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Socialism *and Society*

by *Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya*

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Socialism and Society

PART ONE: *Economic Issues*

BOOK

I

Economic Concepts :

Old & New

1

Economics is generally defined by economists as the Science of Wealth in relation to mankind. The principle underlying economics in the accepted sense has been the securing of given ends with the least means, avoidance of waste being one of its intrinsic qualifications. The rationale of such a principle is the satisfaction of human wants, and endeavour to achieve the greatest possible result with the least possible use of means. Yet both study and experience prove that the case is not as simple as that.

Although superficially one may understand economics as the mechanism to enable people to get a money income to purchase essential goods in the fuller sense it means the securing of those things which bring complete satisfaction to a man as a complex human being, in other words satisfy his or her needs as a personality. For all activity, whether it be breaking of stones or filling a canvas with line and colour, is a field for creation and self-expression.

What gives all activity today a money bias is the fact that all human affairs are evaluated in terms of money. This metal which entered the economic world originally as a convenient medium of exchange has ended by becoming the primary commodity often coveted for its own sake. This not only confuses our sense of values but gives a wrong angle to the very purpose of human activity. Professor Soddy calls money 'The Achilles heel of civilization.'

Even if the purpose of the economic order were only the regulating of obtaining material goods and services, let us see if the orthodox system conforms to that definition and answers that purpose. What we do witness today is not want amidst scarcity as water supply in a desert, but poverty amidst plenty, starvation amidst abundance. Even in the United States, the wealthiest country in the world one third of the people are underfed and below par. What is even more staggering is the fact that scientific development and its application to production to increase both tempo and output has worked in a reverse process throwing millions of able bodied workers out of employment, and creating artificial scarcity by deliberately contracting production. Thus acceleration in production is more than offset by stultification. The interlude between the two world wars witnessed economic deadlocks when precious essentials were destroyed ; harvests were burnt down, soil pregnant with seed

turned over, fruit and dairy products thrown away. As Professor Cole rightly asks "Of what use is it that scientists should devise means of making human labour more productive, if the result becomes a positive cause of unemployment?" , Of what use is it to devise means of lightening labour if these means throw more and more people out of work and income? And what are we to say of a world in which farmer, when he sows his crop, has to pray for a bad harvest in order to rescue him from financial difficulties?" Said H. G. Wells : "We are faced indeed with the spectacle of industry through sheer progressive efficiency producing more and more and killing the demand for its products as it does so." The factor which stultifies economic progress, is not overpopulation nor the inadequate productive capacity of the world's resources, nor even the lack of ways and means. It is much more the faulty understanding of the very purpose of the science of economics, the application of a contorted principle.

For many decades economics was treated merely as a means, a mere investment of obtaining satisfaction, as Cassel would have it. In other words the function of an economic system was the turning out of as large stocks of consumer's goods and services of value as cheaply as possible, meaning the least possible use of means in the process. In reality the working of the present economic system

is quite the reverse. Whereas Technological progress, while it seems to apparently make for economy (least possible use of means) is in reality making ultimately for more waste, and far from satisfying the needs of the people, produces either artificial scarcity or destruction. As Professor V. K. R. V. Rao pertinently remarks : "The implication of full employment which underlies the use of the concept of scarcity for advocating economy is thus found to be somewhat unreal. Employment is not only a means of living but also constitutes a value in itself; and if the effect of applying the principle of economy is to bring about a net decrease in employment, there is something obviously wrong with the unqualified exercise of this criterion in regulating economic activity. . . . When unemployment ceases to be merely fractional and takes the form of a chronic malady it is high time that considerations of economy cease to dominate the choice of the methods of production."

Among the discontented and seekers after new paths are those who pin their faith in raising the standard of the masses, that is increasing the present per capita income. This is not impossible but whether it answers the purpose is the criterion. Most of the Western countries have a higher economic standard to the Indian. Although the real income per capita for the major population in rural India may be only 18 to 20 rupees, the

average on paper is Rs. 65 as compared with Rs. 1,013 and Rs. 1,186 for Britain and United States respectively. But the basic problems of Britain and United States are not different from that of India. When Roosevelt came out with his New Deal panacea, the unemployment figures had reached 13 millions in a population of 130 millions. Distress in Britain was even greater.

