strangers from other tribes were treated like slaves to cultivate the land. The principal means of production was land. These changes clearly manifest that the primitive communal system was gradually transforming into feudal society. Now, "the seasons stood like guards about his ways", but he overcome the natural calamities

> "And he changed a little,
> But took his colour from the earth,
> And grew in likeness to his sheep and cattle."

(Ea, p.252.)

His familiarity with the "sheep and cattle" and their use for his own sake, and the use of the strangers as his "favourite horse" clearly show that the tribal form of society was gradually being transformed into a feudal society where agriculture became the principal source of income.

Sonnet V describes the rise of feudal society and its gradual establishments. The economic structure of the primitive tribal community was immensely transformed by the new agricultural economic system. The land became the principal means of production and the owners of the land became feudal lords of the ruling class. The rise of the new ruling class is described as rich, bountiful and fearless. They drew the attention of the damsels with their horse and sword. This is the typical knight-errantry culture which was born and brought up only in

feudal society.

> "His generous bearing was a new invention:
> For life was slow; earth needed to be careless:
> With horse and sword he drew the girls' attention;
> He was the Rich, the Bountiful, the Fearless".
>
> (EA, p.252.)

The knights were able to increase their knowledge about the world by "long migration", and they grew "sharp-witted" in the long migration. Their sharpened knowledge and learning about the world by long migration enhanced their importance and they were turned into a ruling class. They became feudal lords and began to talk about "law and order".

> "Or sat in offices and stole,
> And spoke approvingly of Law and Order,
> And hated life with all his soul."
>
> (EA, p.253.)

The sonnet, on the whole, describes the political establishment of feudal society. repetitive

Sonnet VI presents the rise of witch-craft, magic, worship of nature, the science of forecasting and palmistry. It is a typical culture of superstition which is abundant in feudal society.

> "He watched the stars and noted birds in flight;
> The rivers flooded or the Empire fell:
> He made predictions and was sometimes right;
> His lucky guesses were rewarded well."
>
> (EA, p.253.)

The superstitious ideas gave birth to many myths and legends. The birth of religion can be traced in these myths and legends:

> "And he fell in love with Truth before he knew her,
> And rode into imaginary lands,
> With solitude and fasting hoped to woo her,
> And mocked at those who served her with their hands."

(EA, p.253.)

Truth is a relative value produced by a particular society, at a particular period. Here "Truth" may be interpreted as an expression of moral value in a feudal society. The lines clearly reveal that with the rise of religion a class of monks emerged to woo the "Truth" through solitude and fasting. The tremendous impact of religion on people in feudal society compelled them to believe in a particular type of morality which was suitable to the ruling class.

> "And followed her and looked into her eyes;
> Saw there reflected every human weakness,
> And saw himself as one of many men."

(EA, p.253.)

Obviously, it can be said that religion and the typical morality produced by religion at different periods became the useful means of the existing political authority.

Sonnet VII gives an account of how the power of religion was used by the feudal lords (the political authority) to

expliot the masses. They appropriated the agricultural produce of the masses. They used religion for their own sake and the monks became their servants:

> "He was their servant-some say he was blind--
> And moved among their faces and their things:
> Their feeling gathered in him like a wind
> And sang: they cried- 'It is a God that sings'-"

(EA, p.253.)

The class of monks and priests is the authority of church and monastry in a feudal society. They were made the godly figures and so the masses worshiped them. This was a deliberate attempt of the ruling class to alienate the monks and priests from the masses. They "walked like an assassin through the town,/And looked at men and did not like them". Certainly, the ruling class did not want the church authority to overpower them. On the other hand, feudal lords used the power of religion for their selfish purposes. Thus, the sonnet reveals the socio-political phase of the feudal society.

