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**F O R**  
**D E M O C R A C Y**



# **F O R D E M O C R A C Y**

**AMLAN DATTA**



**THE MINERVA ASSOCIATES  
CALCUTTA-29**

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*TO*  
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*By the same author*

**SOCIALISM DEMOCRACY AND INDUSTRIALIZATION**

George Allen & Unwin, London.

**RELIGION EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

Orient Longmans, New Delhi.

গণযুগ ও গণতন্ত্র (আনন্দ পাবলিশার্স, কলকাতা)

প্রগতির পথ

ঐ

সমাজ ও ইতিহাস

ঐ

## PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

**FOR DEMOCRACY** was first published in 1953 and a new edition appeared next year. It had a very mixed reception. It so infuriated some Marxists that they started a campaign of slander against its author in default of a reasoned criticism of the work. But it also received unexpected appreciation.

The book quickly sold out after 1954. Friends have since then repeatedly suggested that it should again be made available to readers. The present edition is a belated response to these requests. Before putting it out I had to make up my mind on the extent of revision that might be proper now. Most of the essays collected here were first written while Stalin was still alive. Much has changed since then. The book would have to be re-written very extensively indeed, if it were to be made anything nearly up-to-date. Instead, I have decided to keep the original essays almost unaltered, except to insert a few short footnotes to remind the reader that the situation to-day is not quite the same as it was in 1953.

When these essays were written, I was not yet thirty. Naturally, there are many ideas which I would state very differently, if I were to start writing over again to-day. For an illustration, the reader may compare the essay on 'The Materialistic Interpretation of History' with the new version of the same incorporated in my book **RELIGION, EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT** which was published much more recently (Orient Longmans, 1968). I do not know which variant is the better. They are records of my thought on the same theme at two different points of time. I can only say that the basic argument which runs through these pages is one which I find broadly acceptable even to-day, however much I may wish to qualify it in detail.

Calcutta University

Amlan Datta

August, 1970

## **PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION**

This book is a collection of articles written over the last few years without much attention to their interconnection. Collected together they exhibit, nonetheless, a reasonable continuity of thought, though the treatment remains far from being comprehensive. Some modifications have been introduced in the original articles, and the chronological order ignored in order to make the continuity of thought clearer.

Though the common subject matter of these articles is democracy, special attention has been given to problems of Soviet Communism. Communism seems to surpass all other brands of dictatorship in its appeal to people who are not wholly lost to democracy.

The ideas contained in this book may be made use of without any reference to their source. Few of these ideas can be anything like original ; and if some of them are less commonplace than others, no importance attaches to the author. Ideas are important either in themselves or not at all.

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# **PART ONE**



## DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

The etymological platitude that democracy means the rule of the people, and in modern states, of the representatives of the majority of the people, has, in the present century, done dubious service to the cause that it proposes to uphold. The definition of democracy as the rule of the majority is wrong as well as dangerous. It is not by counting the heads of Hitler's supporters that one must decide whether the Hitlerite regime was democratic or not. If in a fanatical community the majority decides to gag the voice of all minorities, the system does not deserve to be called democratic merely because its undemocratic action has the approval of the majority. Even in its narrower connotation, democracy stands for a peaceful method of political change, and as such it stands for the right of the majority, or the representatives of the majority, to rule, as well as the right of the minority to try, by every peaceful means, to convert the majority. Every case of rule of a minority is a case of undemocratic rule ; but not all cases of rule of the majority are cases of democracy. Without the right of the minority to convert the majority, democracy loses its dynamic significance and is turned into its opposite.

In a wider sense, democracy is not just a peaceful method of political change, but a system representing the maximum possible opportunity for the individual to develop

what is unique in him and to enrich society through the contribution of his creative uniqueness. It demands, unquestionably, the right of the individual to material security, in 'as much as such security is an essential condition of unhampered growth ; but it stands also for something more. If security were an end in itself, there would be nothing to say against the security of detention camps. Democracy is as much hampered by the absence of "economic rights" as by the presence of these same "rights" in a form which constitutes a negation of political liberty and of other human rights. As a matter of fact, the rights of an individual as a man take precedence over all other rights, and these other rights are to be judged in terms of their effectiveness in sustaining fundamental human rights. Of the fundamental rights of the individual, the right to freedom of thought and expression is amongst the most essential. This right is important in an ultimate as well as in an instrumental sense. In an ultimate sense, the peculiar glory of man lies in his power of contemplation and his incomparable capacity for externalising his ideas and emotions. Even if it were possible in a completely regimented society to enjoy to the full the material comforts of life, the best of human spirits would feel after a time that life is not quite worth living merely for the sake of such comforts. They would feel something innermost in them being starved, and their manhood would rebel against the monotony of the pleasures of a predominantly physical existence.

Not less important is the instrumental value of freedom of thought. In countries like this, where the economic problem is acute, there is a not too uncommon habit of dismissing freedom of thought as a luxury important only for the better-off people, which can easily be dispensed with till

the more pressing problem of livelihood for the million is solved. This is an entirely wrong way of looking at the question of democracy.

It is true that only a minority of people are interested in thought. It does not follow that a minority enjoys the fruits of thought. The progress of natural sciences as well as social sciences has been due to the efforts of a small number of exceptionally gifted men ; but the discoveries made in these fields have brought benefits to numbers far exceeding those directly connected with the acts of discovery. Progress of ideas, then, is important not for a select few, but for the community as a whole. That being the case, the important question is whether, on the evidence of history, ideas have most rapidly progressed in an atmosphere of freedom or under the rule of authority. It is no use saying that those ideas alone should be allowed to circulate which contribute to progress. If historical evidence is any guide, no group of people, however wise, is competent to settle before-hand which ideas will turn out in the long run to be most conducive to progress. And even erroneous ideas have often a contribution to make, which they yield best when they are freely discussed, and allowed to withdraw themselves in the normal process of time rather than in obedience to the fiat of the state. Ideas, it has long been recognised, develop through a process of mutual opposition and interpenetration, so that to raise any set of ideas to the status of a State religion and protect it against fundamental criticism, leaving only the right of annotation and interpretation of the scripture to choice devotees, is to raise an overwhelming impediment to the progress of ideas and to deprive society of much of the fruits of such progress.

But it is not simply by arresting the advance of ideas

that totalitarianism brings harm to society. Not less destructive of social welfare are the atmosphere that suppression of thought produces and the many strange products of that vicious atmosphere. Suppression of thought is not simply a physical process ; it is a psychological process as well. It signifies not only the act of stopping the expression of certain ideas ; it points also to the act of hating certain ideas, and of inculcating such hatred amongst the largest possible number of people. By introducing in society a specially glorified variety of intolerance, it pollutes the very sources of social solidarity. Free co-operation arises from readiness to appreciate differences. Where appreciation of differences is seriously restricted, there can only be concerted action without the spirit of free co-operation. Hatred has its counterpart in fear ; and a society urged by hatred is equally urged by fear. Where differences are not respected, people have to cultivate an instinctive caution against fellow men, lest unwittingly they betray differences which in the eyes of authority merit condemnation. Few things are spiritually more degrading than an attitude of continuous caution against the people who surround us. Under modern forms of totalitarianism, there is no respite from such caution even in one's relations to one's dearest people ; for the modern State has left earlier types far behind in its mastery over the delicate art of setting loved people against one another in the service of the State. Under the rule of the dictator, there is no holiday from fear.

Modern totalitarianism has, not unoften, introduced itself with the promise of ending exploitation. It has never failed to create a new justification for exploitation. Moral aversion to exploitation arises fundamentally from a recognition of the intrinsic value of the individual. The totalitarian State denies value to all those who seem to harbour opinions

different from those which the State, or the group of people acting in the name of the State, has, in its wisdom, considered worthy of honest citizens. In denying value to such persons, a new basis of exploitation is inevitably introduced. People belonging, or suspected to belong, to a different faith deserve no mercy ; for is not mercy for the enemy tantamount to mercy for evil itself ! Where the faith of the fanatic is leavened with the merciful dogma that even the worst sinner can possibly be won over to the way of God, hatred is tempered with pity ; where that leaven is absent, every restraining force is lost. The enemies of the people must be disposed of in the shortest possible time—with time enough, possibly, to exploit the utterances of their dying moments to add glory to the State ; or else—and is not that better still when coolly considered !—they may be thrown into forced labour camps, to contribute to the society they have sinned against the maximum surplus value that the State may extract from them before they enrich the soil with their bones. Said the ruler of a totalitarian State, with great cogency : “The labour of those deprived of liberty is being used by us on.....communal and highway tasks. We did this before, we are doing it now, **and** we shall continue to do so. This is profitable for society.” **And** how else can one augment such profit to society **without** increasing indefinitely the number of those “deprived of liberty !”

Not only is the suspicion of the fanatical rulers of a totalitarian State turned against its own citizens, but by the very single-mindedness of their fanaticism they are rendered incapable of regarding other States with anything but suspicion unless total submission is offered as the price of friendship. The rulers of a totalitarian State are, moreover,

quick to learn that the largest possible degree of obedience can be had from its citizens only when the latter, struck by some real or imaginary fear, are anxious to be protected by the strong arm of the State ; and that one of the quickest ways of creating such panic amongst the people is to persuade them that the enemy is ever knocking at the door. Totalitarianism will as easily allow liberal conditions to grow within the country as it will treat a rival power, reluctant to accept its leadership, as anything but wicked, and, therefore, to be furiously guarded against.

One does not keep zealous guard against one's neighbours without paying a price for it. A large part of that price is spiritual. But the cost of "defence", even in material terms, is high indeed. It measures what it takes away from the standard of material comforts of the citizens, and is never satisfied with its own performance till it has cut to the bone the supply of all the main goods of civilian consumption. The greater the resulting hardship thrown on the citizens, the greater becomes the need to blame it on the enemy. The more the citizens clasp the protective arm of the totalitarian State the closer they are likely to move towards what they seek to avoid.

And when finally they discover that they have taken shelter under the wrong banner, they discover further that they stand deprived of the right to plant a new banner. When freedom of thought and organisation is banished, the way to a peaceful change of the existing order is also closed. Nor do insurrections hold up prospects of liberation ; for the modern State cannot be overthrown by an insurrection from within, unless quite exceptional circumstances intervene, for which the best that the people can do is to wait in patient agony.

If freedom of thought were merely a luxury for the intellectual e'lite, if by showing democracy the door we could bring in prosperity, how much of the attention paid to these ideals would have been out of place ! Democracy is not just a political system ; it is a way of life. The greatest enemy of the democratic way of life is fanaticism. Fanatics are rarely guilty of lack of idealism ; what they lack is tolerance. It is not generally realised how completely idealism may be corrupted by intolerance. In the same proportion as the fanatic is self-sacrificing in the cause of his ideal, he feels himself duty-bound to transgress the general codes of ethical conduct in his attitude to his opponents. Through his intolerance he extends the boundaries of that field in which, self-righteously, he acts in open disregard of morality. Thus, the fanatical idealist, in the very pursuit of his ideal, builds a world in which contempt of all ideals is the law.

## THE CLASS AND THE STATE

Before Marx, idealist political philosophers like Hegel and Rousseau had taught that transcending the conflicting interests of the individuals who compose a nation, there is the common interest of the nation as a whole. The conflicting interests of the individuals are not their real interests. Their real interests, being grounded in the common national interest, are harmonious. It is in the service of this common interest that the individual truly fulfils himself. The “general will” is the will directed to the realisation of the common interest. Ignorant individuals may seek to act in opposition to the general will, and such individuals may conceivably form a majority of the population. But in all such cases, the individuals are really acting against themselves. It is to their interest, as well as to the interest of the nation, that such individuals should be compelled to conform to the general will. Hegel conceived of the Prussian monarchy of his time as the embodiment of the highest interest of the nation, total subservience to which was, therefore, true freedom. Nazis, in recent times, found a similar embodiment of the national interest in Hitler and the party which he represented. The concept of the “general will” became thus the philosophical foundation of Right totalitarianism of the nationalist brand.

Marx, in opposition to the idealists, taught that the unity represented by the nation is a fictitious unity. The

nation is divided into opposing classes, and there is nothing that gives unity to the conflicting interests of the warring classes. As long as the means of production remain privately owned, the State, far from representing the highest interest of society, serves as an instrument of exploitation by the propertied class. While Marx thus repudiated the idea of the common interest of the nation, he substituted for it the idea of the common interest of the class. The proletarian has a common interest, and any individual proletarian truly serves himself only by serving this common interest. What the "general will" is in relation to the interest of the nation, "class consciousness" is in relation to the interest of the class. "Class consciousness", that is to say, is not necessarily the actual and dominant state of consciousness of any and every worker, or even the majority of workers, but the consciousness of the workers as it will be if and when they come to comprehend clearly the common interests (and, therefore, the highest interests) of the class.

As Rousseau's theory of general will provided the philosophic basis of Nazi tyranny, so Marx's doctrine that all conflict of interests is rooted in private ownership of the means of production has served as the foundation of communist totalitarianism. The liquidation of political opposition in the Soviet Union has been justified, since the inauguration of the Soviet constitution, on the ground that since in the U. S. S. R. the instruments of production have been socialised, opposing classes no longer exist; and in the absence of opposing classes, opposing parties are unnecessary. By the middle of the 'thirties the vast majority of agricultural farms were collectivised; industries were nationalised even earlier; and trade passed into the hands of the State, the co-operative societies and the collective

farms. For quite a long time now, the Soviet Union has no class of private capitalists. There is, to be sure, some difference between the respective ways in which the means of production are owned in the factories in towns and the collective farms in the country. But the opposition between a propertied class and a propertyless class is gone and the whole people form a community from which "exploitation of man by man has been abolished", and even the dividing lines between the working class and peasantry are being obliterated. The Communist Party represents the unified interests of this socialist community ; all other parties are superfluous or worse. Such is the justification of one-party dictatorship which has been repeatedly put forward since the middle of the 'thirties.

The unity of interests attributed to a class (and to a socialist community) is nearly as real, or fictitious, as the unity attributed to a nation ; and the case for totalitarianism drawn from the one assumption is not much stronger than the case drawn from the other.

Even from the purely economic point of view, the interests of the proletariat are not free from inner conflict. Labour, to put the point technically, is not a homogeneous commodity, but denotes a group of commodities which between themselves are imperfectly substitutable—in limiting cases, substitutability being nil. Broadly speaking, while in a capitalist country the proletariat has a general interest in obtaining a higher reward for labour as against other factors of production, every distinct type of labour has a special interest, under socialism no less than under capitalism, in advancing the value of that particular type as against other types. It may be added that the imperfect substitutability of certain types of labour may be due not

to technical factors alone, but to social and political factors as well. The Marxian assumption of homogeneity of labour, or the possibility of a unique reduction of all types of labour to a simple type, is sometimes a useful simplification in explaining the conflict between labour and capital, but is misleading when questions about the relation between different groups of labour are opened. As the conflict between labour and capital recedes to the background or disappears, conflicts within the working class may understandably come to the forefront.

Within the U. S. S. R. clash of economic interests is easily traceable. A major case of such conflict is that between the industrial workers and the peasants. Similar conflict lies between skilled and unskilled labour, and even between different types of skilled labour. In numerous cases these conflicts of interest, arising in the economic sphere, had found formulation in divergent policies with their respective spokesmen, until all opposition groups were suppressed and exterminated and the domination of one group was finally established. Tomsy's "wage-levelling" policy and its supersession at the end of the 'twenties, and the clash between Bukharin and Stalin on the peasant problem, afford illustrations of the point made above. A close study of any of these cases reveals that even in a socialist society there is no obvious or automatic solution of the conflict involved. Consider, for example, the clash of interests between workers in manufacturing industries and peasants in agricultural farms. If industrial prices are fixed relatively high, peasants usually react by offering less of their produce for sale, the more so the more their demand for manufactured articles is elastic. But the State may adopt measures of compulsion to bring the farms under its control and

extract from the peasants the surplus grain to feed the industrial workers, while keeping industrial prices relatively high. Between the alternative policies of coaxing the peasants to part with their surplus through the inducement of a favourable rate of exchange between agricultural and industrial products, and the forcible requisitioning of the surplus belonging to the peasantry without compensation, there are various possible intermediate positions. All these stand for alternative "solutions" of the conflict of economic interests between the industrial workers and the peasantry, in varying degrees favourable to the one section or the other. On the whole, "solutions" in the Soviet Union have been made in favour of the industrial proletariat.

If within a single socialist country, conflict of economic interests exists, similar conflict must be possible to a still greater extent within a combination of socialist countries, more so if they are unequally developed.

Even granting for the sake of agreement that a socialist society has a common and determinate interest such as no class-ridden society has, it does not follow that liquidation of all political opposition maximises the chances of this common interest being discovered and effectively served. With the best possible intentions, the task of formulating a correct policy is difficult, if only because of the complex and imperfectly predictable circumstances in which any such policy has to be applied. Criticism of policy, both in its formulation and in its execution, is, therefore, important. To suggest that such criticism may well come from within the party rather than from outside is to simplify matters unrealistically. Every party moves towards a unified leadership. A party with a divided leadership cannot but represent an unstable position ; presently, either the party splits up, or, one of

the contending factions gets the upper hand and restores unity by suppressing dissentients. The leadership of a party never allows effective criticism either of its right to lead, or of what it considers to be the fundamentals of party policy. If it had not been interested in such discipline, it would have lost all motive for maintaining the party, and would have been content to merge it in the whole society as an open platform. Thus, the very constitution of a party precludes the possibility of sustained and basic criticism from within. But, at the same time, a single party, left to itself, can hardly fail to perpetrate errors of a basic character. This is inevitable for more than one reason. Firstly, in the absence of continuous criticism, the authors of a mistaken policy do not discover their mistakes until the policy has been carried far; and the fact that it has been carried far makes it difficult to retrace steps, and prompts rationalisation of mistaken conduct. In the next place, one of the fundamental errors of judgement that a party with unlimited power generally makes is the error of identifying its own power with the good of the community. To be sure, even under a multi-party system, this error is not quite avoided. But there the opposition finds it to its interest to make the people conscious of the dangers of unrestrained authority. And the possibility that the party in power to-day will have to play the opposition to-morrow inclines all those who would play the game to observe and appreciate certain democratic restraints. The importance of such restraints cannot be over-estimated. In every society there is a tendency towards concentration of power. The dictatorial state removes some of the most important agencies through which this tendency is normally counteracted. No party, left to itself, can be depended upon to resist the temptation of unlimited authority. And the path once chosen is justified as

the necessary path. When a single party, in the name of the dictatorship of the proletariat, liquidates all opposition and arrogates to itself an unshared responsibility for discovering the true interests of the people, it has already created a situation in which that discovery is rendered impossible. By the compulsion of circumstances, it moves, more and more, towards a tragic confusion of ends, whereby the power of the State—and of the Party—is substituted for the interests of the people as the true goal of policy.