In clarifying the correct objective of an economic order, the Eastern sages and the Western thinkers meet. The National Planning Committee in India aimed at a system that would pay attention to "Cultural and Spiritual values and the human side of life." Professor Agarwal interprets the Gandhian economics as aimed at the promotion of the welfare and happiness of the whole nation, and not merely of a selected class or group; and be free from that regimentation of the masses which divests them of the legitimate liberty of living within their own pattern of life. "Of what avail shall such material prosperity be if the people lose their soul—their spirit of freedom?" he asks. It has its counterpart in Professor Aldous Huxley's definition: "To transform the society into a just peaceful, moral and intellectually progressive community of non-attached and responsible men and women."

The purpose of an economic order is therefore not an isolated one, confined to the counting of

coins or transferring of bank drafts but one of virtually helping the general purpose of all human activity. As our entire social pattern is greatly determined by the economic, its import is of unparalleled value. If the aim of society is to organise harmonious and healthy co-operative living, then the aim of our economic system must be co-related to this end and be not merely the material prop which supports an any-how structure, but one that shapes and moulds its motifs to render it noble and beautiful, a thing of joy and beauty.

Society is not composed of neutral elements but positive beings and hence all educationalists are agreed upon one thing, that to achieve a successful society, the individuals who compose it should be well developed human personalities. The aim of society should therefore be to provide the necessary atmosphere that would nurture each growing personality to its full stature. Where this is stunted and thwarted, the effect is disaster.

The damage to society by human wastage through mal-adjusted or frustrated men and women, is far greater than through any material destruction due to the prevailing ill-adjusted economic structure. In fact this alone should seal its doom. As Professor Agarwal rightly warns us in his Gandhian Plan: "We can no longer afford to neglect the *human* aspect of our economic life. Man is much more valuable and important than

machine or material goods. Productivity and national wealth are to be increased for *man* and not *at the cost of man*."

For a human being to flower into a full personality, certain basic needs have to be satisfied. Therefore any economic order if it is to fulfil its purpose must supply the fundamental requirements of a community. This must ensure not only the right but also its exercise in practice, of each member of that community to work, which necessarily rules out the present system which Lord Keynes described as "the dependence upon an intense appeal to the money-making and the money-loving instincts of individuals as the motif of the economic machine," and replace it with one guided by human needs and requirements.

This system must on the social plan ensure self-respect and dignity to every individual, that is, obliterate the unnatural frontier which divides society today into two groups or classes, the haves and the have-nots, the acquirers and the labourers, and establish the recognition of work as a mark of dignity, the quality that lends nobility to man. Professor Dewey laying stress upon this as a principle of education says: "Education through occupation combines within itself more of the factors conducive to learning than any other method. It calls instincts and habits into play; it is a foe to passive receptivity. Workers are

creators for they produce goods not only in the sense of money value but as essentials of life, on which the existence of human society depends. The goods may be a loaf of bread or a violin or a book of verse. All are equally essential to satisfy the human needWhen our sense of values shifts from metal coins and cheques to the nurturing of the human personality, then our emphasis on the essentials changes to a different note. This naturally transforms our economic concepts. Under such a system the worker must have more initiative and greater responsibility, the conscious pride of feeling he is somebody who matters and has a definite place in society and is not a mere cog in the wheel. It is this which makes a labourer an artist, diffuses his limbs with the thrill and throb of creation, vibrates his heart with the pangs of birth and pulsates his imagination with the great shapes of things to come."

Road to Socialism

Freedom from Want

2

The present era is now more or less being accepted as an inter-war period, with another World War in the offing. There are many Socialists today who look back upon the last inter-war period with regret as one of lost opportunities for the World Socialist movements. For the end of the last World War threw the world into a fearful ferment and most countries of the world were rocked by social upheavals. In fact, socialist and peasant mass movements were actually in power in several countries especially of Europe, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, the Balkans and practically all of the Colonial East was in open revolt in a bid for power.

Once again we are in transition and it is necessary that we take stock of the situation so that opportunities that we hold almost within the palm of our hands may not be thrown away again.