The antagonism of feudal society is based upon the expliotation of the peasants by the feudal lords. It gives rise to the various forms of social conflict. The most acute forms of antagonism in feudal society were the peasant wars and the popular uprisings among the peasants. The emergence of the peasants as an important class in feudal society as against the feudal lords was a significant phenomenon in socio-political

history of feudal society. The principal means of production, the land, was captured by the peasant class and consequently the feudal system of society gradually collapsed. The class-struggle between the peasants and the feudal lords led to the gradual decay of the feudal society. The evolution of society is the dialectical principle of history according to Marx. The fall of feudalism is preceded by the rise of capitalism. The sonnet VIII gives an account of the fall of feudalism. The existence of feudal lords in a newly emerging capitalist society was obsolete. Like a liberal leader he tried to find the notion of equality. He also made an unsuccessful attempt of organising the masses to resist capitalism. This is a typical situation of feudal lords in a decaying feudal society.

> "He turned his field into a meeting-place,
> And grew the tolerant ironic eye,
> And formed the mobile money-changer's face,
> And found the notion of equality."

(EA, p.254.)

In order to gain sympathies of the people in a newly emerging capitalist society, he considered the strangers as "brothers" and "with his spires he made a human sky." But as he was already a decadent in a capitalist society, people "stored his learning like a box" in museums and his property and estate was seen with suspicion. He lived very expensively, and he was strangely

alienated in a capitalist society.

> "It grew so fast his life was overgrown,
> And he forgot what once it had been made for,
> And gathered into crowds and was alone."

(EA, p.254.)

Sonnet IX presents the collapse of feudal society. The emergence of capitalism brings about a complete fall of feudalism.

> "They died and entered the closed life like nuns:
> Even the very poor lost something:oppresion
> Was no more a fact; and the self-centred ones
> Took up an even more extreme position."

(EA, p.254.)

The oppression and the expliotation of the poor by feudal lords came to an end. A typical "self-centred" bourgeoise class emerged as a product of capitalist social system. The kings, the feudal lords and the saints were "distributed among the woods and the oceans". The kings and the saints became the remains of the feudal society. That is to say they lost their power in the capitalist society. They were decayed and doomed. So, "they hear their deaths lamented in our voice".

Sonnet X presents an account of the socio-economic formation of capitalism. In a capitalist society the means of production are owned by capitalists. Wealth and the economic powers of the society were centralized in the hands of the capitalists. Consequently capitalists gained political power

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through this economic power. The church and the monastry were gradually detoriated as a political force in a capitalist society. Besides, capitalism introduced a new form of expliotation. The churches and monasteries were replaced by courts. Thus, the expliotation of the masses was taken over by the capitalists from the feudal lords. These ideas are expressed in the sonnet X. A newly emerging bourgeoise class is described as "a young child". Marx defined bourgeoise as "the class of modern capitalists, owners of the means of production and employers of wage labour."[49] The bourgeoise became familiar "like their wives." On the contrary, the poor people saved up their pennies for the capitalists. The capitalists appropriated the pennies of the poor and became extra-ordinarily rich and wealthy. The appropriation of the pennies was done by the capitalists very skilfully. Their appearance before the people was in disguised form, so they were never revealed to them. They could not realize that they were ruling over them and that they were explioting them. In a feudal society, on the other hand, the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed was mostly clear. But in the capitalist society this relationship became ambiguous. Besides, the capitalists earned social prestige by presenting themselves before the people in a certain social context. For example, "The beautiful stone courts were built where they/Could leave him to be worshipped and well fed". The courts became a centre of "fear and greed". The poor people became helpless. The new forms of oppressions tyrranized

them. The phrase, "the tyrant's citadel" may suggest an impending terror among poor people caused by the law and court world.

Sonnet XI continues to give an account of the oppression of the people by the capitalists. "He looked in all His wisdom from the throne/Down on the humble boy who kept the ship". Here "the throne" suggests the accumulation of political power in the hands of the capitalists. The capitalists are described as companions to "the eagle". The symbol of eagle like hawk in Auden suggests the impending peril of fascism. It shows that the capitalists who have joined the hands with the fascists have learnt the art of violence:

> "But with the eagle he was always willing
> To go where it suggested, and adored
> And learnt from it the many ways of killing".