There is one more fundamental point to underline. A class can represent only an aspect of the total interests of an individual. An individual may be a proletarian, belonging, according to theory, to the same class as workers in other lands ; but in diverse other capacities he possibly belongs to other groups having other interests. By nationality he may be a German ; by religion a devout Catholic ; by habit a teetotaller ; and so on endlessly. As an individual he is the centre of diverse loyalties, and his endeavour is to weave out of these manifold ties a pattern of life promising the richest possible integration of his personality. In search of such integration he may well reach conclusions which will be unacceptable to a fellow proletarian. As a member of the working class, he stands, let us suppose, for socialisation of industries ; as a German, he may heartily dislike the idea of having to follow the Kremlin-controlled Cominform, and desire that his country should pursue an independent line ; as a Catholic he may have an attitude towards religion which a convinced Marxist will regard as sickeningly “petit bourgeois” ; as a teetotaller he may wish that a sizable portion of the revenue of the State should be derived from taxes on wine and tobacco, an idea which a fellow proletarian may detest from the bottom of his heart. Such a situation

will, of course, leave the convinced Marxist quite unmoved. He is content to learn from theory that all the interests of a proletarian, including his cultural interests, are deducible from his position as a proletarian, and that the true interests of the proletariat are basically and everywhere the same. Now, this is far from obvious. It is not at all clear how the position of a proletarian as a proletarian can sufficiently decide what his views should be on the multifarious problems of life. And even if such a method of deciding questions is possible, it is wrong. It is wrong for any person to try to infer from his class situation what should be the place of poetry in his life. A proletarian, like any other individual, is at basis a human being ; and his views, cultural, political and economic, should be decided in terms of his needs as a total man. Marxist theory teaches that ideas are determined by economic interests, and in the case of the proletariat, the inference is illicitly made that they should be so determined. They are not so determined, and should not be so determined. The apotheosis of the class character of the individual yields a severely circumscribed view of human nature and interests; and provides the ruling circle of a proletarian state with a false justification for totalitarianism.

In an ultimate sense, humanity has a common interest ; but one of the surest ways of vulgarising this common interest is to try to deduce it from the economic character of man. Men, in their "material" aspect, are most like one another ; but their similar interests in this sense are not their highest interests. Their highest interests lie in a field where they are dissimilar and are tied only by the common goal of founding a human society in which each will have the freedom to develop what is distinct and valuable in him. In his wholeness, no individual is represented by the brute totality of a class ;

and a totalitarian state which rules in the name of a class must, by its very nature, do violence to the integrity of the individual. If our previous analysis is correct, this violence to the individual, whatever the explanations offered for it, will have as its chief motivating force the unquenchable thirst for authority of a small group of people—itsself a victim of its circumstances—leading the State Party in the name of a fictitious unity of interests of the proletariat.

## SOCIALISM AND EQUALITY

The common conception of socialism is bound up with the idea of equality. Nor is this popular association unwarranted. Socialism arose as a revolt against the glaring evils of capitalism, of which the one that was most widely condemned was the economic inequality that capitalism bred. Critics have pointed out that in the social order built up by the bourgeoisie, the ideals announced at the time of the Revolution were adopted only in their legal and political aspect while their economic and social aspects were cynically ignored. In this abstract form liberty, equality and fraternity appeared in capitalist society more as mocking shadows than as realised values. By contrast, socialism came to represent a new order in which economic equality combines with political liberty and the spirit of fraternity, for the first time, to make of these ideals a living reality.

The principle of distribution most in consonance with the ideal of fraternity is that which has been noted by Marx in his portrayal of communism. It may appear that this principle—"to each according to his need"—is incapable of being realised until economic scarcity has been wholly removed. It is not until then that each can be allowed to have freely as much of everything as he chooses to have. Yet it is possible to conceive of a system of distribution under which, even in a state of scarcity, no one is allowed to satisfy any of his needs until the more urgent needs of all have been satisfied. With a given social

income, it is this distribution which will maximise total satisfaction. If we look at every individual as a consumer rather than as an agent of production, it is this principle of distribution according to needs which will be the first to suggest itself to our mind. Even in practice, this principle tends actually to be accepted in small groups based on ties of love in which individual members are treated as ends in themselves and not merely as "factors of production."

There is, however, one great disadvantage from which the above principle suffers when it is sought to be applied in a society from which scarcity has not been eliminated. In such a society, it is not enough to ensure that a given income at a given point of time should be so distributed as to maximise the satisfaction yielded by it ; it is necessary also to devise ways and means of utilising scarce resources in the most economic manner and removing scarcity progressively through time. This calls for proper allocation of resources, including labour, amongst alternative uses. Now, a system of remuneration of labour not only distributes income in a certain way amongst various groups, but also serves as an instrument of allocation of labour amongst alternative occupations. It is arguable that distribution of income according to needs is inconsistent with proper allocation of labour amongst competing occupations.

That the structure of wages in capitalist economy serves as an instrument of distribution of labour amongst different industries and occupations is well known. A scarcity of labour in a given industry tends to raise wages in that industry and this rise in wages tends to draw a larger supply of labour towards it ; and conversely. In spite of these tendencies being obstructed by various rigidities in the econo-

mic system, they remain important in the working of capitalism. Under socialism the problem of rational allocation of resources does not disappear, for the problem is rooted not in capitalist relations of production but in the scarcity of non-specific resources relatively to the needs to be satisfied with them. What may change under socialism is the mode of solution of the problem while the problem persists.

It seems that some of the enthusiastic exponents of socialism once hoped that, in the new social order of their dreams, it will be possible to attain proper allocation of labour amongst alternative occupations without dependence on monetary incentives. What monetary incentives did in a competitive society, social consciousness will do in a socialist society. If, for example, social interests demand an expansion of the labour force in a certain branch of production, the will to serve the community will impel a sufficient number of persons to offer themselves for work in that branch. The Soviet experiment has falsified this hope. Patriotic exhortations and the attraction of public honour may at certain times draw some persons to some types of work ; but these are wholly insufficient for a continuous solution of the problem of allocation of labour amongst the different branches of production in the economy as a whole. The method of compulsion is left, thus, as the only effective alternative to monetary incentives. In times of emergency, such as war, compulsion has actually been adopted in many cases. But the limitations of this method are serious. It lacks the means of bringing together the right man and the right job ; it is destructive of devotion to work ; except in times of emergency it is bound to promote widespread resentment ; and, finally, it involves a rude sacrifice of freedom. Even if it showed the way to more equal distribution of income consistently with

optimum allocation of labour, equality would not be worth having at that price.

We are thus driven to the conclusion that so long as economic scarcity persists, a society will require a system of monetary incentives to effect a proper allocation of its labour force amongst alternative occupations. A close examination reveals, however, a "contradiction" within this proposition. "Proper" allocation of resources is itself relative to the prevailing distribution of income. The most desirable allocation of resources is that which reflects the enlightened preferences of consumers, as these preferences would be if income were distributed according to the principle of needs (or, in other words, if the distribution of income were such that the "marginal utility of money" was the same to all persons). In so far as the system of payment according to work gives rise to a distribution of income diverging from distribution according to needs, it is itself a barrier to the ideal allocation of resources ; for, the allocation that it helps to bring about is 'proper' only in relation to the not-so-proper distribution of income which follows from it.

This contradiction would not be serious if the actual results of the two alternative methods of socialist distribution noted above could be shown to deviate from each other only to a minor extent. The divergence seems, however, to be great, if one is permitted to draw inferences from the case of the only socialist state in the world.\* Rough estimates show that variations of wages and salaries in the U. S. S. R. are as high as in the advanced capitalist countries. ( See *The Structure of Soviet Wages*, by A. Bergson ).

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\* It is no longer permissible to talk of the Soviet Union as "the only socialist state in the world" but this does not affect the argument fundamentally.

It has been argued that in a socialist economy which adopts the principle of payment according to work, inequality will be reduced to small dimensions if educational opportunities are made free and universal. There can be no doubt that this should be one of the first and foremost tasks of a socialist society. Its influence in the direction of reducing inequality is easily understood. It will help to increase the supply of those types of skill which, because of existing scarcity, earn high reward. Where education involves expenses and is limited to a few, inequality tends to be progressively intensified, because those who are better-off are in a position to invest on themselves and thus to earn still more in future, whereas those who are poor find it hard to improve their position.

Even extensive educational opportunities may, however, go hand in hand with a fairly high degree of inequality. Certain industries, requiring special types of skill, may expand so rapidly as to keep such skill in a state of continuous scarcity, thus enabling it to enjoy a specially high reward. Such a situation cannot possibly continue indefinitely, but it can continue long enough to help lay the basis of social stratification. And there are certain services of which the supply does not increase greatly even if an extraordinarily high reward is paid to those who are in a position to render them. The services rendered by many popular artists and actresses may be cited as examples in point. The income earned by them may contain a large amount of "rent" by virtue of the inelasticity of supply of their services. Finally, certain positions of special privilege, the numerical limitation of which is institutionally secured, may carry with them extraordinary remuneration, fixed quite independently of the ordinary cost-calculations of a market economy.

The more highly centralised a society is, the higher seems to be the probability of the emergence of a few positions of extraordinary power and privilege.

As between two socialist economies, both adopting the principle of payment according to work, a smaller degree of inequality is likely to be found in that which provides for greater decentralisation, a more balanced development of different branches of production, wider scope for free education, a progressive income tax specially designed to draw away rental income, and greater restriction on accumulation and inheritance of personal property, even though such property may not take the form of ownership of the means of production. It may be noted incidentally that in the Soviet Union the rate of expansion of heavy industries has throughout been extraordinarily high relatively to light industries, that the income tax is, for the most part, marked by an absence of progression beyond a moderate range, and that opportunities for inheritance and accumulation of personal savings are conspicuously present.

Attempts have been made to belittle the seriousness of inequality of incomes in the USSR on the plea that the USSR is free from "exploitation." Provided that exploitation is defined in terms of "class", and a class defined in terms of private ownership of the means of the production, exploitation is non-existent in the USSR. But this proves little. The case against inequality does not rest on the Marxian definition of class. It is not as though inequality is bad because it is found under capitalism; on the contrary, capitalism is bad because, among other things, it breeds inequality. Nor is this all. Even according to Marxian analysis, exploitation exists whenever the labourer gets less than the full value of his labour. Even granting that "skilled

labour counts as multiplied simple labour", it strains one's credulity to have to believe that the very wide disparity between the highest and lowest incomes in the USSR reflects only the difference between the labour performed by the respective income earners, particularly when a comparable disparity of income in capitalist countries is accepted as a clear evidence of exploitation. It is hardly proper to absolve a system of the charge of exploitation on the theoretical ground that the system has the outward form of "socialism."

One may close with a note of caution. There are certain ways of furthering equality which involve an increasing restriction on freedom. The system of social security, for example, may be so administered as to make freedom the price of security. It is important to be discriminating in our choice of the means to equality. The principle of equality is a deduction from the more basic principle that every individual is an ~~end in himself~~ and should receive as much opportunity for self-development as any other individual. Equality should not be so administered as to contradict this basic postulate. What has finally to be equalised, as nearly as possible, is not wealth but power; and looked at from this fundamental point of view, dictatorship, socialist or otherwise, is by its very definition a negation of equality.

## THE TRANSITIONAL DICTATORSHIP

In the History of the C. P. S. U. one finds the following statement: "Engel's authoritative statement in his criticism of the draft of the Erfurt Programme in 1891, namely that 'the democratic republic.....is.....the specific form for the dictatorship of the proletariat' left no doubt that the Marxists continued to regard the democratic republic as the political form for the dictatorship of the proletariat. However, as a result of a study of the experience of the two Russian revolutions Lenin, on the basis of the theory of Marxism, arrived at the conclusion that the best political form for the dictatorship of the proletariat was not a parliamentary democratic republic, but a republic of Soviets. The opportunists of all countries clung to the parliamentary republic and accused Lenin of departing from Marxism and destroying democracy."

This statement is unfair to the critics of Soviet dictatorship. What many of these critics take exception to is not the institution of the Soviets as such, but the subservience of the Soviets to a monolithic party, the Communist Party, striding the political field alone and enjoying the monopoly of state power. Thus Rosa Luxemburg soon after the October Revolution, criticised the Soviet system in the following terms: "With the repression of political life in the land as a whole, life in the Soviets must also become more and more crippled.....Without unrestricted freedom of press and

assembly, without a free struggle of opinion, life dies out in every public institution.....in which only the bureaucracy remains as the active element.” (*The Russian Revolution*). That is the core of the charge against the Soviet system, that it does not permit “a free struggle of opinion”.

In the days immediately following the October Revolution, the scope for a free struggle of opinion expressing itself through diverse groups had of necessity to be limited. Whether even in those days there was ground enough for the forcible dissolution of the Constituent Assembly freely elected by the people under the care of the Bolsheviks themselves, and for other sweeping restrictions on democratic freedom, is a controversial point; but the circumstances undoubtedly warranted some unusual limitation on liberty. For, these were days of extraordinary disorder. The peasants were busy seizing land and distributing it amongst themselves in defiance of the intention of the state to introduce order into this process; the workers were forcibly taking charge of the factories in opposition to the express desire of the newly constituted government; early in 1918, the Left Social Revolutionaries left the government and launched violent attacks on it; civil war and foreign intervention followed; and in 1921 came the Kronstadt uprising. Under such circumstances, freedom to organise opposition, even along democratic lines, had to be curbed.

But even if there was justification for a single party dictatorship in the Soviet Union in the years immediately following the October Revolution, that justification has long ceased.

In 1918, Soviet Russia was perilously encircled by capitalist states waging an open war of intervention against her. To-day, she is comfortably encircled by dependable

allies, with her security vastly improved.\* “Comrades”, declared Malenkov in his Report to the Nineteenth Party Congress, “the Soviet Union is no longer a lone oasis surrounded by capitalist countries. We are moving forward together with the great Chinese people, together with many millions of the People’s Democracies... ..Our mighty country is in the flower of its strength.”

Within the U.S.S.R. the class enemies of the State have long been completely liquidated. Industries have for a long time been under state ownership ; the private trader, at the height of his glory in 1923, came to be eclipsed well before the First Five-Year Plan was launched in 1928 ; the extermination of the kulaks took place with frightful rapidity after 1929. There can be no question of a party of indigenous capitalists being formed to-day in the Soviet Union, if only because capitalists no longer exist in the U.S.S.R.

Nor is there any chance of a group of foreign agents overthrowing the present regime. Thanks to the extremely efficient secret police of the Soviet Union, any such group will be detected in no time and speedily liquidated. At any rate, foreign agents cannot grow into a menace in the U.S.S.R. any more than a similar group can become a threat to the state, say, in France or Finland. If these countries can guard themselves against foreign saboteurs without recourse to dictatorship, so can the U.S.S.R. One cannot condemn the U.S. government for indulging in arbitrary and overzealous action in the name of security against “un-American” elements, and in the same breath uphold the Soviet government for doing worse. In either case one must

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\* Communist China was still a dependable ally of the Soviet Union at the time this was written.

stick to the same standard of judgement, maintaining consistently that a strong and stable State, whether it is the U.S. or the U.S.S.R., is in a position to introduce sufficient security measures against foreign elements without going to the length of resorting to dictatorial methods. In the case of any such State, foreign agents can only provide an excuse, and not a justification, for continued suspension of democracy.

The contention that, in the Soviet Union the right to form a political opposition is unnecessary as the need for a second party has disappeared with the abolition of classes, is senseless. It is not for the party in-power to decide a priori whether such a need exists or not. The right to organise an opposition must be fully guaranteed ; the people must possess the opportunity to exercise that right if they feel the need for it.

With the Soviet block greatly expanded after the second World War, with capitalist elements within the U.S.S.R. exterminated, with the military might of the Soviet Union immeasurably increased, with the Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist ideology vigorously and exclusively propagated to the citizens of the U.S.S.R. for well over three decades, the Soviet Government is in a position, to-day, to feel confident that even if the democratic right to organise an opposition party is formally granted to the people, no serious challenge to the present order is likely to develop in the near future on the basis of this right. An opposition party, formed and allowed to function to-day in the Soviet Union, is most likely to remain exceedingly weak for quite sometime to come, and the present Government should have little to fear from it. If, on the other hand, it succeeds, in spite of the odds being heavily against it, in attracting to itself any considerable support from the people, then obviously there is objective justification

for the growth of such a party, and it is brazen authoritarianism to deny it the right to grow.

Not only in the Soviet Union, but in other communist countries as well, conditions to-day are such as to warrant a much smaller restriction on political freedom than was found necessary by Lenin in the early years after the October Revolution. No country passing under Communist rule to-day is likely to find itself in the same desperate position as the Soviet Union was in 1918. No such country will be alone to-day, but will be in a position to count upon the support, material and moral, of a large number of friends and allies. Against no such country will the capitalist states, unless provoked, dare to-day start the type of aggression that they launched against the U.S.S.R. in 1918; and if anything resembling aggression is started, no such country will have to fight single-handed as the U.S.S.R. practically had to in 1918. China, no doubt, is fighting against difficulties; but no one knowing the facts and having a sense of proportion will possibly deny that the difficulties of Lenin's Russia were immeasurably greater. The career of most East European 'People's Democracies' has been much less troubled. And the troubles themselves have not been wholly of capitalist creation.

In this changed context of the world situation, the international communist movement should feel itself in a position to re-assert that "the democratic republic is the specific form of the dictatorship of the proletariat." Such a democratic republic need not, however, have the traditional parliamentary form. It may be based on local Soviets and "panchayets." The essential point is that it should accommodate "a free struggle of opinion", with the right to organise groups or parties as the vehicles of divergent opinions. Such groups

and parties should be allowed to function unhampered, so long as they remain faithful to democratic methods. The course suggested here is certainly different from what Lenin stood for at the time of and after the Russian Revolution. But the question to-day is not what Lenin taught in 1917, but what is possible and desirable under present circumstances, just as the question in 1917 was not what Engels had taught in 1891, but what was possible and desirable in 1917 and the years immediately following. Dialectically considered, it is possible to state that conditions have matured for a new synthesis of what Engels taught in 1891 and Lenin in 1917--a democratic republic based on local Soviets.

## THE SOVIET WAY OF INDUSTRIALISATION

Marx conceived of socialism as the system necessary for the further development of the productive forces of society after these have reached the limit of their possible development within the framework of capitalist relations. "No social order ever disappears", wrote Marx in his preface to the *Critique of Political Economy*, "before all the productive forces for which there is room in it, have been developed." The Bolshevik revolution and the subsequent economic experiment in the Soviet Union affords poor support to this thesis. In point of economic development, the U.S.S.R. still remains far behind the advanced capitalist countries. Thus, at the beginning of the 'fifties, she was producing about half as much coal and a third as much steel as the U. S. A. Whether socialist relations are better suited to promoting economic progress after the productive forces have reached a high stage of development under capitalism is a question on which the Soviet experiment has as yet little to say directly.