The first question that poses itself to the interrogating minds is: Constitutional methods or

revolution by violence. In fact evolution or revolution has been the eternal subject that has agitated the human mind down the centuries and through the generations. In his biography of Lenin, James Maxton states: "Can humanity progress to higher forms without collapse of existing forms, entailing widespread sufferings? Can man by force of intelligence go forward to better things or must he proceed by way of struggle, violence and brute force? History is on the side of Lenin's view. At every big change in Social structure, there has been an open clash of opposing forces." "Force" wrote Marx "is the midwife of every new society." { But the tragedy today is that some of his followers, as someone has put it, would make it the father, mother and child as well, of a social revolution. The issue of force or no force, reviewed in the historical perspective, is a misleading presentation of the question. Implicit in a speech by Lenin to the Russian Transport Workers' Congress are certain implications of this much debated point: "What gave this class (Russian masses) the moral strength to bear this privation? It is clear that it had to obtain the moral strength to overcome this material privation from somewhere.....For three and half years all the wealthiest Powers in the world fought against us. Their military forces were many times, immeasurably and undoubtedly superior.....Our military forces were insignificant.

We did not win the victory ; the victory was won by the fact that the Powers could not hurl the whole of their military forces against us.....the moral strength of the Russian worker was that he knew, he felt, sensed the assistance and support which the proletariat of all the advanced countries of Europe rendered him in his struggle. Relying on this support, our proletariat, numerically weak, tormented by poverty and privation, won because it possessed moral strength. This is the first force."

Thus the master of revolutionary technique, gives us an insight into the social process which seems to produce a dependable ethics which is also a calculating strategy, capable of inspiring as well as sustaining a humanity sunk in pathetic destitution to a heroic battle against heavy odds. Force in this context rests not necessarily on brutal military weapons but far more on the strength the movement derives from the moral sanction behind the positive social purpose it is to serve.

Let us now view the setting for this struggle and the various currents that cross it. The existing order rests in and is supported by the armed State, resting fully on violent force with a few democratic trimmings to camouflage the inner steel frame. In terms of realism, the weapons forged for replacing such an order are of necessity bequeathed and determined by the setting itself, that is the State

and the order it stands for. To rely wholly in this context on logic, argument, constitutional methods, human persuasion, is to fail the bigger cause by ignoring the foundations of power in modern society. For in the event of a challenge, this order, unfettered by the moral precepts it preaches to those it oppresses, does not hesitate to ride rough shod over the rebelling elements. The struggle has to be determined by only one criterion, unswerving resistance to evil, that is to oppression, tyranny and exploitation. The alternative is abdication. For the compelling imperatives of change must be viewed in harmony with the progressive social forces that would be released and which would move towards the liberation of a chained humanity as of the productive system manacled by restrictive capitalism and the narrow limits of a Nation-State. For it is only such a challenging wave that can halt the world's further drive to disaster and provide the material basis for the genuine culture of a free humanity. Today the choice before us is either a continuation of the present Society rent by perpetual internal conflict, subjected to a bleak existence of artificial scarcity, relieved only by periodical global conflagrations; or a new era of civilization based on a classless society, provided with essentials and a World State. Expérience shows that a force by itself is only a potential, like an electric current, which can eventuate either in brutality or

creativeness. No social change can be a firm hand rail in the upheavals which attend human progress unless it includes a sturdy ethic appropriate to its milieu, and the only rational ethical criterion is to weigh the costs in terms of the possibilities of human progress and happiness under the *status quo* and in the event of a struggle for the new order. Force takes brutal forms only when it is not insulated by the elemental forces making for social advance. Moreover a price must be paid whenever a challenge to *status quo* is offered. What weapons the force resorts to is beside the point, for even where resistance is offered non-violently, it often results in brutality and loss of life, for the other side is bound to use any and every weapon without much scruple. Non-violent resistance or rebellion is as much of a force as any with military weapons. The method of strike and passive resistance has proved amply fruitful and produced striking results. For the inescapable conclusion is there that those who resist tyranny and refuse to bow to coercion, have the moral law on their side—a factor of immense importance in the constitution of new society. Because in a fundamental sense, the very struggle generates a moral climate and creates the positive conditions out of which peace and harmony can be evolved and flourish—a condition that Professor Joad has described in his book *Philosophy of Morals and Politics*: “For the Greeks ethics and politics were two aspects of a

single enquiry. It was the business of ethics to determine the good life for the individual. It was the business of politics to determine the Society in which the good life as prescribed by ethics could be lived." Coming to more modern times, the comments of Rosa Luxemburg on this knotty question throws it into proper relief. Here is what she says : "Historically legislative reform and the revolutionary method function in accordance with influences that are much more profound than the consideration of the advantages of one method or the other. . . . Legislative reform and revolution are not different methods of historic development that can be chosen at pleasure from the counter of history as one chooses hot or cold sausages. They are different factors in the development of class society. They condition and complement one another and at the same time are reciprocally exclusive, as are the North and South Poles. . . . every legal constitution is the product of a revolution. . . . revolution is the act of political creation, while legislation is the political expression in the life of a society which has already come into being. Work for reform does not contain its own force, independent from revolution. In each historic period work for reforms is carried on only in the framework of the Social reform created by the last revolution. . . . a Social transformation and a legislative reform do not differ according to their duration but according to their content." Therefore

to favour one in place of the other is not a question of choosing a quieter road to the same destination but rather choosing a different goal altogether. For one stands for a radical change and the other surface patch work. For a radical change in the law can only be the result of a process in the structural change itself.