(EA, p.255.)

The Sonnet XII expresses an idea of evolution. It predicts that the age of capitalism is going to be perished. It is the historical principle of dialetics - "And the age ended, and the last deliverer died/In bed, grown idle and unhappy". Though capitalism was "a sterile dragon lingered to a natural death", there was still an impending doom of fascism. In other words, the capitalist oppression was disguised in the form of Nazi and the fascist forces. The Nazies and fascists struck down the people and continued violence.

"... The vanquished powers were glad
To be invisible and free: without remorse
Struk down the sons who stayed into their course,
And ravished the daughters, and drove the
fathers mad."

(EA, p.256.)

Sonnet XIII, and the rest of the sonnets from the sequence deal with the actual war situation in China. The threatening fear of fascism and its terrible effects upon common people is the central political theme in these sonnets. The political ideas which are expressed in the earlier sonnets highlighted the Marxist concept of history. According to Marxism, the historical progress of man as a process of evolution is based upon the dialectical principles of history. The primitive communal system of society was gradually transformed into a feudal society; the fall of feudalism gave birth to capitalism. The development of socio-economic formation of society in this manner is the Marxist interpretation of human history. Religion, art, literature, the various political bodies etc. are based upon the socio-economic formation of society and they are subject to change their forms according to the economic relations at different times in different societies. This Marxist idea is expressed in a number of earlier sonnets. The idea that religion is used as a means of oppression by the ruling class is also expressed in many sonnets.

Surprisingly enough, Auden does not deal with the Marxist political idea of the formation of a new social system, the

system that precedes the capitalism. Marx and Engels prophesised that the fall of capitalism will bring the age of socialism. In the Manifesto of the Communist Party, they elucidated the idea of the historical mission of the proletariat as the revolutionary transformer of the old society, and the builder and new champion of the interests of all toiling masses. They advanced the idea of the dictatorship of proletariat in the Manifesto. The political solutions that Auden finds out to the particular critical dismay of the thirties are Auden's own solutions. They are not necessarily the Marxist solutions. The solutions are expressed in the last three sonnets of the sonnet sequence and in the verse commentary. Auden's solutions to the political termoil of the thirties determine Auden's gradual ideological departure from Marxism. This is a prominent ideological phenomenon in the developmental stage of Auden's career. What different ideological solutions Auden reached at is the subject of the rest of the sonnets and the verse commentary.

A prominent recurrent political idea in Auden is the impending fear of fascism. It is expressed in the rest of the sonnets. In Sonnet XIII we find the forces of fascism and imperialism are at work. So we "hear the morning's injured weeping, and know why: / Cities and men have fallen" The international leaders who are busy in organizing war, "employ the Fairly-Noble unifying Lie". The whole of the Western civilization is collapsed and people have been wronged by fascism and imperialism. The cities and men have fallen.

The unjust and cruel rulers, on the other hand, are employing "the Fairly-Noble unifying Lie". The earth has been constructed by "the Eighteen Provinces". The fear of the international war is impending.

In Sonnet XIV we find the common people trapped in a war-situation. The fascists have produced the sky that "throbs like a feverish forehead":

> "Yes, we are going to suffer, now; the sky
> Throbs like a feverish forehead; pain is real;
> The groping searchlights suddenly reveal
> The little natures that will make us cry."

(EA, p.256.)

The fascists are hard upon the poor and the innocent people. Their guns resist ~~against~~ those who are socially aware. The private massacres of all "Women, Jews, the Rich, the Human Race" are taking place. The poor people are thus, in a perplexed state of mind. Now and then, they face a dreadful anxiety of war. So their vexation is intensified. So they say:

> "The mountains cannot judge us when we lie:
> We dwell upon the earth; the earth obeys
> The intelligent and evil till they die."

(EA, p.257.)

Sonnet XV describes the true nature of the fascists. The fascists are free and they are isolated like rich people.