What can be claimed with justice for the Soviet economic system is that it has served as a powerful instrument of industrialisation of a backward country. In recent decades, the two leading instances of rapid industrialisation of an under-developed region have come from the U.S.S.R. and Japan. The rates of development of these both countries have been remarkably high, though exact comparison is made impossible by the unreliable character of the

available statistics.\* The Japanese way of industrialisation has rightly been condemned by progressive opinion because of its militaristic character, its neglect of the standard of living of the workers, and its association with an eclipse of freedom. The Soviet way has been admired and held up for emulation by certain sections of socialists, though outwardly, at any rate, it shares the same characteristics.

The basic features of Soviet economic development have been determined by the objectives that guided its course. To outstrip the principal capitalist countries in the shortest possible time, to lay a firm foundation of heavy industries, and to raise to the maximum the military strength of the U.S.S.R.—these have been the chief aims of Soviet collectivism. While these aims have been paramount, the production of consumption-goods has consistently been given a place of secondary importance. The cost, in terms of human suffering, of pursuing this programme of economic development has been so heavy that only a dictatorial government could have extracted it from the people. Whether the Soviet state was justified in adopting this programme is a question which we will not treat of here. What seems to be more important is to decide whether other countries, like India, which are still left with some choice in this matter, will be wise to take up a similar programme. A few facts bearing on the subject may be introduced here.

The progress of industrialisation in the U.S.S.R. under the five-year plans has been truly spectacular. According to Malenkov's Report to the Nineteenth Party

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\*Over the seventeen years that have elapsed since this book was first published in 1953, the economic growth of Japan has been faster.

Congress, the index of industrial output rose from 100 in 1929 to 1,082 in 1950, the last year of the fourth Five Year Plan. Critics of Soviet statistics will, no doubt, find fault with these figures, and it is now commonly agreed that the Soviet practice of using the fixed prices of 1926-27 as the basis of calculations was unwarranted. But a study of the growth of industrial production in terms of physical volume with reference to a few selected commodities shows that, whatever the sins of Soviet statistics, the expansion of heavy industries in U. S. S. R. has been undeniably impressive. Not the less striking, however, is the contrast between the rates of growth of heavy industries and the corresponding rates for the light industries producing consumer goods. Thus, according to Soviet official figures, output of steel in 1950 was 549 per cent higher than in 1913, oil 320 per cent higher, coal 799 per cent higher. In contrast, between 1913 and 1950 the output of cotton cloth increased by less than 75 per cent, while woollen cloth seems to have increased by less than 80 per cent. In the same period, grain production increased by 56 per cent.\* These figures afford one some guidance in estimating the rise in the standard of living in the U. S. S. R. in 1950 over the corresponding standard in 1913, allowance being made for the fact that between 1913 and 1950 population increased by a little more than 40 per cent. With unemployment liquidated and a comprehensive social security system introduced, the Soviet standard of living continues nonetheless to be low ; and compares strikingly unfavourably with the standard of living in the

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\*It now appears that this is a gross overstatement and that grain production in 1950, as more recent official figures make clear, was no higher than it was in 1913.

West. The extent of the divergence can be guessed from Soviet official reports, and other authoritative statements. The main items entering into the standard of living of ordinary people are, of course, food, clothing and housing. In the matter of food, differences in standards of living are not so clearly reflected in the per capita consumption of cereals as in the consumption of such articles as milk and meat. Describing the position in this respect at the close of the thirties Dobb writes : "With the exception of grain the per capita supply of foodstuffs remained well below the standard of most West European countries and of America ; in the case of meat, the equivalent figure cannot have been more than a third that of England or U. S. A., of milk no more than a half that of England, and even of sugar no more than a half the German, English or North American level." (*Soviet Economic Development Since 1917*, pp. 288-9). The position in this respect does not appear to have notably improved by 1950. With regard to the output of cotton and woollen fabric and leather footwear, the following figures, taken from Molotov's report to the Eighteenth Party Congress in 1939, indicate the comparative position in the pre-war years :

|             | Cotton<br>fabric<br>(metres) | Woollen<br>fabric<br>(metres) | Leather<br>footwear<br>(metres) |
|-------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| U. S. A.    | 58                           | 2.8                           | 2.6                             |
| Britain     | 60                           | 7.4                           | 2.2                             |
| U. S. S. R. | 16                           | 0.6                           | 1.0                             |

On housing, Dobb points out that between 1923 and the end of the '30's urban dwelling accommodation had grown by about 80 per cent. As urban population had meanwhile increased by well over 100 per cent, dwelling accomo

dation per head of the population in the towns seems to have been distinctly less in 1939 than in 1923. The position at the beginning of the '50's is indicated by Malenkov's Report to the Nineteenth Party Congress in October, 1952. After drawing attention to "extensive housing and municipal development" in progress in the country, the Report goes on to add : "In spite of the big volume of construction, there is still an acute housing shortage everywhere. Year after year, many Ministries and local Soviets fail to fulfil their housing plans." From the same report it appears that the output of footwear reached the pre-war level in 1950, that of cotton textiles in 1951 ; so that making allowance for the growth of population in the intervening period it will appear that per capita output of textiles and footwear at the beginning of '50's was somewhat less than what it was in the pre-war days. Some visitors from India returning after a short stay in the U.S.S.R. have spoken of material prosperity in that country in terms which are obviously contradicted by the facts contained in Soviet official statistics. The attempt to explain away this contradiction with the argument that in the Soviet Union ordinary people are better off than people in Western countries because of the far greater degree of economic equality that obtains in the socialist fatherland betrays ignorance as well as a lack of sense of proportion. Even if the current output of consumption goods had been equally divided amongst the people in the U. S. S. R., the result would have been not a common level of prosperity, but (compared to Western standards) a common level of poverty. And the idea that there is anything like an approximation to equality in the U. S. S. R. is only made possible by a lack of acquaintance with the relevant facts. Soviet Union, with her variations of wages and salaries as wide as in leading

capitalist countries, her income-tax remarkably less progressive than in these other countries, and her constitution guaranteeing the right to inheritance of personal savings, which, moreover, are not subject to death-duties as in Britain, is very far, indeed, from being a land of equality. The gulf between Soviet reality and our visitors' accounts is unbridgeable ; and the only important way in which these accounts add to our knowledge is by making it evident that their authors have failed to see the Soviet reality.

The magnificent achievements of the Soviet Union in the field of capital construction without the aid of sizable foreign loans would have been impossible without the imposition of drastic restrictions on the consumption of the masses. The relation between the two is clearly brought out by certain developments in the early '30's. In these years, Soviet foreign trade was directed to one overriding purpose, viz., the hastening of the pace of industrialisation. In order to raise her imports of constructional materials to the maximum limit, imports of consumption goods were drastically reduced. Imports of raw cotton, for example, were heavily curtailed, with the result that in the final year of the first Five Year Plan, cloth production was substantially less than at the beginning of the period. Simultaneously, exports of essential articles of consumption were raised, in spite of these articles being in short supply in the home market. In the years 1931 and '32 grain production in the U. S. S. R. was smaller than in any year since the mid-'twenties ; yet the export of foodstuff, as a proportion of total exports reached the peak figure of 35.2 p. c. in 1931, while large masses of people passed through conditions of famine. The rate of industrialisation achieved under the first Five Year Plan was unparalleled ; but the occurrence of famine in the final year

of that plan furnished a significant commentary on the manner of its fulfilment. The leaders of the Soviet State having set their hearts on certain objectives were not deterred by any considerations of cost from pursuing these ends.

The burden thrown on the consumers to make possible an extraordinary rate of capital-formation was not divided equally amongst different sections of the people. In every period of stress since the foundation of the Soviet State the major part of the burden has been imposed on the peasantry. In the period of New Economic Policy the disadvantageous position of the peasantry showed itself through the "scissors" crisis resulting from an unfavourable rate of exchange between agricultural and manufactured articles. In the same period a theory was developed by Preobrazhensky and others who spoke of a process of "primitive socialist accumulation." According to this theory the Soviet State was to treat the sector of small-scale private economy (which in Russia, at that time, consisted chiefly of agriculture which was still under individual peasant farming) as a "colony" to be exploited in order to obtain the "surplus value" necessary for the expansion of the basis of industry. The most important method of this exploitation was to lie in "socialist protectionism" to be adopted by the state with the clear purpose of turning the rate of interchange of commodities between the State economy and its "colonies" to the disadvantage of the latter. For the time being this theory could not be acted upon with decision and determination, chiefly it seems for fear of breaking the alliance between the peasantry and the working class, which Lenin had described as essential to the security of the new State. However, collectivisation of agricultural farms introduced at the very beginning of the 'thirties changed the situation radically. What marks out the collec-

tives from other advanced forms of farming is not higher productivity of land, but the comparative ease with which the collectives can be subjected to (a) larger procurement and centralised control, and (b) withdrawal of labour force from the farms for employment elsewhere. While in the years 1931 and '32 agricultural production sharply declined, in these same years the total volume of procurement substantially rose. It may be added that the compulsory deliveries that the collective farms have to make regularly to the state are paid for at fixed prices substantially lower than those prevailing in the free market.

Collectivisation had to be introduced in the teeth of stubborn opposition. Peasants owning land can be induced to form themselves voluntarily into those types of co-operatives under which they retain individual proprietorship of their holdings; the majority of them show strong reluctance to surrender proprietorship. It is significant that in the closing part of the '20's, when attempts were made in the U. S. S. R. to organise co-operative farms on a voluntary basis, the great majority of these co-operatives took the form of the "toz", under which the individual peasant retains a share in the land. The years of collectivisation in the early '30's were years of fierce struggle between the Party and the peasantry. The number of unnatural deaths in this stormy period has been put, even according to the more conservative estimates, at several millions. (See *The Population of the Soviet Union*, by Lorimer). These same years witnessed the rapid growth of a distinctive institution of the Soviet Union, the forced labour camp. Vast masses of rural people were deported from their ancestral homes to far-off regions, specially in Siberia, to work there on certain communal projects. These movements of population are notably

reflected in the official census of the U. S. S. R. Between 1926 and 1939, the population of the U. S. S. R. is estimated to have increased by 16 p. c. In the Central Black Soil region, however, total population in 1939 was, strangely but significantly, less than that in 1926, and the decline in rural population in this area was specially marked. On the other hand, in East Siberia and certain other regions in the extreme North, the increase of population was extraordinarily large. Moreover, a fantastic increase in urban population is to be noted in these regions, simultaneously with an increase of rural population. Obviously, the additional urban population in these areas was not drawn to any significant extent from amongst the local rural people. It may be pointed out here that in the Soviet census the distinction between rural and urban population is made on the basis of the character of the main occupations of the people, and those forced to work on certain construction projects may, logically enough, be classed as urban people.

The labour camps of the Soviet Union served as special centres of extraction of "surplus value" assisting the industrialisation of the country. While the inmates of these camps had to work hard, the allowances they received for their work were pitiable. Prof. Prokopovich, a well-known authority on Soviet economic development, writes : "However much we may want to reduce the possible estimates, be it only five to seven million, one thing remains clear beyond any doubt : in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics we have a class of slaves of many millions whose living and working conditions are infinitely worse than those of the American Negroes in the Southern State". These remarks appear to be amply corroborated by the following factual statement contained in David Dallin's *Forced Labour in Soviet Russia* : "It

has been officially stated that in 1932-33 "the cost of upkeep per prisoner was over 500 roubles a year". During the same period the average wage in the Soviet Union, according to official statistics, amounted to 1,496 roubles a year. This differential is an important element of the government's industrialisation fund." It may be remembered that the year 1932-33 was a year of great scarcity when the standard of consumption of even the average worker outside the labour camps was very low.

There are some who show a high appreciation of the impressive record of industrialisation of the U. S. S. R. while expressing regrets for the famines and persecutions, the millions of unnatural deaths, the labour camps and the restrictions on liberty that accompanied industrialisation. This is a wrong approach. It is unfair to think of Stalin as a misanthrope who inflicted sufferings on the Soviet people out of motiveless malignity. The sufferings inflicted on the people were largely unavoidable so long as the broad objectives adopted by the Party and the State were adhered to. Rapid industrialisation and strengthening of the military basis of the U. S. S. R., without sizable amounts of foreign loans, could not have been achieved without drastic restrictions on the standard of living of the people; politically and economically, it was inevitable that the major part of the resulting hardship should have been thrown on the peasantry; collectivisation was necessary in order to extract from the peasantry the maximum possible contribution to capital-accumulation; given peasant psychology, collective farming could not have been rapidly introduced without the use of force, both direct and indirect; and deaths, persecutions and labour camps were in the nature of corollaries of any attempt to use force against large masses of the peasantry

in a country in which the peasantry formed the majority of the population. Granted a period of peaceful development, the Soviet people will, in all probability, be rewarded for their past toil and suffering in the form of a substantial improvement in their standard of living in the years to come. This fact should, indeed, be taken into account in assessing the economic achievements of the U. S. S. R. But to regard the many tragedies that have accompanied Soviet industrialisation in the three decades and a half following the October Revolution, and particularly in the period covered by the first two five-year plans, as quite fortuitous, is to betray an absence of understanding of the mechanism of Soviet economic development. Certain individual cases of persecution in Stalin's Russia might have been avoided ; but, given the overall plan that Russia adopted, not much else was possibly escapable.

Some may feel that while the Soviet Union could not possibly have avoided the great hardship thrown on her people as the price of industrialisation, a country like India coming after Russia may travel the same way without having to pay a similar price. This, again, seems to be quite a mistaken view. There are, indeed, a few minor arguments which lend support to this view ; but these are offset—and possibly more than offset—by one major fact. The density of population in India is more than ten times as high as in the U.S.S.R. Under these circumstances, a programme of economic development for India, wedded to the Soviet preference for capital-intensive methods of production and aiming at the introduction of collectivisation on an extensive scale in any foreseeable future, may produce hardship and chaos so widespread and acute as to wreck the entire plan. If, on the other hand, the

idea of forced collectivisation, the technocratic fascination for capital-intensive methods of production and exaggerated apprehensions about foreign loans are abandoned, a new avenue of economic development will be opened up differing from the Soviet way of industrialisation not merely in details, but in fundamentals. And this fundamentally different line of economic development will call for a new political orientation appropriate to itself. Economic and political forms cannot grow in defiance of each other. If India must choose a way of economic development different from the Soviet way, her political line must also be fittingly different.

## INDUSTRIALISATION AND INTEGRAL HUMANISM

It is not an accident that the industrial civilisation and the idea of "the economic man" blossomed together in a number of countries during the last century. The industrial civilisation has left earlier societies far behind in its technical efficiency, its mastery over nature, its capacity to produce material goods of its choice. These triumphs would have been difficult to achieve without a few generations of men persuading themselves that creation of wealth was the very measure of social progress. In the early phase of the industrial revolution in Britain, while a few poets and humanitarians wailed over the "decay" of man, the most dynamic class in society came to regard "accumulation" as the supreme good. Relief to the needy was opposed and the growing distinction between the rich and the poor unashamedly supported in the interest of enterprise. The Wealth of Nations became the bible of liberal statesmen. Hedonism taught that pleasure ought to be the aim of life ; economists, claiming that "utility" could be measured in money, systematised the current notion that pleasure was dependent on wealth; and, for the augmentation of the wealth of the community, ways and means were approved which inflicted untold pain on the majority of individuals in the community and drove nations to war. History sometimes plays strange tricks with ideas. There is nothing wrong in recognising the

utility of wealth ; but when wealth is worshipped, it subordinates to itself and injures the very ends which it is meant to serve.

Marx was as much a product of the industrial revolution as the liberals who drew guidance from Smith and Ricardo. Starting with the theory that the evolution of productive forces is the central theme of history, he concluded, through a curious acceptance of the Hegelian proposition that the real is the rational, that such evolution is progress itself. While the liberal theorists spoke of the "economic man" and thought that material progress was best achieved through the unhampered competition of "free" individuals, Marx adopted the idea of the economic class and made the progress of history dependent on the conflict of opposing classes. In the Marxian scheme, no less, and possibly more, than in the scheme of liberal hedonists, economic interests hold the centre of the stage, but people pursue them not as individuals, but as groups of individuals, or classes.

Accepting the development of productive forces as the standard by which progress is to be measured, and recognising that the capitalist class had been playing a most important role in improving the methods of production, Marx paid a more handsome tribute to capitalism than most other economists would have been prepared to accord it. The Communist Manifesto declares: "The bourgeoisie, historically has played a most revolutionary part. The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations.....It has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids Roman aqueducts and Gothic cathedrals." Marxian theory has sometimes been regarded as an expression of the most inspired condemnation of economic exploitation. This, it

should be made clear, is a misunderstanding of Marxism. Marx clearly recognised that the expansion of capitalism, which he had come to regard as a great historical step forward, would not have been possible without exploitation of labour. His own economic theory is concerned to explain that, "surplus value," which is the measure of the exploitation of the labourers, is the source of "accumulation" and accumulation is essential for capitalist expansion. Logically, Marx could not be opposed to exploitation as such. What he was opposed to was the continuation of the capitalist system after it had exhausted its capacity to promote the further growth of the forces of production. If capitalism, in a later phase, is to be condemned, it is only because it ceases then to assist the development of the productive forces. At such a stage, socialism becomes a necessity in order to release the forces of production from the fetters which capitalism has fastened on them.

Marx was, above all, the spirit of the industrial revolution incarnate. Nowhere, possibly, is this clearer than in the pages of the Communist Manifesto. Compared to earlier societies, the new industrial society, ushered in by capitalism, was regarded Marx as civilisation itself. "The cheap prices of commodities," the Communist Manifesto triumphantly declares, "are the heavy artillery with which it (i.e., the bourgeoisie) batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intense, obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate.....It has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilised ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West". Eastern people, nations of peasants, appear here as barbarians because in the evolution of the instruments of production they have fallen behind the West. It should be conceded that Marx, the

humanist, was obviously touched by the heartless methods of capitalist expansions. In the pages of *Capital*, the miserable conditions of the proletariat under the early factory system are painted with great intensity of feeling. But to Marx, the "scientist," these things were of secondary importance, the central point being that capitalism was "revolutionising the instruments of production" and thus carrying history forward.