This is essentially so where the establishment of a Socialist Society is concerned. For a change over from a society based on private profit to one on common ownership and economic equality is a revolution, regardless of the presence or absence of violence or its degree of intensity. Those who fail to take note of this, do so at the risk of defeating their very objective and losing the entire cause of Socialism. Where those who pursue the Socialist objective content themselves with trying to reform capitalism, instead of trying to replace it, there the positive Socialist purpose is surrendered. In many a country in pursuing this reformist line, the Socialist Parties have allied themselves with pro-capitalist groups to get into seats of power and thus lost themselves, driven to the sterile task of maintaining the *status quo* in the growing attacks on the working class by a capitalism in crisis. A Socialist Party can therefore coalesce with any other on no other basis except one of rapid and complete transformation in the basis of Society. The point in the question

therefore is not what the weapon is, but what the aim is. The instrument can then be adjusted to the situation. An insurrection was inevitable in Moscow and Petrograd in 1917 and would still normally in a totalitarian dictatorship while it may be totally unnecessary under a stable parliamentary system as in England where prospects of going ahead with socialisation measures, are still practicable through the democratic medium.

After the last war, the peoples of the world failed to meet the problems thrown up by the decay of capitalism—for the war itself was a symptom of the deadly struggle in which this decaying system was caught. Because of this, not only was peace lost but the groundwork for the next world war was laid. For political schemes such as the League of Nations were merely contrived within the vicious orbit of power politics, leaving untouched the overriding economic problems. Thus was chaos and insecurity nurtured leading to Fascism and another Global War, ushering in the atomic weapon.

We have emerged out of that war to face the threat of still another. Can we avoid another era of fear, tyranny and starvation and ward off the atomic war? The Socialists declare that it can be avoided and that the solution lies in our own hands through the medium of a Socialist planned economy and replacing national separatism through

an international Socialist Society and World State.

As technology has moved forward making giant strides and the world's capacity for production accelerated, we have begun to notice a curious phenomenon — the deepening gloom of a fast spreading scarcity. It is almost as though there were some colossal conspiracy at work, a diabolical play to deprive humanity of all the good things that were coming to them to make life easier, more comfortable and much brighter. Let us take the most elementary and primary of human needs, food, clothing, shelter, transport. More land has been brought under cultivation; scientific knowledge harnessed to production to intensify the productive capacity; mechanised apparatus pressed into service to accelerate the speed and save man from the old drudgery: result, unprecedented world starvation, in the West and in the East. New machines perfected to roll out cloth, experiments effected for better and finer raw materials, vaster facilities for moving materials and finished goods round the world: result, acute cloth shortage, resort to niggardly rationing, most people never getting enough cloth even to meet their barest necessities. Better houses and faster built, the advertisements of construction companies say; machines and materials diverted to roll out houses; new ingredients for structures discovered: result, millions of folks all the world over struggling to put a roof over their head— some roof, any roof.

As for transport, this may be truly called the era of the magic carpet. The variety of the means of transport, the ever-growing speed, the complete conquest of man over the elementals, spanning vast oceans, unsurmountable mountains and forbidding deserts. Man is undeterred by any force or barrier. Yet at no time has travel been so difficult, such a discomfort and so like a deterrent sentence. To get a ticket for anywhere, you have to wait in uncertainty. Even a call to a death-bed conveys nothing unless you have influence and can pull strings or pass the black money from under the table. Even when you do get a ticket, it is only to find yourself squeezed into a crowd, call yourself lucky if you can perch on a box or get space to relax for the night somewhere under a seat.