Engines bear them through the sky in the time of war. That is to say they wander in the sky through war-planes, so that they can attack the people and kill them. Their principal object of such wandering is to explode and devastate the cities. They can only see the breathing city as a target. Consequently, the common people are deprived of freedom and their own choice. They are turned away "from freedom and become/Bound like the heiress in her mother's womb." They are made helpless as the poor have always been.

Sonnet XVI describes the nature of the war in cold terms. To a Fascist or to an imperialist war cannot be a terrible thing. Whereas for common people war is cruel, strange and absurd. For a Fascist the war is as simple as a monument. It is an everyday happening in their life as "a boy brings milk in bowls" and the "flags on the map assert that troops were sent". They have planned out how to develop terror among people: "There is a plan/For living men in terror of their lives." The common people who are struggling to exist can be lost and can "miss their wives". But the ideas of freedom, equality and socialism can be true "although men die,/ And we can watch a thousand faces/Made active by one lie". The evil that has entered the life of common people can be pointed out very easily. The maps can really point out the places "where the life is evil now".

In Sonnet XVII the evil and pitiless attempts of fascism are described. People are massacred and shot mercilessly in

the time of war. Each place is hidden by bandage and the knowledge of the people is restricted. The poet says that the truth of the fascist is not like our truth. They groan, and we are isolated like remote plants. The isolation of the common uninjured people is very dreadful. In Sonnet XVIII we find common man is thrown away "far from the heart of the culture". He was used to such isolation in the time of war. His normal life was disturbed. He was abandoned by his general, and he had to close his eyes under "a padded quilt". He was terribly affected by the impending doom of fascism. As a result he had to put an end to his normal common life,

> "No vital knowledge perished in his skull;
> His jokes were stale; like wartime, he was dull;
> His name is lost for ever like his books.
> He neither knew nor chase the Good..."

(EA, p.258.)

He was totally confused and utterly perplexed in the state of isolation. He tried to make his life meaningful "like a comma", but he was disgraced before dogs. However he thought hopefully that wherever there is "waters/Mountains and houses, may also be men". In Sonnet XIX the account of the oppression by capitalist continues.

> "But in the evening the oppression lifted;
> The peaks come into focus; it had rained:
> Across the lawns and cultured flowers drifted
> The conversation of the highly trained."

(EA, p.258.)

The phrase, "the highly trained" can be interpreted as the fascist spies. The gardners watch these spies while they are reading in the drive, and he listens to their finished "exchange of views". The armies are ready with all the instruments to destroy the cities and to turn the land into a waste land. The cities are massacred "with all its young men slain/The women weeping, and the towns in terror."

In Sonnet XX the terrible and dreadful nature of fascists is described. The fascists carry terror with them as a woman carries purse with her. They flinch from the horizons like a gun and all the rivers and the railways that run look like a curse. The fascists huddle like children sent to school and they always bring a new disaster. Such is the cruel and critical time in which we live here. The tone of political atmosphere of the crisis and dismay in the thirties is correctly caught by Auden in this sonnet.

Sonnet XXI deals with the picture of the decaying capitalism. In a capitalist class, crime, "the daring and the chatter will go on." The capitalists are the decadents of the decaying society and their fall is inevitable. The capitalists walk the earth and they realise how they themselves are defeated. They are wandering in the world, they do not understand. Some capitalist lost a world they never understood. The sense of loss and decay that they are experiencing is natural to them as their fall is inevitable historically. They are to be doomed: "Loss is their shadow-wife,

Anxiety/Receives them like a grand hotel". They are regretting to "hear/The call of the forbidden cities". The people from "the forbidden cities" are described as "strangers". They may be interpreted as revolutionaries who are the makers of a new city, a new world in which "Freedom" will come back to "each door and tree".