If the Bolsheviks, having seized power in Russia, subordinated all else to revolutionising the means of production in that country, if they did not hesitate to exploit heartlessly the peasantry in furtherance of industrialisation, if both bread and freedom were sacrificed in an attempt to secure the quickest possible development of the capital-goods' industries, much of it was nothing more or less than the practice of Marxism by a communist party which, un-Marxianly enough, had come to power in an economically backward country. If progress is to be measured by technical efficiency alone, or by the degree of development of the forces of production, there is not very much to be said against the Soviet programme of industrialisation, except that in the very pursuit of this programme Russian communism has released forces which, combining with other influences, threaten to shake even that material foundation of civilisation which Marxians treat as primary in importance.

Capitalism and communism being variants of the same theme, the conflict between them is a blood feud, and not a contest between two antithetical philosophies of life. It is not without some fundamental justification that the Soviet system has been described as State capitalism. The spirit and essence of capitalism is to be found in a system of valuation in which capital accumulation ranks above all else, with every

other social consideration subordinated to the central objective of fostering capital formation at the quickest possible pace. This is what happened in Britain in the early decades of the 19th century. This, again, is what took place in the USSR after the October Revolution, and specially, in the quarter of a century following the launching of the First Five-Year Plan in 1928. In Britain, private enterprise acted as the instrument of capital formation ; in Russia, the State was the chief instrument. State capitalism in the USSR worked out with a more ruthless logic the same master idea which unfolded itself haltingly in the western individualistic, capitalist countries. That indeed is the central attraction of the Soviet system to some keen students of Western economic history.

Communism is not the anti-thesis of capitalism, but in certain ways its logical culmination, and their common anti-thesis is to be found in various brands of ruralism, such as, the Gandhian philosophy in India. Parallels are easily found in pre-Revolutionary Russia. It is not an accident that some of the finer spirits of our times, such as Tolstoy and Gandhi, should have been attracted that way. The new philosophy of industrialisation had extolled a particular aspect of the human personality above all else, and forced the remaining elements into an uneasy subjection to this one aspect. That was the historic essence of the idea of "the economic man". It is against this that a protest went up from some of the best amongst men. But some of those who thus protested had inadequately grasped the fact that machine could not be opposed and dismissed like some odd piece of social reform. It had to be accepted, and subordinated, as far as human ingenuity could manage, to the largest welfare of society. Industrialisation as such could hardly be combated profitably ;

what called for opposition was its transformation from a means to an end.

While in some of the leading countries of the West, the temper of the early industrial civilisation was articulated through an economic interpretation of history, in certain other countries the achievements of industrialisation were made to the accompaniment of an "idealistic" philosophy. This, at first sight, may appear puzzling. The explanation, however, is, more or less, simple. Technology is a source of wealth as well as power. Some countries, specially those which passed through industrialisation without any acute feeling of unfriendly competition of other countries, generally treated technology as important chiefly because of its being a source of wealth. A number of others, which had their protective instincts harnessed to the process of industrialisation, took to modern technology because of the power that it gives. In such countries, the ethics of power, with its fitting complement in a cult of State worship, provided the ideological foundation of industrialisation.

Prof. Toynbee in his Reith Lectures has discussed this point in his own remarkable way. Some of those countries which in the period of the industrial revolution had lagged behind the more advanced Western countries were quick to discover that unless they imitated and took over the technology of the West, they had no chance of holding their own against hostile attacks. The "barbarians" of Marx's description, instead of allowing their Chinese walls to be battered down by the heavy artillery of "civilisation", set themselves to imitate the technology of the West, while at the same time rejecting, as far as possible, the rational, cultural heritage of Europe after the renaissance. The example of Japan naturally suggests itself to our mind in this connection.

The case of the Soviet Union, when considered from this point of view, appears significant. While much of the pattern of industrial development in Russia in the first three decades and a half after the October Revolution can be explained in terms of a special application of Marxism, much of it, again, can be explained in terms of a nationalistic ambition for power. Possibly neither the one nor the other explanation is complete by itself : both wait to be taken up and blended into a larger whole. But the influence of the nationalist trend is unmistakable : the fanatical rejection of much that is best in the Western culture is just not Marxism. Stalin's repeated warning that Russia had been humbled in the past because she had been technologically backward and would again be defeated unless she could catch up with and surpass the West in the shortest possible time, the encouragement of the nationalistic spirit since the '30's, and the glorification of Russian military heroes of the past, point to the conclusion that the breakneck pace of industrialisation in the Soviet Union, with all its costs in terms of human suffering, was largely a fulfilment of an earlier ambition conceived by some of the greatest of Russian leaders and emperors to modernise their country, technologically and militarily, so that it might rise to the status of a great power in the world.

If Soviet communism, in spite of its profession of materialism, resembles in many respects the idealistic, fascist cult, the explanation lies in their common collectivist bias. Between the liberal brand of materialism and the Marxian brand there is one point of distinction which communists are never tired of emphasising. Marxian materialism is dialectical. How far dialectics can go together with a materialistic philosophy is a question which need not detain us here. Suffice it to note that if the liberal brand of materialism had

the effect of holding up the idea of the economic man, the Marxian dialectical approach resulted in the individual economic man being merged in the economic class. The individual has no significance apart from the totality of which he is a part, and the only relevant totality is the class totality. Liberal materialism is individualistic ; Marxian materialism collectivistic. In this respect, communism is closer to fascism than to liberalism, and the conflict between the two is as between two religious communities worshipping at different shrines.

Philosophies of industrialisation to date, at least in the more spectacular cases, have been derived from a limited view of human nature or a falsely inspired cult of power. Between these last two, the link is simple, but important. The idea of the "economic man" has offered our industrial civilisation a clear-cut, if false, conception of what constitutes human well-being. If modern technology has made totalitarian planning feasible, this mechanical conception of the aim of human existence has made such planning appear reasonable. The idea of the "economic man", with its totalitarian bias, is plainly inconsistent with liberalism, though historically associated with it. Marxism, by imparting to this idea a peculiar dialectical flavour, made the passage from economism to a cult of power easier still. It is not wholly an accident that Nazism rose in a country which earlier had been deeply under the spell of Marxism.

From the tragic experiences of our age one broad conclusion seems to stand out clearly. A country adopting a programme of industrialisation must make it a central point of concern to retain a whole picture of the human individual for whose benefit economic development is neces-

ssary. The idea of "the economic man", and the more ambitious Marxian variant of that idea, is likely to lead to a confusion of ends and means in which happiness and the ultimate ideal of the development of the human personality are sacrificed at the altar of technique. In the implementation of the programme of industrialisation, moreover, much suffering can be avoided by a proper cultivation of co-operation among nations. The hardship that a people has to suffer when industrialisation is attempted on an autarkic basis seems tolerable, in modern times, only under the spell of an induced hysteria. But hysteria on a mass scale points the way to war. Integral humanism and international co-operation are ideals which nations in the present era of industrialisation cannot ignore except at their common peril.

## **PART TWO**



## ON GANDHISM

It is wrong to attempt to assess the merits of the Gandhian technique of struggle and the associated ethics and philosophy without reference to the conditions in which the technique and the philosophy developed. To a large extent the Gandhian technique of non-violent struggle made a virtue of necessity. It may, at least, be urged with considerable force that the technique would not have received the wide acceptance and whatever success it came to enjoy unless it had been rooted in necessity. When Gandhiji appeared on the Indian political scene, discontent against the British raj had already become a force in the ranks of the middle-class. But this discontent had carved out for itself only the fruitless channels of terrorism, and possibly in large measure terrorism was getting inwardly diffident about its potency when Gandhiji began his experiments in satyagraha. Against the vastly superior powers of suppression of the imperialist government the method of violence used by the terrorists seemed futile. The argument that violence begets violence seemed to carry a decisive weight only because people came to realise that every act of violence by the local anti-imperialist forces could only provoke ruthless and effective retaliation from the enemy. It is always the victim of violence that comes to feel intensely that violence is a wrong ; the man with superior power of violence rarely recognises it.

It is in the nature of man to moralise. When India came to fear the might of British arms, she felt the psycholo-

gical need of raising her fear to a moral plane, of explaining to herself that she was not really afraid, but was only indignant at the use of violence, and that the source of her indignation was her conscience which had the fineness to recognise the baseness of violence. It is only by going through this psychological process that the nation could hope to rehabilitate its self-respect. Gandhiji's philosophy of non-violence helped the nation to experience this invigorating psychological process. It infused into the nation a new sense of self-respect ; it gave the Indians a sense of moral superiority over their violent oppressors ; it made the people courageous with this sense of superiority, courageous even to face violence. It is impossible even for an opponent of Gandhism to deny, consistently with observed facts, this elevating influence of Gandhiji's teachings on the masses of Indian humanity.

To state that the Gandhian glorification of non-violence found support in a widely felt emotional need of the Indian people is not to assert that the Gandhian philosophy totally lacks a rational basis. The psychological source of a belief neither confirms nor repudiates the possibility of establishing that belief on a purely rational basis. For the purpose of arriving at a rational estimate of Gandhism it is useful to undertake a twofold investigation, trying to find out, first, how far the Gandhian *technique* of struggle is efficacious, and secondly, how far the Gandhian *philosophy* of life and society is valid and acceptable.

The Gandhian technique of political struggle as applied, for example, in the early 'thirties has been criticised by leftists on the ground that it has really been dictated by the interests of Indian capitalists, that it insisted on strict observance of non-violence only because it intended to avoid revolutionary upheaval by insurgent masses. Spratt, in his

book, *Gandhism*, gives an interesting rejoinder to the left critic. He says that it is true that if Gandhiji had intended to avoid revolution in the interest of the capitalists while maintaining opposition to the British regime, the policy he actually adopted would have fitted in with his purpose ; but at the same time, objectively speaking, revolution was not at all a serious possibility during the great years of the struggle in the early 'thirties, and it is a misrepresentation of reality to suggest that Gandhian leadership was responsible at that time for holding off a right royal conquest of power by the people. If Gandhian leadership had been more inclined towards violence, there could only have been greater disorder and chaos ; there could not have been any revolution in the accepted sense of the term. A violent movement would undoubtedly have been repressed by the government quickly and effectively and could only have left behind among the people a mood of widespread depression. Recovery from that depression would not have been easy or rapid. The quickness with which recovery actually took place after the failure of the Civil Disobedience movement of the early 'thirties is a tribute to the quality of the method and spirit of satyagraha. Non-violent non-co-operation could not, indeed, produce great results ; but, Spratt suggests, every alternative method was, under the prevailing circumstances, bound to fail at least in an equal measure. While concurring with this conclusion in large measure it is possible to suggest that from a long-term point of view the results of the C. D. movement might have been better if, while retaining the general non-violent basis of the struggle, the movement had placed smaller reliance on Gandhian mystic appeals and greater reliance on clear formulation and propagation of the basic rights of the people. The objection

may be raised that clear formulation and propagation of the rights of the people would have alienated the landlords and other privileged classes whose support Gandhiji was unwilling to lose at that stage. But here perhaps a bold, clear lead would have given the movement a healthier complexion and a more fruitful direction than compromise covered up with mysticism.

That the non-violent method of struggle was found eminently suitable to Indian conditions in the past is not any proof that it will remain desirable or acceptable in India in future. Certain considerations against the adoption of violence will, however, remain strong even in future. For one thing, a modern government is so well armed with the latest weapons of destruction that it is bound to be an extremely hazardous adventure for any group of people, however well organised, to seek to defeat an established government in an open trial based on violence. Moreover, the introduction of violence in political struggle is bound to destroy certain established codes and habits of social decency and toleration which are undoubtedly of no mean value. Violence, whether it brings victory to the one side or to the other, can hardly fail to charge the atmosphere with hatred and intolerance, to lead to the suppression of all opposition, and to prepare the field for the rise of dictatorship and the eclipse of whatever is best in the liberal culture. It is awareness of these vices of violence that persuades the intellectual Gandhian to stick to non-violence as the only proper method in a struggle for a free society. The exponent of revolution will possibly point out here that hatred of what is bad is quite consistent with love of what is good, and that a fighter for a free society who allows himself to grow indignant against the enslavers of man does not thereby do any harm to himself or to future society.

This argument is not without some force, but it is vitiated by excessive naivety. Hatred, as it grows, has an inexorable tendency to overstep the limits of propriety. It is bad, indeed, to allow toleration to grow to a point where it paralyses all action, but it is equally bad to allow toleration to fall so low as to make possible the ascendancy of the despotic tendency in human nature. The balance is always difficult to strike, and it is certain that it will be quite wrongly struck when people are guided by glorified hatred. The emphasis on the desirability of keeping up toleration even in course of struggles against political opponents is, within limits, a highly desirable emphasis.

Gandhiji's insistence on love and non-violence calls for two other mutually unrelated but independently important comments.

While, as already pointed out, emphasis on toleration is useful, and the disregard (bordering often on contempt) for it expressed by extremists of the "right" as well as of the "left" is unfortunate, the absolutist Gandhian dictum that nothing done in hatred can have any real value is palpably false. Gandhiji made that extreme type of statement on a number of occasions. On a sober view it appears that judgement on the value of any particular act depends on the balancing of many contrary considerations. There are material barriers to the good life, and it is good to break them down. Hatred is also a barrier to the good life, and it is good to do without hatred. If in a certain case people break down important material barriers to the good life, and derive the energy for this act mainly from the spirit of hatred and bitterness, we may only say that the act would have been of higher value if the destruction of the material barrier, which by itself is desirable, had been brought about without reliance

on hatred, which by itself is undesirable. It is wrong to say that, bad and good aspects considered together, the act on the whole must necessarily be without value. In personal life as well as in social history, it is possible to find instances of acts done in bitterness producing results that on the whole are good. It must, however, be conceded at once that in matters like this, the past is not as sure a guide to the future as historically minded people may sometimes suppose. Organised application of violence is bound to be incomparably more costly in future than it was in the past. The discovery of atomic energy has, so to say, added a new aspect to the controversy on non-violence. Even without subscribing to the Gandhin philosophy of non-violence in its absolute form, it is possible to hold that satyagraha as a technique of struggle represents to-day an experiment of great value.

The second comment on Gandhian non-violence has reference to a paradox. Many Gandhians, including Gandhiji himself, exhibit, in spite of their philosophy of love, a strange lack of open-mindedness. Many have felt—and some have registered that feeling—that in speaking before Gandhiji, they were speaking before closed doors. It is necessary to recognise here that love and understanding are not interchangeable terms; the one helps the other, but is never a complete substitute for the other. Gandhiji had enough of love and affection; but he lacked open-mindedness because he did not have a strictly rationalist temper and possibly made no serious endeavour to understand the changing course of social life, of social thought and social relation. He has often expressed quite clearly his distrust of reason and his disregard for scientific treatises. He relied on love and intuition. In a static society, in which people are largely agreed on the basic

postulates of social ethics, conflicts between persons arise generally from selfishness and not from differences in intellectual pre-suppositions. In such a society, resolution of conflicts requires not any re-examination of basic beliefs, but only a "searching of the heart" and a readiness to adjust interests in conformity with commonly shared moral principles. In such a society it is truly love that is the most important solvent of discords. But in a changing world of ideas, open-mindedness and the critical spirit are essential for progress without undue friction and bitterness. The Renaissance in Europe released two great spiritual forces of immense importance, a new emotional devotion to man and nature as well as an eager scientific enquiry into the nature of things, a humanist as well as a rationalist movement. The humanist movement is not really complete without rationalism. Gandhian humanism, otherwise lofty, has been vitiated by its link with mysticism and unreason, its failure to combine with the critical spirit of rationalism. It is desirable to preserve and propagate the magnificent emotional kernel of Gandhian humanism, but it is necessary to purify this kernel with the spirit of reason. Unless this is done, Gandhism in practice will produce results which may be quite shockingly anti-humanist.

## HOMAGE TO A RATIONALIST

To the last of his published works, Roy\* gives the title, *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*. In our time, the number of those who started by revolting against the existing social order and were transformed by the very ardour of their faith into worshippers of dogmas is tragically large. Roy was one of those rare revolutionaries who succeeded in maintaining his faith in reason as the one dependable guide to social revolution.

No doubt his personal experiences helped him in this matter. In his own country he had known, even from young age, what an authoritarian tradition means. The meek submission of the masses of the Indian humanity to the tyranny of privileged castes, their pathetic acceptance of the present state as the only one that they deserve, produced in his mind an opposition to authoritarianism which was only to ripen with the passage of time. When fascism raised its ugly head in Europe, Roy's appreciation of its danger was marked by a quality which contrasted strangely—in spite of his professed adherence to Marxism at that time—with the general diagnosis of the disease by communist intellectuals. While the official exponents of the economic interpretation of history discovered in fascism only a special confirmation of the crisis of capitalism, and, therefore, failed to make any qualitative distinction between countries like Germany, on the one hand, and

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\* M. N. Roy, expounder of "new humanism", died on January 25, 1954.

the older imperialistic countries like Britain, on the other, Roy discerned in the new development a deeper crisis of human culture, and had no hesitation in choosing his side when the war broke out.

His final break with communism came as a necessary result of his anti-authoritarianism.

Even in his disillusionment with communism, Roy stands in a category apart from most other ex-communists. Out of the depth of his disillusionment he emerged with a clearer vision of the principles of social reconstruction. To secure the maximum possible freedom for every individual on the basis of voluntary and ever-widening co-operation of human beings—this is the central task of honest social reformers. Where the “togetherness” of human beings is secured through adherence to a set of dogmas, a two fold result inevitably follows : on the one hand, within the community the individual loses his liberty and lies prostrate under the chariot-wheel of high authority ; on the other hand, the forced solidarity within every community finds its fitting complement in irresolvable hostility among the communities into which humanity is senselessly broken up. Dogmatism, in brief, is as irreconcilable with individualism as with a co-operative world order. In any tolerable social order, the basis of human relations must, therefore, be found in some alternative principle. That alternative principle, Roy contends, is none other than reason.

There are some who believe that the claims made by Roy on behalf of reason are larger than can be sustained in the final analysis. This may or may not be true. But it is no accident that all the leading variants of totalitarian tyranny in our time have been associated with either a frontal attack on reason or an attack from the flank. Privilege builds itself

not on force alone, but on carefully nurtured illusions, which it must protect at all costs from the scrutiny of reason. The struggle against a privileged order works itself out not on the physical plane alone, but on the plane of ideas as well. And in every significant social revolution the more dramatic changes on the physical plane are preceded by philosophic revolution in course of which the ethical sanctions underlying the older order are subjected to rational analysis and their inadequacy exposed. When a revolutionary surrenders his faith in reason, he has already accepted the essence of traditionalism.