Modern life has^{*} expanded on the modern technological pattern. In the old days each little area tried to be as self-sufficient as possible. To-day economy has become multi-regional, with growing specialisation and man has come to depend more and more on inter-regional monuments. Vast cities have sprung up around expanding factories, making every citizen utterly dependent on mechanised movement even to do his daily job. One sees to-day men and even women hanging on the foot-boards of vehicles, riding on the roofs of trains, crowds lining up for tickets, mobbing buses and

trains. Even money does not solve the problem entirely, for even if one possesses a car, the supply of petrol has been cut—a slash off the very basic supply—and this at a time when the Standard Oil Co., so proudly proclaims through every American Journal this year as the “biggest and most useful year.” It has produced more oil and delivered more products—altogether a year of more accomplishment and greater progress. Well may we then ask: “Where has this oil gone and why are supplies being cut more and more?” The same question may be asked of any commodity for the matter of that, for actually the world is producing more than it ever did before. Its capacity for production is infinite. New sources of production are constantly being discovered, new power ever being tapped. The U.S.A. which has today 60% of the world’s production, could if it geared up to its fullest, probably supply almost every country in the world. In fact nowhere is the full capacity in operation. For there is either a shortage of man-power in one country while several others have idle men; or there is a shortage of machinery and machine tools and therefore the raw material is left to waste while elsewhere precious machines lie idle because they cannot be fed by the requisite materials. These three do not seem somehow to get together—result is needless scarcity. Last but not least even when abundant goods are ready for the consumer’s

markets, either the country which is hungry for them has not the means wherewith to pay or there are transport bottlenecks. Each such item makes a link to run into the other, forming an endless vicious chain. The economics of today is irrational, nay it is worse than crazy. Probably even a mad man would laugh at such senselessness. For gauging not only by estimates, but even from common experience, the world today could easily supply every citizen of the world with more than the bare necessities, leave even a margin over. Why then this cult of scarcity? Why inflation and dizzy prices? This is how Prof. Laski describes the malady in his *Liberty and the Modern State*: "We have come to the end of an economic system...our relations of production contradict the forces of production.....to see the problem in its proper perspective, one must think oneself back into a period like that of the Reformation. Then as now, two great systems of social organisation were struggling for mastery History is allowed to repeat itself, for man never seems to learn by experience. The advance of scientific knowledge and man's gaining greater control over his environment, has not succeeded in banishing conflicts and wars or cut short the painful process accompanying the birth of a new and stable society.

Let us examine the background to this fundamental maladjustment. The Reformation was the first decisive battle the rising bourgeois gave the old feudal

order resulting in the revolutions of England and France. Out of these travails shaped a new order, industrial capitalism based on commodity production and private profit, produced by the labour of a propertyless class. This system generated a belief in *laissez faire* as a stable, self-adjusting system capable of indefinite expansion, and no problem of effective demand, no shortage of consumers' purchasing power could arise. Those who dared to challenge these assumptions were denounced as traitors. But experience proved otherwise and the orthodox complacency became sadly disturbed. The deepening of the depression, unrelieved mass unemployment, the rapid replacement of free trade by monopolies, increasing control over the economy by the State, ground to dust the old snug beliefs. A whole gamut then moved from Marx to Lord Keynes, towards a new theory of Socialism in varying shades, but with more or less the same underlying social philosophy. Its substance is that capital accumulation is a permanent law of the system, and that a falling profit rate follows in its train resulting in economic crisis. The very large capital required by modern industry has led to financial and industrial mergers, and the economic urge to monopoly increased both as a result of technical advance and voluntary combination to eliminate or at least reduce competition. Monopolies necessarily seek to hold up prices by squeezing out competitors, restricting production, and

stooping to even destruction of raw materials and goods. For plenty always menaces the rate of profit. For this system resting on private ownership and drawing its dynamics from private enterprise can only survive on profits.

Imperialism abroad is but the reflection of monopoly at home, the imminent logic of this system. The natural corollary to this is war. Just as the scarcity economics of capitalism are outmoded in an age of mass production, the exhaustion of colonial markets also restricts imperialist expansion, leading to inter-state clashes. For as the economic interdependence of the world has grown, the wars too have expanded into global conflicts, leaving few areas in peace and drawing non-combatants and civil populations within its fierce jaws. Imperialism inevitably produces its own nemesis, for it carries within it the roots of war which quickens the process of imperialist decline. Up to the advent of the first World War, Britain dominated this scene, having vanquished Spain, Portugal, Holland and France. Germany who soon outstripped her in industrial production threatened British supremacy. Out of this struggle emerged some new powers: the U. S. A., Japan and later the Soviet Union. While others have been crushed under the avalanche of a thousand-bómbler raid and the atom bomb, two giants face each other to-day across the globe, with animosity and deadly designs. The question

is can we avoid another bloody war and terrors that follow in its wake? 'The last war has so shaken the entire social and political framework as to endanger the very existence of the people, with food supplies dangerously impaired, transport system destroyed, industries razed to the ground. It is well to remind ourselves here of the dictum of Clausewitz that "War is a continuation of politics by other means." For capitalism, the modern Nation-State and its power politics have emerged together as inter-related parts of the historical process.