The sonnets numbered from thirteenth to twentyfour~~th~~ deal with the war-themes. The nature of fascism, their impending threat upon the poor people, their extreme violence and terror in the time of war, massacre of young men and women, the destruction of ~~the~~ cities by them, the inevitable fall of capitalism and imperialism, their alienation from the masses, their vital support to the fascists are some of the war-themes expressed in these poems. The marxist idea of class-struggle and the socio-economic formations of society at different time are expressed in the first twelve sonnets of the sequence. The idea of revolution that Marx and Engels developed in the Manifesto of the Communist Party is surprisingly missing in Auden. Auden has his own idea of revolution which is not necessarily the Marxist idea of revolution. Marx and Engels believed that the revolution will bring the age of communism in the form of the dictatorship of proletariat as a preceding society to capitalism. The Marxist theory emphatically demands the revolutionary social and economic changes in the social structure of society in order to bring into existence a new world, a new society. Auden too aims to build up a new society. But

like Marxism he does not demand a substantial change in the economic and social spheres of the society. The change that he demands is the change in the individual, the change in the heart of the individual. It is not the social and political environment that should be transformed, but it is rather the individual who should be changed. It does not mean that Auden does not aim to change the society. In fact, he demands the change in the individual to change the society. His conviction is that if people change, they can change the society. On the contrary, Marxism believes in bringing up the fundamental change in the socio-economic structure of society. Probably, Marxism did not provide Auden any solutions. It was this new ideological change in the approach of Auden that compelled him to turn towards Christianity and existantialism. His later poetry, the poetry written after 1940, deals with the Christian and existantial themes. But there is constant urge and demand for social change, expressed in Auden's later poetry, the change for the construction of a new city, a "Just City". Thus, Auden departed from the Marxist morality to the ideas of the bourgeoise morality. The last three sonnets from the sequence, numbered XXV, XXVI and XXVII, describe Auden's solutions to the crisis of the period in terms of his own morality.

Sonnet XXV begins with an epigrammatical style: "Nothing is given: we must find our law". The social and economic betterment of society can be made possible by ourselves and

not necessarily by the proletariat. Probably there is not going to be a revolution as prophesised by Marx after the fall of capitalism. The Marxist revolution by the proletariat seems to be beyond the reach of the poet. We should rather plan to better ourselves. Auden thinks the hospitals as the only place of the equality of man. Auden aims to construct a better society based on the doctrines of equality in which children will be really loved even by police. The emergence of a future society, not necessarily the marxist future society of the proletariat, is suggested by the throbbing of the brass bands.

> "And only
> The brass bands throbbing in the parks fortell
> Some future reign of happiness and peace .
> We learn to pity and rebel."
>
> (EA, p.261.)

Thus, the "reign of happiness and peace" will be definitely secured because we have learnt to pity those who are oppressed and we have learnt to rebel against those who are oppressors. Such a society will be a society without expliotation of man by man. Auden calls such a new society, "A Just City".

The sonnets XXVI and XXVII sum up this series of the sonnets. It gives greater importance as a whole to the theme of man's choice of life. The choice is obviously the choice of disciplined love. We are lost wandering "upon the mountains of our choice". The choice is to concretize the dream of future,

"the glorious balls of the future". The future can be built up by the people who are probably disciplined by the heart.

> "... each intricate maze
> Has a plan, and the disciplined movements of heart
> Can follow for ever and ever its harmless ways".

(EA, p.262.)

Mountains here represent the human situation in our time. Though we seek refuge in an illusiory past or uncertain future, and long for certainty and stability, we must live in the strenuous present. We have to make our difficult choices. Inspite of our imperfections we should strive for truth and freedom in this dreadful time. This reference of the sonnet is certainly "topical and political - democracy versus totalitarianism".[50]

The phrases such as, "the disciplined movements of the heart" indicate Auden's gradual ideological transformation from Marxism to Christianity. Auden's emphasis is now on a change in the individual rather than a change in the economical structure of the society. Probably, the change in individuals by the disciplined movements of the heart may bring change in the social formation of society to fulfil the glorious balls of the future. This was a prominent turn that took shape in the ideological development of Auden's poetic career, a change from socialism to individualism. This change took place gradually in Auden in the last two years of the decade.