In a free society the accepted codes of social conduct must, as far as possible, derive their binding force from reason, and they must be amenable to change when the collective rationality of the thinking individuals of the community point to the need for change. If human beings must retain their individual distinctions and yet co-operate, they must be prepared to state their differences, in so far as these relate to matters of public importance, in a discussible form—that is, in rational terms. Where the differences relate to fundamentals, reason, we are sometimes told, is incapable of resolving the conflict. But it is extraordinary how often we imagine that our differences relate to “ends” while, in truth, we are disagreeing on “means.” In social life, most of the important controversies pertain to questions of means and are capable of resolution if we have faith enough in reason and patience enough to persist under its guidance.

Men do not have patience enough with reason unless they have faith enough in it. In our age there has been no dearth of theories trying to establish rationally that human beings are incapable of rational judgment. It does not require any extraordinary insight to understand that men are

quite often moved by reasonless passion. But it is equally obvious that over a period they also learn from experience, and that the habit of thus learning is, indeed, one of the basic traits of human nature. It is not by obscuring this fundamental fact, but by making people conscious of its presence and its value, that we can strengthen the foundation of a free society of the future.

It was one of the most remarkable achievements of Roy that he succeeded in retaining his faith in reason though he had to face, possibly more than any other men of our time, the heart-breaking hostility of organised irrationalism of the right as well as the left. Born in a country where the authoritarian tradition is strong and in an age of militant nationalism, he rose superior to both ; and he proclaimed his faith in a family of free human beings, worshipping no tribal gods, but loyal only to the universal principle of reason. In his life he embodied his teachings—for he was utterly devoid of all parochial loyalties—and in death he remains an example and a tower of strength to those who, sharing his ideal, may yet be occasionally dismayed by the surrounding gloom.

## ENDS AND MEANS

In the Mahabharata, Krishna counsels Arjuna to ignore the conventional codes of morality and take up arms against those whom he holds in love and reverence, but that he must do so in a spirit of detachment and as a matter of fulfilment of duty. The Yogi, the detached person, purged of personal desires and possessed of a clear vision, is free to adopt whatever means seem best to suit his ends. He may even allow himself to utter lies : Krishna counsels Yudhishthira to do the same. From the cult of the Yogi-in-arms, fanatical idealists in India have, time and again, drawn justification for the use of violence and falsehood in fulfilment of their ends. Terrorists were attracted by this cult, and the militant Right in India to-day draws inspiration from it. Gandhi was killed by a fanatic in fulfilment of his duty.

Plato placed the philosopher king above morality. As a philosopher he is defined to be a lover of truth ; but in ruling his people he is entitled to make use of falsehoods. "It is the business of the rulers of the city, if it is any body's," wrote Plato, "to tell lies, deceiving both its enemies and its own citizens for the benefit of the city." (Quoted by K. R. Popper in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Vol. I, p. 121). Plato's ideas, surviving their great originator, had numerous descendants, various in form, yet similar in essence. While in Platonic thought, passionless reason found a voice in the philosopher king, in Hegel, with his distinctive brand of

dialectics, history became the expression of reason in its unfoldment. The State, as the sovereign institution in society, assumed the character of the highest embodiment of reason ; and, accordingly, it was conceived by Hegel as standing above morality. But the State does not function as an abstraction, it functions through human agencies ; and under the Nazis it found a voice in Hitler who, idealistically enough, disdained to confine himself to truth in leading his people towards their historic destiny !

Marx, a part disciple of Hegel, held out the faith that the struggle between the capitalist and the proletariat was driving society towards the dictatorship of the proletariat, which in normal course was bound to lead to a classless society. Whatever hastened the progress of society towards this ultimate end was good. Following Marx, Lenin taught that the party of "professional revolutionaries," the Communist Party, in whom the forces of progress found their most conscious expression, was not bound by conventional codes of ethics. Whatever the party did in the interests of the proletariat was ethical\*. Living his theory, Lenin was unscrupulous in his choice of means for destroying his "class enemies". After his death, some of his leading disciples, each believing himself to be the true representative of proletarian interests, engaged in disreputable plots for eliminating adversaries. In the resulting atmosphere of suspicion, intrigues and violence, an organisation grew up which stands to day as a model of an instrument of tyranny.

Means cannot be justified by motives : they must be

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\*Cf. "Our morality is derived from the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat.....We subordinate our Communist morality to this task." (Lenin, *Address to the 3rd Congress of the Russian Young Communist League* )

judged by consequences. Where an action leads to wholly unforeseeable consequences due to the intervention of similarly unforeseeable circumstances, these circumstances should, indeed, be taken into consideration before a moral judgement is passed on the action. But even then it is the most probable consequences, and not the motives professed, which must serve as the standard by which to judge the action. Plato's ideal State was small and static ; so were the ancient States known to the authors of the Mahabharata. In a simple, self-sufficient community, the gap between the desired effects of an action and its actual effects tends to be insignificant ; and it appears pointless to draw a sharp distinction between the two different senses of the word "end." The ethics of a simple society is naturally pre-occupied with the question of "ends" in the sense of motives inspiring an action. If only the motives are pure, actions will be right. In most situations in domestic life, this simple attitude is still adopted ; and, at times, it is serviceable. But in the world at large, grown incomparably more complicated than it was ever before, this is clearly a wrong approach. The old question concerning the relation between ends and means requires to be reformulated in this new context, so as to shift emphasis from enquiries into the quality of the motives underlying an action to an objective and comprehensive investigation of its consequences. Rather than raising the question whether ends justify means, and then leave one free to be deceived by the ambiguity of the word "end," it is better to ask : Can immoral means produce morally desirable consequences ? Is it possible, for example, to change society for the better, demonstrably and durably, with the help of such traditionally condemned means as falsehood and violence ?

It is wrong to be dogmatic in answering this question.

There are imaginable as well as actual circumstances in which a lie or an act of violence produces effects which are, on the whole, desirable.

But effects of an opposite kind occur more frequently than one would suspect at the outset, and the reasons for this are worth investigating.

The philosopher king, the non-attached Yogi, or the party of dedicated revolutionaries, may adopt immoral means out of the most moral considerations and may even be eager to keep the use of such means within the limits of the necessary minimum. But this minimum is almost certain to include an attempt to conceal the fact of the use of the immoral means. And the attempt to conceal this fact is most likely to lead to a much longer chain of evil deeds than was originally intended or anticipated. The use of evil means produces the need for secrecy, and once a dark world of secrecy has been called into existence it generates a corrupting influence of its own. In that underground world people fear to trust, and fear and suspicion once started rarely keep themselves within carefully chosen limits.

In the execution of his policy the philosopher king, or the "superman", cannot help depending on a band of followers. He will have such followers as he can most readily attract with his programme. The character of the means adopted by him will determine largely the character of his following. A policy of violence will appeal to those who have a taste for violence. The Yogi may practise violence in a spirit of utter detachment : but his followers are unlikely to represent the same spirit. Even the Yogi should not be too sure of himself. It is in the nature of immoral means to degrade those who practise them. And, then, there are other complications as well. Once the Yogi has gathered around

himself a band of followers agreeing with the immoral character of the means adopted by him, he will have to suit his words, more and more, to the ears of these followers ; or, the latter will possibly find a new leader whom they understand better. The means, having created its own vehicle, will determine alike the end towards which it moves through an inner, inexorable compulsion.

Nor can the philosopher king ignore the fact that, in proportion as the methods employed by him against his opponents prove effective, these methods are likely to be imitated by others, and, sooner or later, used against him. It is in the nature of good means that its effectiveness increases as it comes to be adopted more and more universally. In the case of bad means, the opposite holds true. No party has a right to decide in favour of bad means on the assumption that it alone will have a monopoly of using it. Communists, inspired by revolutionary idealism, judged it worthy of themselves to use the foulest means in furtherance of their interests, and poured contempt on all "bourgeois" virtues, such as, mercy and tolerance. Nazis, rising from the ranks of the petite bourgeoisie, dispensed with bourgeois scruples, and avenged themselves on communists, with disastrous effects for all concerned. The teachings of Kautilya and Machiavelli did not remain confined in practice to any single State. Since Machiavelli it has been the usual practice of all States aspiring to "greatness" to rely on methods of deceit and diplomacy. As a result international politics has degenerated into one of the dirtiest spheres of human activity. It is of the definition of bad means that when it is adopted by many it turns out to be self-defeating and worse. Against Lenin and Machiavelli, Kant should serve here as a corrective.

The progress towards the good life is from hurdle to hurdle. At any moment, the immediate obstacle may appear to be supremely important, and one may be tempted to think that if only it could be overcome by some means, fair or foul, the rest of the way will be easy passage. In thinking thus we delude ourselves. Fresh obstacles show themselves as soon as the immediate one is overcome, and the nature of these new obstacles depends to no small extent on the manner in which we tackle the one at hand. Unconcern with means is a result of short-sightedness—of obsession with the present to the exclusion of the future. Such obsession is to be found to-day among opponents both of capitalism and of communism.

In our times, the incomparably greater power of organisation developed by man makes it possible to employ good means as well as bad, but the latter much more than the former, on a scale so extensive as one could hardly imagine earlier. Violence and falsehood can be organised to-day with a degree of efficiency far surpassing what was possible before. Decent people seek to escape from the world of contending interests into the purer realms of art, science and philosophy. But even there the masters of foul means pursue them, and, in the name of some fair end, urge them to pervert their profession in the service of partisanship. Civilisation is presented thus with a challenge of unprecedented dimensions. This challenge is presented in its acutest form when it comes from the State. The power of the modern State is more pervasive than that of any other organisation. When this immense power falls under the control of a group of conscienceless people, the resulting evil must in all likelihood be more crushing than anything that a private organisation can possibly produce. State-worshippers like to believe that while individual citizens must be restrained from

the use of violence and deceit, the State may adopt any means that it chooses. But it is an absolute error to imagine that evil means lose their capacity to produce evil effects when they are in the service of the State. The State, no doubt, is obliged, by virtue of its special function in society, to exercise a certain amount of coercion. But even in its use of force, it ought, in the main, to act as a "hindrance to hindrances" to the good life, exercising its coercive authority as a last resort to restrain those who put obstacles in the way of voluntary co-operation of others. Beyond a point, the use of violence by the State is tyranny itself; and tyranny can be even worse than chaos. To place the State above morality is to sanction a tyrannical rule. Totalitarian States serve as a warning. In proportion as man's technical skill develops, individuals as well as institutions, the State not excluded, must be prepared, either to submit themselves to a stricter and more enlightened conscience, or to face a common peril to all mankind.

Once bad means have been commonly adopted, every party blames its crimes on its opponents. In a world gone wrong, it is risky for an individual to do the right. Even then, one who has the good of society at heart may find reason enough to decide that the risks of goodness are preferable to the risks of common ruin. It is unlikely that the lead in this matter will come from the political parties either in power or in opposition: parties, even when they call themselves revolutionary, tend to be, like all large organisations, essentially conformist. Creative leadership comes from exceptional individuals. It is for such individuals to suggest, through words and actions, how to fight evil without imitating evil, and how a community caught in the vicious circle of self-defeating means can break away from it. Even

ordinary men and women can decide to be carriers of this new outlook. To the extent that such individuals succeed in creating a new climate of public opinion, inconvenient to those who are habitually unscrupulous in their choice of means, even political parties may, in course of time, feel persuaded to change their ways and subscribe to a new morality.

This, indeed, is one of the most urgent tasks awaiting fulfilment in the technologically efficient and delicately interdependent communities of our time. It is impossible to lay a firm foundation for this new morality without combating a whole tradition to which Plato and Machiavelli, Hegel and Marx, Lenin and the Fascists, all contributed in their respective ways. To muster courage to oppose a tradition so powerful and sanctified is not easy. But it is, perhaps, essential. And for those who will make up their mind, there is the other tradition from Christ to Gandhi to which to turn, though possibly with discrimination, for support and inspiration. From this tradition one may gather those elements of wisdom which, combined with the spirit of rational enquiry, promise to show a way out of the crisis of our age.

## REVOLUTIONARY ILLUSIONS

Leftism in India, having grown in opposition to Gandhism, has a special attachment to violence. This seems to be true of every considerable group of "leftists" in India, with the possible exception of Praja Socialists, who significantly enough are denied title to "leftism" by others who lay claim to it. Even when such leftists undertake to abide by constitutional or non-violent methods, they retain a basic distrust of all such methods. The clearest illustration of this point comes from the Communist Party of India. At the time of their opening the "Parliamentary front", the leaders of the C. P. I. had declared their intention to follow the constitutional way. But soon afterwards on the occasion of the thirty-fifth anniversary of the October Revolution, the fortnightly organ of the Cominform carried an article by the general secretary of the Indian Communist Party, in which he referred to "the constitutional illusions that set in after the general election, illusions about the possibilities of the ballot box." Other Marxist parties in India apparently share the same cynical attitude towards the ballot box.

Undoubtedly, many of our liberals make all sorts of claims about purely constitutional methods; they live in a world that is no more, and possibly never was. More serious, however, are the illusions of "professional revolutionaries", of Marxist-Leninists and fellow travellers.

## *Revolutionary Illusions*

Lenin, who guided the Bolsheviks in their insurrectionary seizure of power in Russia, had combined in his theory the conspiratorial methods of earlier terroristic groups with the teachings of Marx on class struggle, allowing each to modify the other. Revolutionaries in India were understandably attracted by Leninism. Many of them had been terrorists in their early life, and had learnt through bitter frustration the futility of individual terrorism. Terrorism modified by the philosophy of class struggle held out a strong appeal as much to their intellect as to their emotion.

Unfortunately, it is not always sufficiently realised that the October Revolution owed its success to special circumstances. By 1917, under the impact of the world war, the Russian economy had been driven to the brink of collapse ; the discontent of the peasantry had reached great heights ; their reluctance to deliver grain had produced an acute shortage of bread in the urban areas ; transport had been gravely disorganised ; and almost the whole of the population had grown weary of war. Above all, the army had been disaffected. To expect comparable circumstances to visit India short of a major war is to make revolutionary wish father to the thought. To expect a successful insurrection even in the absence of such favourable circumstances is to put one's faith in miracles.

The French Revolution opened the door to faith in such miracles. People like to believe that there is a short cut from the distressful reality of the present to a new world of abounding happiness. They have always felt a desperate need to put their trust in magical formulae like "open sesame". If the Marxian idea of "qualitative leap" at crucial points in social evolution has caught the fascination of not a few people, the explanation is, at least partly, psychological. When

fantasies are transferred from the realm of art to that of social sciences, the result may well be unfortunate. Since the French Revolution, conditions have greatly changed. It is one of the results of these changes that a government can no longer be overthrown by a popular insurrection, unless certain very exceptional circumstances intervene.\* Economic distress combined with revolutionary philosophy can no longer guarantee the success of a popular insurrection. One of the crucial changes that has taken place in the intervening period is the immeasurable improvement in the organisational power of the State and in its command over instruments of destruction. When men fought with bows and arrows the divergence between the striking power of a regular army and a hastily assembled army of the people could not but be small. The discovery of gun-powder widened the gulf. But it is only in the age of aeroplanes and bombs that a sea of difference

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\* It is noteworthy that Engels himself was waking up to this reality in the closing years of his life. In his preface to "The Class Struggles in France", which appeared in 1895, Engels wrote: "Thanks to the intelligent use which the German workers made of the universal suffrage introduced in 1866, the astonishing growth of the party is made plain to all the world by incontestable figures..... With this successful utilisation of universal suffrage, however, an entirely new method of proletarian struggle came into operation..... Rebellion in the old style, street fighting with barricades, which decided the issue everywhere up to 1848, was to a considerable extent obsolete. Let us have no illusions about it: a real victory of an insurrection over the military in street fighting is one of the rarest exceptions." Even then Engels did not possibly give up his faith in insurrection completely: it is not easy to root out an old belief so firmly fortified by an elaborate philosophy. But the change of note from the flamboyant declarations of the Communist Manifesto of 1848 is too evident to be missed.

has come to separate the two. Under the present circumstances, a popular insurrection can succeed only when it is something more than merely popular, when a part of the regular army with its generals has come over to the side of the insurrectionaries with their full quota of arms and military equipment. Military coup d'état still remains a possibility ; but seizure of power through popular insurrections of the traditional type is impossible to-day.\*

Nor should the possibility of coup d'état hearten revolutionaries. When generals or men of the army take it into their heads to make a bid for power, the result is, more often than not, a dictatorship of the fascist variety.

Communists have not ordinarily shown much success in disaffecting the army to any extent greater than what is sufficient to tighten security measures against them. Even in France, where the Communist Party is decidedly stronger than it is here and the revolutionary tradition high, it is to be presumed from events in the last few years that no substantial section of the army could be attracted to the camp of revolution. Nor can the revolutionaries in this country safely leave it out of account that the present government has inherited from its British predecessor an army distinguished for its discipline, built up with special care in the era of imperialism, so that an attempt to infiltrate is likely to yield poor results.

Those who realise that the idea of a spectacular insurrection in India is merely romantic, and are yet unable to think except in terms of violent overthrow of the government, are sometimes found to advocate the way of a protracted civil war. India must learn from the Chinese way, we are told.

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\* The 'Naxalite' way had not yet developed in India at the time this was written and it is not considered in the following pages. But the ideas developed here are still relevant.

For a time after 1949, when the Chinese communists scored resounding victories against the government of Chiang Kai-Shek, the advocates of the Chinese way were eagerly listened to. Even those who had never looked upon communism with special favour felt that the advance of communism was inevitable, that like an irresistible avalanche it will sweep across the Far East, and that it was better to be prepared for what could not be avoided. This frenzied mood of expectation and apprehension was, however, short-lived. In retrospect it is easier now to detect basic difference between the Chinese situation and the Indian.

Disorganisation produced by the Japanese invasion of the Asiatic mainland created conditions favourable to the success of civil war in China and South-East Asia. The territorial range of the Japanese aggression extended during World War II upto the boundaries of India, where it was stopped short. When the Japanese army started retreating, it left behind an ample supply of arms and ammunitions which native insurgents later on used to good advantage. The civil war in countries like Indo-China, Malaya and Burma in the post-war period came as a by-product of the Japanese aggression into these territories. To be sure, struggle against imperialism in countries like Indo-China was inevitable ; but the form assumed by that struggle, the civil war, was made possible by the special circumstances created by the second World War. If the Japanese army had an opportunity to march into Assam, a zone of continuous disorder might have been created in this part of India and the communists would possibly have obtained a base from which they could carry out their war-like operations. The Government of India was, however, well assisted by anti-fascists and the exponents of People's War in preventing any such development.

In China, the end of the Japanese war was followed by a period of fluctuating fortunes for the embattled forces of the Communists and the Kuomintang. "In the first year of the war," reports a publication from Peking, "from July 1946 to June 1947, the Kuomintang forces by means of their numerical superiority and their superiority in equipment captured many towns and cities in the Liberated Areas. But the tide of the war soon turned in the second year." One of the decisive factors which contributed to this turning of the tide was the opportunity gained by the Communists for making use of Manchuria, which Japan had built up as an industrial and military base for her army. After the defeat of Japan in her homeland, the collapse of her army in Manchuria in the face of Soviet thrusts was pre-determined. Without the fall of Manchuria, the civil war in China might have had a different career.