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Lord Keynes, the noted British economist once shocked the world by the following comment : "Pyramid building, earthquakes, even wars may serve to increase wealth, if the education of our statesmen on the principles of the classical economics stands in the way of anything better." There is some truth in this paradox, even though it may be the outburst of exasperated desperation. In an economic system that permits artificial scarcity, manipulated inflation and a standing army of unemployed, abnormal compulsions lead to distribution of incomes, even though the expenditure be wasteful, step up the volume of production and facilitate greater consumption. In an attempt to discover the economic law of motion of modern society, Keynes turned to dynamic analysis and reached an explanation of the causes of poverty in

plenty's midst, substantially similar to that of Marx who may be called probably the most important social philosopher of the 19th century. Capital accumulation and the consequent tendency of the profit rate to fall, is seen to be the central factor at work in the cyclical fluctuations of trade and employment and the chronic existence of unused productive resources. This is more or less accepted by all modern economists. Yet to-day there are still not a few who believe that on the basis of an alliance between capitalism (which to-day can only mean monopoly capitalism) and labour it is possible to create an industrial system guaranteeing full production and no unemployment. It is argued that a scheme of planned monopoly capitalism providing a guarantee of employment, a minimum wage rising with the productivity of labour, semi-controlled investment (for it is assumed that a falling rate of return on capital applies only to competitive capitalism) would provide a workable economic machiney.

Many a Government seems to fall for this—and so do even some trade unionists. Some who had for long years sworn by Socialism, to-day declare equally vehemently, that to talk to-day of Socialism is reactionary and attempts in that direction can only bring counter-revolution. On the other hand they equally claim that state planning and state control of certain aspects of economic life, will naturally lead to ultimate Socialism. These are all

fallacious arguments. Although state control may be the pre-requisite to a Socialist order, that by itself does not constitute Socialism nor even the straight road to it, more so where a state deliberately enters into partnership with capitalism in certain fields, but even more, leaves capitalism a free hand to run the economy of the country. All the price racketeering that has been going on even after the advent of the Interim Government, and more so since August 15th, is ample evidence of the dominance of capitalist power in the economy of our country. State control in a country which is run by a bureaucracy elevated to the position of a privileged caste, is rule by authoritarian convention even if not dictatorial decree. In its last statement on Industrial Policy, the Government of India reiterated its faith in private enterprise: ".....private enterprise, properly directed and regulated has valuable role to play." This it defines as the "dynamic" national policy, that is to open the country's doors to wealth and prosperity. Let us now examine the implications of this key factor that must determine the character of our entire national economy.

By accepting that private enterprise has a role to play in the industrial economics of the country, it has recognised the pernicious principle of private profit as a recognised economic impulse, which in other words means that if production has

to be increased the entrepreneur must be assured of his gains. On this the entire wheel of increased production is expected to hinge. Yet we know from every bitter experience that the essence of capitalism, especially monopoly capitalism which alone is able to-day to survive and sustain itself in its decrepit age, is to sustain profit rates by restricting output and by often keeping idle a part of existing capital equipment. For over a century and more, this theory which maintains that since all costs were also incomes no problem of effective demand could possibly arise, had obscured the real nature of the system. Those who talk to-day of expansion by the way of monopoly capital, also continue to ignore the nature of this system. One may pertinently echo Keynes' profound remark: "It is astonishing what foolish things one can temporarily believe if one thinks too long alone, particularly in economics, when it is impossible to bring one's ideas to a conclusive test, either formal or experimental." For at the root of the problem lies the dilemma described so vividly by Rosa Luxemburg: "You cannot buy copper mine shares with a stock of unsaleable tallow dips, or found an engineering work with a stock of equally unsaleable goloshes."