The sonnet sequence is accompanied by a verse commentary. The verse commentary also takes a broad survey of human evolution. Nevertheless, it does not deal with the primitive communal society of man. The commentary, however, highlights on the growth and the fall of feudal society. It mainly throws light on the critical and intense situation of man in the existing capitalist social world. Moreover, it deals with the moral choice of man in time of crisis and dismay. The moral choices that Auden provides in the verse commentary determine Auden's changing ideology. Auden's moral choices are certainly derived from the bourgeoise ideology. He appeals to his own class to inculcate moral choices in themselves for the foundation of a "Just City". The idea of "Just City" which is elaborated in the verse commentary is exclusively a bourgeoise concept. Certainly it is a non-Marxist city. Thus, it can be asserted that In Time of War marks Auden's gradual change in his ideology. Consequently, In Time of War can be considered as a significant work marking an important developmental stage in Auden's poetic career. Though the work expresses varied substantial Marxist ideas such as the idea of social and political revolution, the process of evolution in the history, the cruel and dreadful growth of fascism, the social and political decay of capitalism and an existing capitalist society as inevitable historically, Auden does not find solutions in Marxism. He has his own bourgeoise solutions. Nevertheless, a perpetual awareness of social change persistent in Auden's poetry of the thirties and even in his later poetry makes him an entirely different poet from the poets of his own group.

Since the beginning of human life, man has been contemplating on the idea that he "is both judge and victim of the universe". The science and scientific discoveries changed his life rapidly. Our ancestors might have amazed to find "the clandestine evolution in the mother's shadow". The feudal lords and later on, the capitalists became the rulers of human society, according to Marxist theory. They are described as "humorous and hairess people/Who like a cereal have inherited these valleys". These rules denied "freedom" not only to the people on whom they reigned, but also to themselves "in a calm stupor under their blood-spotted flag".

The advancement of imperialism in Europe gave birth to fascism. In a fascist state, "danger works a civil reconciliation". The people are getting together to resist fascism and their "will-power is growing like a prosperous city". "The elderly, the amorous, the young, the handy and the thoughtful" are the people in whom the urge to action is so strong that they are busy "creating their own future on a bed". This is the atmosphere of "the general war" between the common people and the fascists. It is a war in a capitalist society where industrial progress is being done on a gigantic scale. It is an age of machine and the machine has taught us how to make Human "the Non-Human". In a capitalist society, generally the consciousness of colour and creeds among people is dominant. It leads to communal riots and wars. The communal war should be continued and the common people should be oppressed is the usual policy of the ruling class. These wars may take

different forms, but the content of wars will be same: "The issue is the same. Some uniforms are new,/Some have changed sides; but the campaign continues:"

Auden refers to the collapse of feudal society: "This is the epoch of the Third Great Disappointment:/The first was the collapse of that slave-owning empire". A feudal social system has a slave-owning empire. This may well refer to the age of slavery of the Roman Empire. The establishment of church-power is significantly useful in a feudal social system. The power of religion is considered next to the political power of feudal lords,

> "Upon its ruins rose the Universal Churches:
> Men camped like tourists under their tremendous shadows,
> United by a common sense of human failure,"
>
> (EA, p.265.)

With the birth of the capitalism, the slave-owning oppression of workers was continued by capitalists. "A host of workers" toiled hard for capitalists, "not knowing what they did" and they were put in "a neutral dying star". The capitalists were alienated from the world of the common people and they preferred to live in "the cell where each must find his comfort and his pain". It was a cell, "where Justice could not visit". By Justice, Auden means social justice for the betterment of the people in a capitalist society. By "Justice" Auden does not mean to change the basic structure of society and bring a

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political revolution, offering power in the hands of proletariat, according to the Marxist phrophecy.

Apparent improvement in a capitalist society in the form of industrial developments attracted the people.