In all these respects, the position of India is different from that of China. Add to this the fact that India has a much more centralised administration than China under Chiang had ; that, thanks to the British proclivity to exploit the Indian market, the transport system in this sub-continent has for a long time been far more developed than that in China ; and that the Chinese terrain is, on the whole, much more suitable for guerilla operations than the Indian. A revolutionary party adopting the Chinese way in India will lead themselves to a goal utterly different from that which has been reached in China. With the best of luck the insurgents may gain a limited success in parts of the Himalayan territory ; beyond that they must face the certainty of defeat. But in the very process of this defeat, not only will incalculable suffering be inflicted on the people, but the government will be brutalised by the very methods of repression which it

will feel compelled to apply against its enemies, and the meagre tradition of democracy that this country has will be shaken to its foundation. Civil war in India will help set the stage for the coronation of reaction.

In all that has been stated above, it is assumed that India, in a foreseeable future, will not be involved in a major war. In the event of such a war, the perspective may change radically so as to make calculation impossible. But there is little, indeed, to be said for a revolutionary programme which awaits a major war for its chance of success. War, moreover, contains at least an equal probability of a change of government diametrically opposed in character to what revolutionaries desire as of a change favourable to them.

Revolutionary illusions serve the cause of reaction. A sober programme of the left must avoid such illusions. In India, for all foreseeable future, the ballot box will remain an important institution for all those who care to contest for political power. This does not mean that leftists must confine themselves to parliamentary activities. Extra-parliamentary activities should obviously constitute their major occupation. Such activities may include various forms of struggle against the government in support of the demands of the people. For example, popular agitation, even of an aggressive character, may be in order if the government shows further reluctance to introduce radical agrarian reforms. But it will be utopian to believe that such struggles can be usefully developed into an all-out offensive for seizure of political power by the opponents of the present government. Popular agitations may (and, properly conducted, are most likely to) influence favourably the verdict of the electorate at a coming election ; but no party in India can come to power by a route which by-passes that verdict.

The way suggested here is not the way of the orthodox constitutionalist. Defiance of law may mark certain stages of the journey. But whatever the events on the way, it leads to the seat of political authority through the portal of a democratic verdict. Leftists may feel that this is a long way. But there is no short cut. The search for a short cut may only make the journey longer and more hazardous.

If this is the path sober leftists must tread, widest possible leftist unity becomes a *sine qua non* of success. Through a sudden assault on the existing government, a determined minority may, under favourable circumstances, come to power. The Bolsheviks were such a minority. But a minority of that order has no chance of winning power with the verdict of the electorate. Unity between leading parties of the left is impossible on the basis of a programme and an outlook designed to secure beforehand the permanent predominance of one of the parties joining the proposed combination. For this reason, Mao-Tse-Tung's conception of the Dictatorship of People's Democracy cannot serve as a basis for the widest possible leftist unity in India. Mao's ideas are clearly expressed in his article, *The Dictatorship of People's Democracy*, which explains how in China the working class, the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie united "under the leadership of the working class and the Communist Party". In China, there are, indeed, many parties besides the Communist Party. But those opposing the Communist Party are considered pernicious and fit for extermination ; and it is difficult to see why those agreeing with the Communist Party should not in due course come to be treated as superfluous. When a Communist Party has already come to power, other parties, anxious to preserve a precarious existence, may agree to

receive its protection and patronage under any terms ; but there is little reason to expect the same in a country like India where the Communists are not as yet in sight of power. The latter have only themselves to blame if others refuse to strengthen them in their bid for power, with full knowledge that victory in this venture will be the prelude to the eclipse of all parties except one. Some insignificant groups may indeed join hands with the communists even now, either because they have in any case to play second fiddle to some bigger party, or because of ignorance of the implications of their own action. But a left unity, wide enough to deserve that name, can and should be achieved only on the basis of a clear understanding that none of the parties entering the common front will, if it comes to power, deprive the others of the right to oppose it through every democratic means. This understanding must inform the outlook of all the parties uniting, and be so clearly expressed in their actions as to stand above doubt. This is the minimum necessary democratic postulate that ought to underlie a sound unity of the left.

The importance of this democratic postulate will be unclear only to those who are still thinking of taking the citadel of power by storm and establishing their own brand of dictatorship. Even those who do not openly subscribe to this way of thinking are found to betray a lingering fondness for revolutionary illusions by their reluctance to accept clearly the democratic corollaries of their rejection of insurrectionary adventurism.

## THE MARCH OF COMMUNISM

From the Marxian theory of capitalist crisis the conclusion seemed to follow that it is in the most advanced capitalist countries that the chances of the victory of the proletariat are rosiest. "What the bourgeoisie produces, above all," declared the *Communist Manifesto*, "are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable". One has only to take this declaration with the other pregnant remark that "in proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e., capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed", to understand Marx's reading of the probable order of the proletarian revolution in different countries. Marx had high hopes in his own country. The *Communist Manifesto* declares: "The Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany.....The bourgeois revolution in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution." For Marx, the movement of the proletariat was the "movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority". For him, the law of centralisation of capital was the guarantee that as capitalism developed, the proletariat would grow into "the immense majority" and at the crucial hour there will take place "the expropriation of a few usurpers by the mass of the people" (*Capital, Vol. I*). If the proletariat, in spite of being the immense majority of the population, is obliged to seize political power through force rather than acquire it through the democratic

method, this is chiefly because the holders of political power, the handful of capitalists, will not allow political power to pass peacefully into the hands of the proletarian majority.

The first proletarian revolution took place not in Germany, but in Russia ; not in one of the most advanced countries of the West, but in one of those countries of Europe in which capitalism was least developed ; and the party of the proletariat, the Bolshevik Party, came to power not with the backing of the immense majority of the people, but with the following of a distinct minority. In 1917, Russia was a predominantly agricultural country ; and the overwhelming majority of the peasants did not support the Bolsheviks. Under the influence of the architect of the October Revolution, Lenin, the idea of revolution, and of revolutionary tactics, had undergone a radical transformation. Lenin's theory of revolutionary tactics was a synthesis of the Marxian doctrine with the terroristic ideas that had been growing in Russia in the nineteenth century. The leadership of the proletarian revolution was to rest with a closely guarded group of the intellectual e'lite, working in secrecy and avoiding public appearance. "The theory of socialism", Lenin declared in *What Is To Be Done ?*, "grew out of the philosophic, historical and economic theories that were elaborated by the educated representatives of the propertied classes, the intellectuals. According to their social status, Marx and Engels themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia. Similarly, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of Social Democracy arose as a natural and inevitable outcome of the development of ideas among the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia." "No revolutionary organisation" taught Lenin, "has ever practised broad democracy, nor could it." And again : "According

to its form, a strong revolutionary organisation in an autocratic country may be described as a conspirative organisation, and we must have the utmost secrecy for an organisation of that type." Lenin's idea of the revolutionary movement was Marxism adapted to the Russian tradition and environment, an adaptation that robbed the earlier Marxist conception of much of its democratic content. The success of the revolution, Lenin perceived, was dependent upon the support not of an absolute majority of the population, but of a working majority at crucial points of time and space. In the Constituent Assembly of 1918, the Bolsheviks were in a distinct minority, the Socialist Revolutionaries having received more than twice as many votes as the Bolsheviks. For Lenin this meant little, because he had a decisive majority at the strategical points—"a decisive majority within the working class" and "whereas about half the votes were ours in the army as a whole, we had an overwhelming majority in the front lines nearest the capital." (Quoted by Rakosi, the then leader of the Hungarian Communist Party, in a speech delivered in 1952). Thus Lenin transformed the idea of the proletarian struggle. From a movement of the immense majority, it turned into a movement of a minority, working in the name of the majority, for an insurrectionary seizure of power.

After the October Revolution, the hope of a spread of the revolution to the more advanced West, particularly to Germany, persisted for a while. The Comintern, in the early years of its existence, prepared itself to act as the directing centre of world revolution. By 1923, the hope of an early spread of the revolution towards the West was lost, and attention came to be directed increasingly towards the East, particularly to China. Once the new practice had been adopted, all that happened appeared to the Communists to

be perfectly consistent with theory—specially, the Leninist theory of imperialism. But history had clearly belied Marx's own anticipations, and Lenin's earlier anticipations as well, as regards the course of world revolution.

In the East, the most popular movement has been the colonial, anti-imperialist movement. In order to penetrate this movement, communism has had to present itself as the most uncompromising champion of nationalist aspirations. The Communist movement has also been assisted by the acute agrarian problem in the Asian countries where radical reforms are long overdue. The strength of the movement in these countries in the post-war period cannot, however, be represented as a function of the degree of acuteness of agrarian distress; the chief determining factor has been the presence of opportunities for turning nationalist sentiments towards communism. Indo-China, for example, is not to be distinguished from other adjacent countries by the greater acuteness of its agrarian problem, but by the opportunity that it offers for drawing nationalists under the banner of communism in the fight against French imperialism.\* In the post-Leninist phase, the most important development in the communist movement has been the assumption of the nationalist role by militant communism.

Marx was democratic, internationalist and revolutionary. When Lenin, trying to apply Marxism in Russia, found that revolution and democracy went ill together, he gave up democracy. He managed to remain an internationalist. But the strategy of the revolution claimed compromise with nationalism, and under the leadership of Stalin the compromise came with a vengeance. Nationalism in the East

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\* The reference to French imperialism is obviously dated.

is understandably anti-West. Communism, in its bid for power in Eastern countries, has, in its negative aspects, been similarly orientated. Developments within Russia have further strengthened this trend. Wedded to militant nationalism, communism in the last two decades has grown even more anti-liberal than in its Leninist phase.

The new trend, partly the result of opportunism, reflects the characteristic features of the Stalinist ideology and leadership. Marx and Lenin drank at the fount of liberal cosmopolitanism. "The bourgeoisie", wrote Marx in the *Communist Manifesto*, "has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption.....National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures there arises a world literature." And, again: "National differences and antagonisms between people are daily more and more vanishing owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, to freedom of commerce. The supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster." Under the Stalinist regime cosmopolitanism has come to be treated as a deadly disease. But the new trend has created its own problems. The communist movement aspires to conquer the world with the help of the people of different countries through a concerted world-wide struggle. It cannot, therefore, dispense with the idea of internationalism. It has to be nationalist and internationalist at the same time. Within the U. S. S. R., the problem is easy to solve; people there are naturally glad to learn that he who serves Russia serves the world. In countries outside the U. S. S. R., the position is rather more complicated. It may suit Moscow to teach that nationalism involving opposition to Kremlin is bourgeois nationalism,

that a world outlook marked by an appreciation of the culture of the West is cosmopolitanism, and that no proletarian worth his salt must show the slightest weakness for any such perversion. But this theory, understandably attractive to Moscow, may appear a little unconvincing to people who chance to live in other parts of the world. The development of the international communist movement in the post-Leninist phase, and particularly in more recent years, has thus imposed on the top leadership of the movement the ever-wakeful task of weeding out from amongst the nationalist-communist leaders those who develop symptoms of nationalism of the forbidden variety. As a result, the communist movement at the beginning of the second half of this century, apparently more powerful than ever before, is closer to disruption within its camp than in earlier years.

The threat of disruption from within has led to a strengthening of the totalitarian bias of communism. Political power, Marx taught, is merely "the organised power of one class for oppressing another." Under capitalism a minority oppresses a majority, so that a capitalist State can never represent a true democracy. True democracy begins with the revolutionary subversion of the capitalist State and the assumption of political power by the proletariat, that is to say, by the vast majority of the people. The dictatorship of the proletariat is also true democracy; it is dictatorship only in so far as it is organised in the form of a State for exercising coercive power against a dwindling minority. But simultaneously as power comes to be held and exercised by the immense majority, the need for organised coercion from the top grows less and less, so that from the beginning of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the process of the

withering away of the State begins. Lenin put the whole point clearly in his *State and Revolution* : "At a certain stage in the development of democracy, it first welds together the class that wages a revolutionary struggle against capitalism—the proletariat, and enables it to crush the bourgeois state machine and the bureaucracy, and to substitute for them a more democratic state machine, but a state nevertheless, in the shape of the armed masses of workers.....From the moment all members of society, or even only the vast majority, have learned to administer the State themselves—from this moment the need for government of any kind begins to disappear altogether." In U. S. S. R., the actual evolution of the State after the Revolution has taken a direction opposite to that anticipated by Lenin. Already in 1930 Stalin announced in his report to the Party Congress : "We stand for the strengthening of the proletarian dictatorship, which is the mightiest and strongest State Power that has ever existed." This is no empty boast : the Soviet Union may well claim to be the mightiest and strongest State—the mightiest and strongest organised power of coercion—that has ever existed. If the Leninist diagnosis is correct, it would appear that in the U. S. S. R., the vast majority are having had to unlearn to administer the State themselves.

Not less significant, perhaps, is the change of meaning that the very word communism has been undergoing in the post-Leninist phase. The withering away of the State, or organised violence, and the establishment of a society in which "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all", has, for a long time, been held high as the ideal of the communist movement. Realising that this ideal cannot be fully achieved immediately

after the revolution, Marx distinguished between the lower and the higher phases of communist society, the higher phase being marked by the withering away of the State. In view of the qualitative distinction between the two phases, the term "socialism" came later to be applied to the lower stage, the word "communism" being reserved for the higher. Without a radical departure from tradition, communism, as the goal of the Marxian socialist movement, cannot be defined except in terms of the withering away of the State. The stage has already been prepared for this significant departure. In his report to the Nineteenth Party Congress, in which attention was drawn to preparations for transition from socialism to communism, Malenkov explained, "It (i.e., the Party) advanced and substantiated the proposition that the State will remain even under communism, if the capitalist encirclement remains." Years before that, at the Eighteenth Party Congress, 1939, Stalin had said : "We now have an entirely new, socialist State.....But development cannot stop there. We are going ahead towards communism. Will our state remain in the period of communism also ? Yes, it will, unless the capitalist encirclement is liquidated." So long as capitalist encirclement remains, the State will remain—this is understandable ; but so long as the state remains, one would have thought there could be no "communism." If the State remains in the period of "communism", what is the term to be used for that qualitatively different social order which is marked by the liquidation of the State ! Or, is the liquidation of the State a matter of little importance, deserving no special notice ? Possibly, experience of "socialism" in the U.S.S. R., has robbed that word of its attraction, and the magic word, "communism", has therefore to be launched, purged of what makes it inconvenient to the rulers of a totalitarian State.

Communism stands, today, deprived of what made it once the symbol of a free society. It stands transformed into its own anti-thesis—a symbol of totalitarianism, more thoroughgoing than anything of its type that had gone before. The factors that have contributed to this development are many and varied : the absolutist bias of the Marxian ideology, the accident of its first success in a backward country marked by a strong autocratic tradition, the fearful atmosphere in which the Soviet State had to grow in its childhood stage, the failure of the revolution in the more advanced countries of the West, and so on. Whether in future the Soviet State, and the communist movement which it dominates, will evolve in a more democratic direction, it is difficult to predict. It is possible to imagine circumstances in which this desirable change may appear. But it is easier to grow into totalitarianism than to grow out of it.

The perversion of communism is not itself a guarantee against the further spread of its influence. The power of an ideology is not determined by the soundness of its precepts. It is probable, nonetheless, that the international communist movement has already passed its historic crest, or drawn close to it. Its chances still appear to be somewhat brighter in the East than in the West. In the two most industrialised countries of Asia, communists are likely to find it most difficult to capture power. In Japan, it is only by capturing nationalist sentiments arising in reaction against American highhandedness, that communists can gain any considerable strength. In quite a few other countries, however, communists have a favourable field, thanks to continued disorder left over as a legacy of the war, to the obstinate effort of Western imperialism to continue its sway over coloured people, and to the role of native reactionaries whose interests are tied up with the dis-

tressful agrarian situation in these areas. In the West, further advance of communism, short of a world war, will be difficult. The more the communist movement allies itself to Asian racialism, the more will it loose influence in the West.

Granted peace, the liquidation of old-type imperialism, and agrarian reform for balanced economic development in the backward countries of the world, the march of communism will be halted in the East as well as in the West ; and, even in Asia, the attention of people will turn rapidly towards the menace of imperialism of the new type. Alternatively, communism may make some fresh but essentially unimportant gains, with the world still continuing in a state of painful division between the industrially advanced areas where communism will remain important, and the economically backward but populous regions where it may find readier acceptance.

If war starts, the prospects may be equally gloomy for all concerned. True, Malenkov at the Nineteenth Party Congress boldly declared : "The Soviet Union is not afraid of the threats of war-mongers.....The facts of the past must be heeded. These facts are that.....as a result of the second World War quite a number of countries in Europe and Asia fell away from the capitalist system. There is every reason to believe that a third World War will cause the collapse of the capitalist system." But even Malenkov is aware, one would suppose, that in the event of another global war, an initial, but short-lived, expansion of the orbit of Soviet power will be followed rapidly by a rising storm in which not only the capitalist system but the communist empire as well, and much else besides, including something of the best part of civilisation, is likely to collapse.

The march of communism, there is reason enough to conclude, has led itself up one of the blind alleys of history.

## THE MATERIALISTIC INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY

This article deals with certain aspects of the materialistic interpretation of history, but does not deal with the application of dialectics as such to historical phenomena.

### I

Marxists have maintained that "forces of production" are the primary determinants of the character of society in any given epoch and of the evolution of society through successive epochs in history. According to this view, forces of production as applied to society have their necessary counterpart in corresponding "relations of production", and on these the "superstructure" of legal codes, political systems and cultural patterns is raised. Legal, political and cultural systems are determined by the "material" basis on which they stand ; and this is explained by the fact that in any given society, law, politics and culture are all made to subserve the economic interests of the dominant class. By the dominant class is meant here the class which owns, or dominates in the ownership of, the means of production. Relations of production, themselves dependent on forces of production, directly determine which class will be dominant in society and, therefore, determine also the special interests which politics and culture will be made to subserve in a given epoch. The dependence

of politics and culture on the prevailing mode of production has sometimes been extremely rigorously conceived by the exponents of this doctrine, but sometimes again—as in a well known passage by Engels—the original rigour of the conception has been noticeably relaxed. Marxians, in general, continue, however, specially in their political literature, to conceive this dependence in a strikingly rigorous form. Moreover, this rigour cannot now be much relaxed without making Marxism give up its distinction, because a marked amount of dependence of politics and culture on the economic foundation of society has, if not much earlier, at least by this time, come to be generally recognised.