Tangible commodities apart from money are involved in the process of capital accumulation, and the overcoming of the inevitable capitalist

crisis must mean a drastic change in the distribution of incomes either directly or via a sharp fall in the rates of return upon private property. To quote Keynes again : “. . . it would mean the euthansia of the rentier and consequently the euthansia of the cumulative oppressive power of the capitalist, to exploit the scarcity value of capital. Interest to-day rewards no genuine service any more than does the rent of land. . . . We might therefore aim in practice at an increase in the volume of capital until it ceases to be scarce, so that the functionless investor no longer receives a bonus. After the war I hope we shall have learnt some things which will prevent us from ever lapsing back into our pre-war economic morass.” But obviously the Government of India has not learnt them. There are other aspects of the incompatibility of capitalism with national prosperity. Monopoly capitalists jib direct high taxation to finance public work schemes and will resist to the utmost any incursion by the state upon the territory of industrial production. It has of course various other defects. If employers are made to concede to wage increase; they invariably recoup them from the consumers by raising prices, while the consumer is deprived of any semblance of control over the industrial process or price fixing. A society which divides the national income in grossly inequitable proportions—half to one-tenth of the population and half to nine-tenths—must defeat the pious desire of the Government for

equitable distribution and reduce it to mere mirage; the threat of unemployment is the main factor in maintaining industrial discipline. For it is a well known fact that unemployment is necessary to capitalism in order to preserve the stability of the value of money and to give the employer authority over his employees, by having ample reserves of man power.

Under capitalism, production is determined by profits not the needs of the community, even though an old economic myth still declares the consumer to be sovereign, deciding by his choice all the complex problems of production. This is so only as a copy-book axiom, and which as someone has declared is to detract the people's minds from the problems of the real world. For in the real world where the market is shaped to the design of profit an inequitable distribution of income, pulls production from essentials to luxuries; and demand created by mass-suggestion and the lure of advertisements; in such a context the sovereignty of the consumer is only a nice fiction. There may have been a time in the days gone by, when competition between independent producers did in some measure shape production in accordance with consumer's preferences. But that hardly obtains to-day.

Experience has however shown that giving

expression to the consumer's preferences is a practicable proposition, and can be manifested through a pricing system and in return for "prices" deduced from the prices of consumer's goods, to be placed on the use of investment, land and labour and cost accounts compiled therefrom. It is certainly very desirable for a socialist society to try to supply its members goods they most desire and with the least expenditure of its limited resources. The nature of the expenditure of their incomes would reveal their preferences.

The logical corollary to the Government of India's thesis is that if production has to increase, then the capitalists must be assured of their profits, for that alone can guarantee success. For a fundamental understanding of the problem, an analysis of the causes of low or falling production is indispensable. To merely lay it at the door of the left and describe the trade union leaders as innately wicked, up to culpable sabotage, are shibboleths that make no impression and convince nobody. The present bewilderment arises from very basic social laws underlying our economic structure, its irritating sectionalism that serves to maintain conflict rather than harmony, its tasks rather than to humanize frailties or wickedness. The uneven levels which underly capitalism presents a peaceful and satisfactory division of the good things of this world. This tendency towards unequal development and

distribution, the lag between agriculture and industry for instance, render all the schemes unrealistic. We could not do better than to quote a statement of the British labour towards the close of the war: " Realising that the failure of private enterprise to utilise the nation's industrial and labour forces to meet the needs of war has compelled the application of extensive state control and direction; realising that private enterprise will be similarly incapable of dealing effectively with the post-war problems, the solution of which will involve national planning and a far-reaching programme of reconstruction, we recognise that as the Trade Unions are so inseparably connected with the industrial and social life of the nation, they will be greatly affected by these inevitable changes, it is essential that they exercise the maximum influence upon the direction these changes should take. "

How much bigger and more vital are the problems we have to tackle in the post-freedom period and how much more dynamic our outlook and drive has to be. Yet the sum total of the Government's industrial policy in its basic form is the maintenance of the *status quo* for the present.

In fact the emphasis is mostly on increased production within the existing framework, instead of the direct tangible advance it should guarantee to the masses in terms of their subsistence priorities, which is the only criterion applicable to such a

policy. The approach to a country's economy especially for the first decade after the attainment of freedom, after centuries of political slavery, social degradation and economic exploitation, is of crucial importance. Where the main framework is to be left intact with a few trimmings of state control and workers' council and the like, all talk of equitable distribution and profit sharing reduces itself to more pious sounding epithets with little prospect of their being translated into reality for these processes are inconsistent with the workings of finance capital. Even if the several commendable projects planned by the Government are to take shape, they will become isolated efforts unless they can be made to fit into a cohesive whole, an overall national projects designed to wipe out the gulf of disparities in income which to-day restricts the legitimate enjoyment of the national income to a few, leaving the vast masses sunk in want. Otherwise the economic machinery would merely creak with ill-fitting parts haphazardly assembled together, instead of efficiently turning out wealth and prosperity.