> "... The human field became
> Hostile to brotherhood and feeling like a forest.
> Machines devised by harmless clergymen and boys
> Attracted men like magnets from the marl and clay".

(EA, p.265.)

While the oppressed people are lost in the glamour of capitalism, the capitalist, "the apprehensive rich pace up and down/ Their narrow compound of success". On the contrary, the oppressed had to wander on the earth, in search of home and "fail, and weep for the lost ages". The spread of fascism all over Europe as exemplified in Italy, Germany and Japan, was culminating into a political crisis during the thirties.

The totalitarian propoganda of fascism is summed up in a statement: "Man can have Unity if Man will give up Freedom", and "Leave Truth to the police and us; we know the Good; We build the Perfect city time shall never alter". Auden then, goes on describing many historical leaders and thinkers from Ch'in Shih Huang Ti to Bernard Bosanquet, including Genghis Khan, Napoleon, Hobbs and Hegel. Chin Shih Huang Ti burnt the scholar books fearing that the books may inspire the oppressed masses for revolution. Genghis Khan thought of

destroying mankind and Nepoleon "found religion useful" for the oppression of the masses. All these specimen manifest the oppression of feudal lords in a feudal society. On the other hand, there have been the great supporters of human freedom who never lost their faith in knowledge nor in man. They still speak to us from their grave:

> "... we have our faithful swcrn supporters
> Who never lost their faith in knowledge or in man,
> But worked so eagerly that they forgot their food
> And never noticed death or old age coming on,"

(EA, p.267.)

They were not like stereo-typed thinkers who are "humbugs full of vain dexterity". Auden describes the great thinkers and leaders:They

> "... stretch around our struggle as the normal landscape,
> And mingle, fluent with our living, like the winds and the waters,
> The dust of the dead that reddens every sunset;
> Giving us courage to comfort our enemies,

(EA, p.268.)

The idea of the thinkers and the leaders that Auden perceives, is a bourgeoise idea. Consequently, the philosophical solutions that Auden gives are bourgeoise solutions. But it should be noted that Auden is in agreement with the Marxist view that the fall of capitalism is inevitable and the preparation for a new society is to be done. He appeals

to defeat the enemies of the new society:

> "Now in the clutch of crisis and the bloody hour
> You must defeat your enemies or perish, but remember,
> Only by those who reverence it can life be mastered;".

(EA, p.269.)

Auden has great faith in the oppressed people and their historical role in building up a new society. So he sees that "the great are of travelling shadow/Moves over land and ocean, altering life." He hears the voice of Man: "O teach me to outgrow my madness", to "construct at last a human justice."

Thus, the verse commentary, deals with the various political ideas. It portrays the oppression of the masses by the feudal lords. It potrays the expliotation of the capitalists and imperialists. It throws light on the violence and terror among people caused by fascism. It also deals with the idea of revolution which is not necessarily the Marxist revolution. Auden conceives of social change in terms of just and better world. He emphasizes the need to make a moral choice by the people so that human justice may be brought into existence. Hence, there is a cry for outgrowing madness. This madness is the madness for a just city a city without oppression, a city without expliotation by the ruling class. Here Auden seems to have taken a democratic stand in terms of

politics. His "Just City" is based upon the doctrines of liberty, equality and fraternity, the bourgeoise values given by the bourgeoise revolution. In order to concretize the revolution of social change, as conceived by Auden, he wants the people to inculcate in them the moral choices. Thus, it can be said that the sonnet sequence, In Time of War and the the verse commentary are full of Marxist intellectual ideas. But parodoxically enough the work does not offer the Marxist prophecy of social revolution to the emergence of the new age in the form of communism. Auden's revolution is democratic and reformative in the bourgeoise ideological frame. It is Auden's gradual idealogical journey from Marxism to Christianity. And we observe him, within two years from the composition of In Time of War, becoming a convinced adherant of the Christian doctrines. In Another Time (1940) this ideological development of Auden's poetic career is clearly reflected.