## II

It may be shown that forces of production do not uniquely determine “corresponding” relations of production, that, at any rate closely similar technology can be applied to social production in significantly different ways, and can be made to provide the technological foundation for distinctly different economic relations and institutions. The technological bases of the American, the British and the Soviet economy are not as different as are the “relations of production” obtaining in these countries respectively. This is a point of more than mere academic interest, because it admits—and by admitting urges us to explore—wider alternative possibilities of organising our society on the basis of existing and available technology. On any ordinary rendering of the phrase “the forces of production”, very dissimilar “relations of production” may go together with very similar “forces of production”. The attack against this position may come from either of two ends. The phrase “forces of production” may

be so defined as to differentiate it, to a significant extent, from mere technology (operating on and with natural resources), and, this with this definition, productive forces in the U.S.S.R. may be shown to be substantially different from those in the U. K. or the U. S. A. But to define "forces of production" in this way is to introduce into that phrase a content, which, as will be shown later, is specially unsuitable for sustaining a "materialistic" interpretation of history. Alternatively, Marxian critics may point out that the co-existence of dissimilar relations of production with similar forces of production in the U. K. and the U. S. S. R. is only a temporary phenomenon : relations of production in the U. K. are bound to change, and to change soon, as they already stand in "contradiction" with the productive forces which they have helped to mature. There can be little doubt that the existing economic relations in Britain and other capitalist countries will not endure long—they are, to be sure, already changing ; but there is no evidence that the new economic relations to develop in the U. K. and other capitalist countries will be similar to those that have developed in the Soviet Union. Keynesian theory, Scandinavian practice, and co-operative enterprise and experiments in "democratic socialism" open out alternative possibilities of economic development in our age.

### III

"Relations of production" indicate the position of different classes in relation to existing means of production, and according to the Marxian doctrine, the class which owns the means of production is also the class which dominates society. Ownership of the tools of production is the means

to power in society ; or, to put it in a different way, economic power is primary, other forms of power consequential. The Marxist case is vitiated by one-sidedness. While economic power certainly helps one to gain other forms of power, other forms also may, and do, help one to gain economic power. And once gained, economic power is often too weak to defend itself, and requires other forms of power for its own defence. In relation to other forms of power economic power can be both causal and consequential, and it is not always the case that its operation as a cause is, from the point of view of social analysis, more important than its appearance as a consequence. The Church gained great economic power, primarily and mainly, through non-economic influence, and retained this power for a long time with the assistance of non-economic influence. In any established society economic power is most likely to be primary in the case generally of those who gain it through inheritance ; while in the case of those who bequeath property, unless they themselves started with an inheritance, economic power must have been acquired as a result of some non-economic factors, some native talent, cunning or luck. This is not an unproductive proposition, because, if pursued a little, it helps us to understand that every social organisation puts a premium on a particular type of talent, and brings to the front those who have that talent in special measure.

Three other related observations are necessary here. First, just as property is not the only source of power, so also the economically dominant class, though normally the most powerful group, is not the sole agent of all effective power in society. For instance, in most modern societies the business community, the administration (or the bureaucracy), and the trade-unions are three separate blocs of power, and many

important pieces of legislation bear evidence of the independent pulls of all these three blocs. Few pieces of legislation and few political situations are shaped from a single centre of power. This is a point of much socio-political significance : but its implications cannot be unfolded here. Secondly, while property is the most convenient means through which power, however gained, may be consolidated, it is not the only means of consolidating power ; and as its potency in this respect is largely dependent on the institution of inheritance, in societies where this institution is weak, abandoned or non-existent, other ways of consolidating power can hardly fail to acquire a heightened importance. Thirdly, the influence of economic power, great as it is, is greater from the short-term point of view and smaller from the long term. It is smaller from the long-term point of view if only because in the longer period certain other forces, chiefly ideas, have scope to work. The most important examples are possibly to be found in the lives of scientists, who, not wielding great social power in their life time, released ideas which in course of time changed society more thoroughly than any despot ever did. The role of scientific discoveries in changing social life from the Middle Ages to the modern age is well known. The power over society of men of ideas varies, at least up to a point, directly with the length of the period under observation.

#### IV

It has been urged that the politics and culture of a given epoch are explained by the fact that they subserve the economic interests of the dominant class in that epoch. Such a view is inadequate in at least two respects : firstly, even if the politics or culture of a given class and community is solely

inspired by the economic motive, its specific form cannot be explained exclusively with reference to that motive ; secondly, as a statement of motives it is very unsatisfactory to say that the "economic motive" is the only, or the chief, motive of a class or a community.

A class even when solely inspired by the economic motive may, in a given situation, adopt any one of a number of alternative courses, depending upon the degree of reason, knowledge and foresight that it succeeds in bringing to the service of the motive involved : mere acceptance of a motive or intention does not ensure the adoption of the course best suited to that intention. Even if we grant that the bourgeoisie in pre-revolutionary Russia was eager to safeguard its class interests, we cannot conclude that it acted in a manner most conducive to its interests. As the same motive, coupled with different degrees of foresight, may lead to different courses of action, a motive can, at best, set certain limits to, but can never explain the actual conduct of any class, still less the course of historical evolution. As the same motive may lead to different actions, the attempt by some to explain the conduct of a class in terms of the economic motive has produced the queer result that the same hypothesis is often taken to be equally confirmed by quite opposite courses of events. Thus, the decision of the Labour Government to make India politically independent is, in the minds of the Communists, as much a confirmation of the self-interested motive of the British capitalist class as an opposite decision by a possible Churchillian Government would have been taken to be a confirmation of the same. Thus hypotheses are freed from dependence on the results of observation, which however makes such hypotheses largely useless in explaining historical phenomena. The chief weakness of the attempt to explain history in terms of

the economic motive is that it neglects the influence on history of reason (and unreason).

Not only is a motive taken alone incapable of explaining an action in its specific form, the "economic motive" is a bad indicator even of the psychological springs of action of any individual class or community. What exactly is the so-called economic motive? The most commonsense answer will possibly be that the economic motive consists in the desire for economic power, for wealth, in particular. The desire for economic power or wealth is, however, no simple desire; it is compounded of a variety of more fundamental desires all of which lead us to seek economic power or wealth as a means to their satisfaction. The instinct for self-preservation, love of power and distinction, the desire for security, fellow-feeling, family affection and love, may all lead us to seek wealth, and in this way all of these basic desires may enter into that compounded motive, the economic motive. Any desire, selfish or philanthropic, may be part of the economic motive when, and in so far as, it impels us to seek economic power as a means of its satisfaction, and, conversely, any desire may cease to be part of the economic motive (and may indeed stand opposed to it) when and in so far as it turns us away from economic power. The realisation that the economic motive is not something fixed and self-supporting, but is sustained by other more basic impulses, does not necessarily detract much from the importance of the economic motive; but it certainly gives us a fuller understanding of human nature and a new flexibility to our thought in investigations into human actions. The impulses which generally enter into the economic motive are mostly capable, in large measure, of being directed to non-economic ends as well. The desire for distinction may lead us to seek economic

power, it may also lead us to martyrdom ; the desire for security has led people to earn and to accumulate, but it has also, in millions of cases, found partial satisfaction in religious consolation. The influence on history of impulses turned away from economic ends has not been unimportant.

Science and religion offer two important examples of the influence on history of non-economic motives. While it is true that in certain branches of knowledge material interests have guided the course of scientific investigation, and, further, that scientific discoveries once made have generally been put to material uses, it cannot be denied that most of the eminent scientists from Galileo to Einstein have made their epoch-making discoveries in pursuit of impulses emphatically non-economic. The ardour of the early Christians in propagating the message of Christ, and the adventurous zeal of early Mohamedans in conquering country after country in behalf of their faith, are only misunderstood when they are traced in main to economic motives. There is hardly any mass movement which has not found powerful sustenance in motives quite different from those connected with material gains and losses.

If in every society masses of people have been powerfully moved by non-economic motives and if individual persons, artists and scientists, have also acted often enough and continually enough in obedience to impulses deeper than the desire for wealth, there is nothing to suppose that the dominant class, or the ruling oligarchy, is a very peculiar bunch of people acting only out of economic interests. To suggest that the economic motive is the only "natural" motive in man, that the masses are often found to be moved by non-economic motives only because they fall victims to artificial stimuli created by the ruling class to serve its

special interests, and that the ruling class on its own part always chooses its course of action according to the dictates of the economic motive, is to betray very limited knowledge of human psychology. The "economic motive", as noted above, is sustained by more basic impulses such as love of power and distinction etc., and these deeper impulses as "naturally" drive us to seek wealth under certain circumstances as they impel us to follow non-economic courses under different circumstances ; and it is unreasonable to assume that circumstances of this second type cross the careers of the ruling classes particularly rarely. Here an open mind is an essential requisite. In any actual situation in history, different motives are so mixed up that it is difficult to arrive straight from historical cases to fool-proof conclusions about the chief motivation of particular actions or movements. Out of the multitudinous factors involved in a given situation the Marxist picks up the economic cause and proceeds without any further ado to attach to it the highest weight. It is this dogmatic system of "weighting" different factors according to a predetermined scheme which has to be abandoned if one is to probe historical situations with a fair chance of finding out the truth from amidst the complex welter of actions and reactions in history.

The economic factor undoubtedly exerts a very important influence on politics, but we should not assume beforehand that its influence in every case is decisive or even preponderant. Some economic considerations almost invariably lie behind political expeditions, but equally invariably, other considerations are not quite absent, and it is not infrequently that other considerations are really more compelling. Alexander's invasions served an economic purpose ; but the range of his invasions far exceeded what economic factors

alone would prescribe or permit. The lure of personal glory and the adventurous spirit seem palpably to have played here a decisive role. The same must be true of some, at least, of those Indian rulers who strove for the sovereignty of undivided India. The Middle Ages are replete with political expeditions undertaken more in fulfilment of the desire for distinction or on grounds of prestige than in pursuance of balanced calculations of probable material gains. And one suspects that most wars in modern as well as ancient times would not have been launched, and if launched would have been quickly settled, if sober economic interests were allowed to dictate decisions.

The culture that the ruling class promotes or permits is still less than its politics a mere expression of economic interests. It is true that the ruling class specially encourages ideas which clearly promote, or seem clearly to promote, support for that class, and discourages and suppresses ideas which hold a visible threat to the power of the ruling class ; but ideas which directly and visibly strengthen or jeopardise the position of the ruling class constitute only a small part of the total culture of a community. The major part of the culture of a community receives the support of the dominant class on the strength of its general human appeal. The attempt has been made to show that even those parts of the culture of a community which are apparently unrelated to the class-struggle have an indirect influence on the struggle. This proves and disproves little. Given the class-struggle, anything and everything must inevitably have some relation, direct or indirect, to that struggle ; but the important point is whether that relation is of the essence of the matter from the point of view of the birth and growth and social significance of the thing under consideration. Of the culture of a

community, especially in comparatively peaceful epochs, not a large part owes its essence to its relation to the class-struggle. Stalin remarked that language is the creation of society as a whole, not of some particular class ; it is the expression not of class-struggle, but of the basic unity and cohesion of social life. The same observation is true of much of culture besides language. There is much in culture, in painting and architecture, in music and poetry, in dance and drama, which satisfies deep-laid human impulses, common to the ruling class and the ordinary masses, and expressed on a plane of universality so much removed from the sphere of class-conflict that different classes may enjoy them together and may contribute unitedly to their development. The material interests of the ruling class no doubt impose limitations on and introduce perversions into the sympathies and inclinations of that class ; but with all such limitations there still remains an undefined area, expanding with exploration, in which the activities of the ruling class in relation to culture are shaped mainly by non-economic impulses, so that the culture which comes to permeate society is always broader and more complex than what it would have been if it had been only an instrument for promoting the economic interests of the dominant class.

## V

In spite of all that has been said above, it cannot be denied—and the great contribution of the materialistic interpretation of history lies in forcefully pointing it out—that economic conditions have a large measure of influence on political and cultural movements. But, at the same time, it is not less evident that cultural and political factors have, in

their turn, an important influence on economic development. Cultural factors, connected with the Renaissance, largely account for the earlier and more rapid development of productive forces in the West as compared with the "sluggish East." If we turn now to the economic development of the Western countries, we find that the industrial revolution visited different European countries at different times, arriving earliest in Britain, appearing in France later, and reaching Germany later still. The explanation is largely political. Britain's leading role in the industrial revolution was due only partly to an advantageous geographical situation and bountiful supply of crucial mineral resources, and, to a quite important extent, to her political system which came to be marked early enough by internal national unity, emancipation from feudal fetters on her economic life, and governments actively helpful to her commercial and industrial classes. Compared to Britain, France was at a disadvantage, not only with regard to her natural resources, but also in respect of her political system. The influence of the political factor on economic development has, again, been very prominent in the case of Germany. Handicapped by wasteful internal division, which seriously checked her economic development, Germany had to start on her career of industrialisation even later than France, though her subsequent economic development was significantly more rapid. That the political factor has had decisive influence on Soviet economic development and on colonial economies is incontrovertible.

There is, however, one special point to note in this connection to which the economic interpretation of history has usefully drawn our attention. While cultural and political forces have unmistakably influenced the development of productive forces, the influence has shown itself more in the

tempo than in the general direction of technological progress. It is true that in certain cases political ravages have not merely checked economic progress but thrown the economic system back to an earlier stage, but the sequence of different stages of the development of productive forces appears in past history as something broadly pre-determined. We are furnished with some sort of a uniform economic axis of diverse social development in different lands. This, among other things, often makes a description of prevailing economic conditions a convenient starting point in a fuller exposition of the complex social life of an epoch. It is one thing, however, to note that in some cases a certain factor offers a convenient starting point for a complicated exposition of social life ; it is a different thing to attribute to that factor dominant causal influence in the shaping of history.

## VI

If productive forces and attendant economic conditions do not determine but only influence political and cultural movements, and if politics and culture in their turn influence the development of productive forces and relations, it is not permissible to describe the mode of production as "primary" or "basic", and to speak of culture and politics as "secondary" or "derivative". The relation between technological, economic, political and cultural factors is one of mutual interaction, where no one factor determines the others, but each unquestionably influences the rest. In so far as the mode of production, to the exclusion of other factors, cannot strictly be called "primary", a technological or economic interpretation of history is not admissible. As a matter of fact, the reciprocal influence among the different factors in

social life is such that the economic factor has a tendency to appear as basic when we are interested in finding out the cause of political, cultural and other non-economic movements, while political and, especially, cultural factors, have a tendency to appear as primary when we are investigating the cause of technological and economic progress. Those who are impressed with the idea of the primacy of the economic factor will possibly do well to ponder on the question : What is the development of productive forces due to ? Not to class-struggle, because it is itself not so much the cause as a result of the development of productive forces. The development of productive forces is due to man's increasing mastery over nature, and the role of ideas in the advancement of this process is too obvious to require explanation. To try to explain it by the "economic motive" alone is useless, because that motive is equally present in all countries which differ nonetheless from one another in their respective degrees of economic development.

Even if factors technological and economic are the most powerful factors influencing the course of history, and if accordingly we are entitled to speak loosely of a techno-economic interpretation of history, such interpretation will not necessarily be materialistic. Technology and economic institutions are not expressions of blind matter ; they are possibly best regarded as being themselves the products and expressions of human ideas. Even if ideas embodied in the forces of production have greater influence on the shape of society than ideas entering into politics and religion, or, if ideas in these other fields, political and religious, have of necessity to maintain some sort of a basic conformity to ideas informing the forces of production, we are compelled to recognise not the dominance of matter over ideas but

only the superior influence of one set of ideas over certain other sets. This is so far as social philosophy goes. As a system of metaphysics, materialism may be right or wrong : but it stands or falls independently of the techno-economic interpretation of history.

It may be urged that society, at any given stage of economic development, has to accept the ideas embodied in the prevailing mode of production as given and fixed, as part, so to say, of a pre-determined environment, while political and cultural notions are not equally binding or beyond human control. But reflection suggests that the difference here is a difference of degrees, and it is noteworthy that in modern times forces of production are being brought increasingly under conscious human control. The more so, if by forces of production we mean something more than mere technology, including under that phrase the manner in which technology is organised for production on a social scale. It is only in this larger sense that the forces of production in the U.S.S.R. are substantially different from those in the U.S.A. But in this expanded sense "forces of production" become specially distinguishable from a mere technique of manipulation of brute natural forces for achieving physical results and acquire an added ideal content.

## VII

Among the most important contributions by outstanding individuals in the making of history is the contribution of new ideas. Ideas and ideologies are influenced by circumstances, but cannot be explained by them, the same circumstances being capable of yielding different systems of thought. Adverse economic circumstances produce misery and hardship,

but how exactly misery will formulate itself on the plane of ideas is not settled by the economic situation, but is left to be conditioned by tradition, human genius, and other factors. As with the birth of a system of ideas so also with its subsequent growth, the influence of material conditions is far from decisive. A system of thought grows and modifies itself in obedience to diverse urges ; among which one of the most important is the inward impulse for logical unfoldment of the system, an impulse vitalised by impatience with internal inconsistency and an aspiration for widest possible comprehensiveness. Thus, systems of thought have their own dynamics of development, and acting on the external environment they are often best treated as an independent factor influencing the course of history.

The Marxist teaching that "being determines consciousness", that ideas are determined by economic interests and yield their true significance only when they are viewed in relation to the class struggle, has done much to corrupt the intellectual atmosphere of our age. It has promoted in "leftist" quarters the harmful habit of analysing the opponents' views not in respect of their logical or functional adequacy, but from the point of view of the suspected motives or interests from which they originate. This is vulgar Marxsim, sometimes repudiated in theory, but never discarded in practice. In this way, Marxism, in spite of its "scientific" pretensions, has joined forces with various theories of the "unconscious" and mystic cults to undermine faith in reason and produce a climate of intolerance in which new dogmas and political ideologies of extreme reaction have come to flourish. The resurgence of irrational cults in our age, and the intellectual respectability that they have come to enjoy, cannot be explained in terms of economic adversity alone.

## VIII

When Marx pointed out that man makes history out of available materials he was interested in emphasising the constraints imposed by the material environment on the creative endeavours of man. But it is equally important to emphasise that in spite of such constraints, man in any given environment is left with wide freedom to shape his life and destiny according to his ideals, and that the quality of the life of a community depends really on the manner in which it uses that freedom. History does not dictate, it offers alternatives ; the rest depends on human choice. It lies in human genius to influence history both by discovering new possibilities of development hidden in an epoch, and by helping some one of the available possibilities to mature to the exclusion of the others.

## THE SYNTHESIS

The need for one world, a world at peace with itself, its different parts freely co-operating with one another, has been clear for decades past. The urgency of this need has never been clearer before.

What remains much less plain is how to achieve what we so desperately need.

Clearly, we cannot have one world through war. Neither the U.S.A. nor the U.S.S.R. is in a position to conquer the whole world. Nor will the world be unified through revolution. Marxians, believing in the inevitable doom of capitalism, hope that sooner or later the whole world will be unified by being converted to communism. This hope is an illusion. Capitalism is not a permanent social order ; but communism is not its inevitable, invariable successor. In Western Europe there are clear signs of a profound transformation of capitalism ; but in that part of the world communism, unless imposed through war, is not at all likely to succeed capitalism. In Scandinavian countries, the alternative to communism is found in the co-operative economy ; in Britain, the new social order promises to build itself on the foundation of the Welfare State laid by the Labour Party ; in the rest of West Europe, free choice will normally favour a way of life different from what communist totalitarianism prescribes. Western Europe has entered a phase of her history beset with difficult problems ; but in history problems have alternative solutions, and the actual choice of solution depends

on factors wider than those which Marxians have cared to include in their calculation.

Nor is there any chance of the world being unified on the basis of traditional liberalism which finds acceptance amongst the more conservative admirers of the American system. Liberalism has run its course ; even Western Europe, where it found its most significant expression, cannot return to it. And countries that have embraced communism have been lost for ever to the liberal creed. Certain countries that have passed within the Soviet bloc may indeed come out of it, as Yugoslavia has done ; but even if they break loose from orthodox Marxism, they will not accept orthodox liberalism.

No, neither war, nor peace can unify the world either on the basis of communism, which the Soviet Union holds up, or on the basis of liberalism, such as finds support in America. Yet the need for unifying the world remains paramount.

Such a unifying principle may possibly be found in a synthesis between liberalism and Marxism, a synthesis broad enough to permit varieties, but sufficiently coherent to form the basis of a world at peace with itself. Such a synthesis cannot, of course, grow all on a sudden, so that in the short term the best that the opposing blocs can do is to ensure an interval of peace by agreeing, as best they can, to differ. But in the long run the world must find out more positive principles on which to rest its faith and build its unity.

A synthesis between liberalism and Marxism is possible because of the common ancestry of both. Liberalism was born of revolt—revolt against medieval authoritarianism. In the revolt against authoritarian tradition, it opposed reason to dogma, individualism to conformism. The ideal of individual freedom and the critical, scientific attitude towards life

became thus part and parcel of the liberal spirit. It formed also the spiritual inheritance of Marx. The classless society which Marx envisaged was to secure to the fullest measure the freedom of the individual from social tyranny, an ideal which he and the liberals shared in common. He assailed liberalism not because of the ideal it professed, but because of its habit of glorifying certain fixed forms of capitalist institutions without reference to the changing course of history. Marx, in his turn, betrayed the ideal of freedom when he came to prescribe the way to its fulfilment : the dictatorship of the proletariat, once established, was bound to develop into a mighty fetter on freedom.

The synthesis required between liberalism and Marxism must take over from both their common ideal of human freedom, and establish this ideal on a higher plane, founding it on institutions more adequate to its requirements, and integrating it with a philosophy deeper and more scientific than Benthamite utilitarianism and Marxian theory of class struggle. In attempting this task, our age has the advantage of being able to draw on the richer fund of experience which history makes available to us.

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In order to get a clear view of the nature of the possible synthesis we have to subject both liberalism and Marxism to closer examination.

Liberalism, like most other significant systems of philosophy, built itself around a central insight. This insight consisted in a recognition of the value of individual initiative and non-conformism. The liberal emphasis on the value of individual initiative promises to remain a principle of the first order of importance in all spheres of life, specially in the spheres of art, science and philosophy and ideas in general.

The liberals failed, however, to enunciate properly the conditions of social co-operation under which the individual would have widest opportunities for fruitful exercise of his right of initiative. They were content to allow freedom of contract to regulate the terms of co-operation in the economic field ; universal suffrage and the principle of representative government to govern the pattern of relations in the political sphere ; and the distinction between self-regarding and other-regarding activities to settle the mutual claims of society and the individual in all general cases. Liberalism entered, moreover, into an equivocal alliance with nationalism, thus involving itself in the contradiction of simultaneous allegiance to the totalitarian ideal of national power and the libertarian ideal of individual freedom.

As a result, the social system which found support with the liberals stood in open conflict with the basic liberal conception of individual freedom. In the economic field, the unbridled sway of private property combined with freedom of contract to produce, not a wide diffusion of initiative, but concentration of power in a few hands, reaching its culmination in the formation of financial oligarchies and industrial combinations. Representative government, based on delegation of power and lacking sufficient provisions for popular initiative, became, at best, government for the people, and not by the people. The distinction between self-regarding and other-regarding activities could always be drawn in such a way that no activity appeared to be purely self-regarding, so that the field of permissible social interference with individual liberty turned out to be practically unlimited, apart from such limitations as the State might of its own accord impose on itself. And the limitations that the State felt pleased to impose on itself in the exercise of its powers grew smaller and

smaller as nationalism took a militant form. Long before the rise of Hitler, the world came to be faced with problems of which purely nationalist "solutions" were bound to lead to sharper clash of national interests and a resulting militancy among rival States.

It is in the thirties, however, that the inherent weakness of liberalism could be fully gauged. Experience proved that the way from liberalism to fascism is not as long and difficult as devout liberals had imagined it was. Fascism based its appeal on nationalism, which has long been the traditional ally of liberalism. Hitler came to power through the democratically sanctioned means of seeking election and winning it; and after he had captured power, he found it advantageous to retain some of the political forms that liberals had fashioned. It had all along been clear how close liberals were to conservatives; it was educative to note how close conservatives were to fascists. Yet nothing could be further from the liberal ideal than the fascist cult of complete denial of individual freedom.

Fascism, with all its obnoxious traits, had its lessons, though of a negative nature. By retaining some of the forms of parliamentary government, it showed how ineffectual forms of democracy can be when they are divorced from its spirit, and, incidentally, exposed the error of liberal preoccupation with forms. By adopting glorification of nationalism as the basis of its appeal, it made clear how dangerous an ally liberalism has in nationalism. By setting up the doctrine of the superman in opposition to the democratic ideal of the rule of the people, it proved with its own failure that the cure for the inefficiency of democracy does not lie in an escape into hero-worship.

Apart from fascism, the most notable counterblast to

the liberal creed has come from Marxist quarters. Marx (and, following Marx, the socialists) argued with great effect that in a class-ridden society political democracy serves only as a mask for the dictatorship of the economically dominant and exploiting class. Laws are enacted, interpreted and administered to support the interests of this class, and even art, philosophy and the social sciences are directed to that one end.

It is strange to note that the Marxian theory, so revolutionary by profession and contemptuous of the liberal constitutional approach, suffers nonetheless from a peculiar taint of legalism which it seems to have inherited from the dominant spirit of the times in which it had its birth and growth. This is betrayed by its preoccupation with the question of "ownership" of the means of production. To expropriate the present owners of the instruments of production, to transfer to the State the ownership of these instruments, to set up the "dictatorship of the proletariat"—these are the salient aims of Marxian socialism. The development of capitalism in the last half a century has, however, increasingly underlined the distinction between ownership and management. Effective power belongs to those who manage—and the owners are not necessarily the managers. In an industrial society, such as the present century has known, power tends to be concentrated in the hands of a select body of managers and experts, irrespective of the way in which the instruments of production are legally held. The form of socialism—the ownership of the instruments of production by the State—can be as far (in fact, much further) removed from the reality of workers' sovereignty than the form of parliamentary democracy has been discovered to be remote from true freedom of the people.

Monopoly capitalism is an evil ; but so is monopoly of power in any other form. The dictatorship of the proletariat expressly provides for a monopoly of power by a single party. This centralisation of power has been supposed to impose no serious check on freedom, firstly, because power is exercised on behalf of the proletariat whose interests are taken to coincide with the interests of whole society ; and, secondly, because the dictatorship of the proletariat has been supposed to be transitory, bound to wither away when it has completed its task of wiping out all reactionary forces. These arguments, unfortunately, are gravely erroneous.

There is no automatic harmony of interests between the proletariat and the rest of society ; it is easy, for example, to pick up, even from the economic history of the Soviet Union, of cases stubborn conflict of interests between the proletariat and the peasantry. But what is possibly a much more serious error in the arguments and outlook of the protagonists of proletarian dictatorship is that they completely misconceive the relationship between the individual and the class. While numerically a class is wider than an individual, in a deeper sense the individual is wider than the class. The individual is the centre of multiple relations : as contributing a part of social labour and receiving the value of this contribution he has certain economic relations to his fellow-men ; but he has also other interests which in diverse capacities bind him to diverse groups and pursuits. To imagine that the class of which he is a member in his capacity of being a labourer has, by this fact of his membership, the ultimate right to guide and settle the modes of his participation in all the major spheres of life is to lay at once the foundation of an unwarranted absolutism. It is also to be noted that under the dictatorship of the proletariat

it is the Party that wields power, and it will be making facts stand on their heads to suggest that the Party takes dictation from the proletariat. Finally, there is nothing to believe that the ruling oligarchy under the new absolutism will, contrary to all historical experiences, develop non-attachment to power and readily relinquish its authority as soon as it completes its historically assigned role. On the contrary, the ruling class may be depended upon to do what any normal group of human beings, similarly situated, would have done, viz., perpetually to persuade itself and tell the people that its role has not been completed, that new factors have arisen justifying an extension of its tenure. It is difficult for people in power to believe that they are not really required any longer, and thanks to the modern system of propaganda, ordinary people in a totalitarian state can, with comparative ease, be made to see the truth as their rulers would have them see it. In any case, it is specially difficult under a dictatorial regime to depose the ruling oligarchy against its will.

The anarchists had the supreme merit of seeing that the dictatorship of the proletariat, once established, will not voluntarily liquidate itself. Their error lay in allowing their judgement to be swung to the other extreme and in prescribing that after capitalism has been overthrown the State should forthwith be abolished. In a society as complex as ours, the State as a centre of political co-ordination requires to be maintained; in the absence of such co-ordination society will lapse into disorder and may react back from such disorder into an overcentralised order.

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The common inspiration behind liberalism and Marxism, the ideal of individual freedom, can be enthroned

in social life only by making democracy deeper and wider than it ever has been before.

It must be made deeper through education of the people, making them conscious of their rights, and vigilant and resourceful in the defence of these rights ; through the growth of tolerance of modes not one's own, and respect for the uniqueness of the individual, attitudes essential to the democratic spirit ; through the strengthening and enrichment of the democratic tradition, so that it may reach deep into the consciousness of the people and secure them against sudden moods of betrayal of the cause of liberty. Tolerance is not a gift of nature ; it grows through careful nurture. Its brittleness finds its latest illustration in America's panicky retreat from the democratic ideal under the impact of frenzied anti-communism.\*

Democracy, again, needs to be made wider through diffusion of power. People must be provided with ampler opportunities for direct participation in legislative and administrative functions at various levels of the political organisation of society, which itself must be built up from the bottom with its roots in popular initiative. The economic counterpart of such a political organisation is to be found neither in capitalism nor in collectivism, both of which result in concentration of power. Useful guidance in this field is to be found in the ideas of the more constructive anarchists, guild-socialists and exponents of the co-operative economy. What is required is an economic organisation of society resting as far as possible on groups freely co-operating within and amongst themselves. The actual form of management will naturally diverge from occupation to occupation, co-

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\* The reference here is to McCarthyism, which held sway at the time this was written in the early 1950's.

operative societies covering a large sector of the economy, workers' committees and public corporations managing certain industries, private enterprise operating in certain other fields of business. A central organ of economic co-ordination will, of course, be necessary ; but the basic task of this organ should be to secure the conditions of free and fruitful co-operation of the largest number of individuals and groups of individuals in fulfilment of common economic needs.

To extend the scope of voluntary co-operation should, indeed, be a central aim not only of political and economic institutions, but of organisations in other fields as well. The liberal hedonistic ethics, as it developed in a competitive society based on private enterprise, fostered in the individual a sense of his separateness from his fellow men. This left unsatisfied man's spiritual yearning for constructive companionship ; and, indirectly, reinforced the appeal of totalitarian cults which promised the individual the comfort of belonging unquestionably to some totality, such as, the race or the class. What is required, to-day, is a philosophy which will neither sacrifice individuality, nor promote isolation of spirit, but induce every individual to discover in his fellow men an avenue to the fulfilment of his own personality through a continuous process of commonly advantageous co-operation. The more social institutions are refashioned in accordance with this spirit of co-operation the more will we approach the free society.

Some countries of the world will move toward the new experiment sooner than others. Western Europe in a flux, ready to abandon old institutions, respectful nonetheless to liberal values, offers a favourable field for the new experiment. Countries attached to the Soviet bloc after the World War II, but tending like Yugoslavia to break loose from it, may also

turn slowly and unsteadily towards the experiment in the synthesis between liberalism and Marxism—a synthesis that negates both and yet preserves within it their common ideal. Backward countries, on the threshold of great changes, can possibly be attracted to a course that points to a free society. If these groups move towards the new synthesis, there will in time be created a force to reckon with, holding the balance between the contending blocs of the world to-day, and pointing the way to a higher stage in the evolution of human society.

Alternatively, the immediate prospects may be much bleaker. The world may fail to prevent what it devoutly wishes to avoid, war. Even then, those who believe in the new ideas will have the duty to preserve them ; for war will not unify the world, and when the holocaust is over, if the will and the resources are left to re-build civilisation, the idea of synthesis will again be needed.

## APPENDIX

### I

In the preceding pages there are numerous references, direct and indirect, to regimentation of thought in the Soviet Union. Most of the readers of this book, it is hoped, are sufficiently informed on this subject not to be in doubt about the existence of such regimentation in the U.S.S.R. A few facts are, nonetheless, presented here for the benefit of marginal readers.\*

Marx, and to a greater extent Lenin, believed that man's ideas and systems of thought are determined by economic interests. In his well-known essay, *The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism*, Lenin wrote, "Man's social knowledge (i.e., his various views and doctrines—philosophical, religious, political and so forth) reflects the economic system of society." Even science cannot be "impartial", but is governed by economic interests. "To expect science to be impartial", wrote Lenin in the same essay, "is as silly and naive as to expect impartiality from manufacturers on the question whether workers' wages should be increased by decreasing the profits of capital." Starting with this attitude towards science and social knowledge, the leaders

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\* For a notable recent indictment of regimentation of thought in the Soviet Union, see Andrei D. Sakharov's *Progress, Co-existence and Intellectual Freedom*, now available as a Pelican book. Also see *The Country of the Blind*, by G. S. Counts and N. Lodge.

of the Bolshevik revolution had a strong inducement to believe—it was psychologically impossible for them to think on this subject consistently in any other way—that all systems of thought opposed to their own embodied capitalist interests. The post-revolutionary dictatorship, with its supposed historically assigned role of consolidating the victory of the proletariat, was, therefore, obliged by its own assumptions to liquidate not only the capitalist classes as such, but all systems of thought critical of the regime, because such systems represented “capitalist remnant in the consciousness of man.”

In its endeavour to purge the consciousness of the Soviet citizen of capitalist remnants and establish science on a Marxist–Leninist–Stalinist basis, the Russian Government has gone to extraordinary lengths. Not only has it discovered hidden sympathies for capitalism in researches undertaken and views propagated by eminent Soviet thinkers in the fields of philosophy and history, political economy and biology, literature and jurisprudence, but even music and statistics have not been spared. Nor has official judgement always followed a straight path : its turns and twists have often been unpredictable. In January, 1936, *Izvestia* wrote of Shostakovich that his *Lady Macbeth* was “the most brilliant Soviet production in music” and “had conquered the love of the mass spectator.” In the same month, only a few days later, *Pravda*, official Soviet journal, wrote of him as an “enemy of melody and harmony in music, sympathiser with his bourgeois heroine.” Those of us who have been accustomed to thinking that the basic principles of science are independent of political ideology may feel a little surprised at finding that such ideas mean little in the Soviet Union. In an editorial in the May–June, 1948, issue of *Planovoie Khoziastvo*, for instance, three statisticians are singled out for correction.

They are advised that "Soviet statistics is the most advanced statistics in the world" and that "the strength of Soviet statistics resides in the fact that it is founded on the great teachings of Lenin and Stalin."\*

Once the ruling Party of the Soviet Union judges a line of thought to be undesirable, arrangements are made with great thoroughness to suppress that line. The point may be illustrated with reference to the Lysenko controversy. The Party having decided in favour of the Michurin-Lysenko line, the Presidium of the Academy of Science issued a resolution in August, 1948, which, *inter alia*, stated :

"The Presidium of the Academy of Science of U.S.S.R. decrees :

1. To relieve Academician Orbeli of the duties of the Secretary of the Division of Biological Science.

2. To relieve Academician Schmalhausen of the duties of director of the Institute of Evolutionary Morphology.

etc.

etc.

etc.

6. To revise the staffs of the scientific councils of biological institutes and the editorial boards of biological journals, to remove advocates of the Weismann-Morgan tendency in genetics, and appoint representatives of progressive Michurinist biological science.

etc.

etc.

etc.

11. To commission the Bureau of the Division of Biological Science to revise the plan for the preparation of aspirants in its institutes, being guided in the matter of

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\* That official statistics on agricultural and industrial output in Stalin's period were seriously inaccurate and misleading is openly admitted today.

preparation of scientific personnel by the interests of the Michurinist biological science.”\*

The leaders of the Soviet Union, believing that ideas are merely instruments of class struggle, have not only adopted energetic measures against theories which diverge from their own, but also thought fit to create new theories in conscious disregard of facts, whenever it has been felt that such theories might serve their interest. They would, indeed, have been less than loyal to their philosophy if they had not done so : it is not for Leninists to attach any value to truth as such, irrespective of how truth will serve the interests of the proletariat, as represented by its most conscious vanguard, the leadership of the Communist Party. It is not, therefore, to be surprised at that the Soviet Government has repeatedly rewritten history giving it such content as suits its interests. The studied avoidance of all reference to Trotsky, so far as his great work of organising the Red Army is concerned, is only one of the instances, and not possibly the worst instance, of Soviet attempts at distortion of history. It is interesting to note that not only post-revolutionary developments, but history prior to the revolution has been rewritten under Stalin with a view to persuading people that Russia has for centuries past been the leader of civilisation.

To find another country in which the state has exercised such far-reaching and unscrupulous influence in moulding the thoughts of the people, one has to search amongst countries that fell under the spell of fascism ; for, outside the Soviet bloc, it is in these countries alone that a secular ideology, covering all the major aspects of life, had opportunity to rise to the status of a State religion.

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\* More recently, the Academy of Science has come to the conclusion that biological research in the Soviet Union requires to be rescued from the influence of Lysenko.