Dissatisfaction cannot be created. Where it comes to exist it can be organised and harnessed to a movement, either subversive or for a healthy change. It may thus be given a disruptive or a constructive turn. If there is such an upsurge of sullen force, it only means that the masses remain

thoroughly dissatisfied and that the very foundations of our society are shaky.

Finance capital cannot survive. Whatever its past historic function in the development of the powers of production, it is no longer able to fully utilize them. World scarcity, economic insecurity, international rivalry are not accidental. They are the unerring manifestations of capitalism's desperate struggle to maintain the same old motive force of the system—namely the rate of profit. The only way out is the replacement of this system by one that will transform the lives of the exploited and save them from further social instability accompanying the decay of the old order. The solution lies in abandoning the present tortuous paths and taking the direct road to the creation of a Socialist State.

New Incentives For Old

A Key-Note to Progress

3

Co-operation first developed in response to the challenge of an economy of scarcity and competition and it may be said that the part played by the co-ops in the old days of *laissez faire* with an expanding economy, cannot be repeated now. But changing times also call for new social functions. It is in the new context that we have to examine the role of co-operatives in our economic and social life.

Co-operation is as old as man himself, for when man chose to become a social being, he discovered that it was more profitable to live in communities. He surrendered some of his individualism in return for the benefit of collective living. Historically however, the idea is bound up with the labour theory of value and the desire to eliminate exploitation and secure for the producers the maximum value of their produce.

Even though today individualism as a doctrine no longer holds the same significance, nevertheless individualist premises have entered too

long and deep into us and therefore taken for granted. Nor is it the purpose of those who advocate close social collaboration to destroy the individual. In fact, the measure of harmony in a society is gauged by the contentment it brings to each individual.

But community living is not a mere physical group dwelling, rather it is a sharing of the material and the emotional, without which human existence would become barren, shorn of its sense of fullness. For not only emotionally is there more satisfaction by the sharing of one's joys and sorrows, but even sharing materially with knowledge and goods, is one of the riches for sharing with others. Where this sharing is withheld or contravened, there disaster overtakes mankind. Thus, co-operation has a sound and real basis as a working technique. Even more important is another aspect.

The change from the feudal to the capitalist structure made private profits in the shape of money, the principal motive-power behind production. Capitalism still carries on, continuing to remain blind to any other stimuli except money-profits. The world has, however, moved from this pivotal point and whatever its original strength may have been, it has ceased to inspire mankind as a whole. The world has therefore to find new social incentives that will induce man to put forth his best effort and give him the completest satisfaction in return.

It seems as though co-operation could supply one of these new incentives to replace the obsolete ones.

Co-operation makes for social health and stability for it is an integrating force, a quality so necessary in any progressive movement. For, since capitalism makes market values supreme, it must undermine and disintegrate society; while co-operation which puts its emphasis on broader human principles and values, acts as a constructive and unifying force.

It is well to remind here that a great error lies in assuming co-operation to have mere economic functions. It is actually an experience in genuine community living. Systematic development of this art is essential for any higher and better type of a social pattern. It gives society as wide a base as possible and can in reality be made a beginning for a larger and genuine world social order. For, the principles of co-operation are not a peculiar feature of co-ops, rather they are the indispensable prerequisites for the orientation of any progressive stable society. Under the compelling keynote of social democracy co-operation as a peoples economic and social institution assumes a further significance. For in this group every member has equal rights irrespective of the size of his or her shares, or the tasks performed by each. There is complete democracy in the internal functioning of a co-operative, for it is operated by the members

for their own benefit and all vital decisions are taken by the entire membership as a whole. This is of a special value at a time when the modern economic colossus keeps growing, crushing out the individual. Perhaps, at no time had it been so easy for so few to govern so many and for individuals to count so little. In co-operation, collective action is possible without trampling on the individual. It helps to build genuine community living. For, it weans the large masses away from an over emphasis on individualism and knits them together into social groups based on worldly possession or birth as in bourgeois or feudalistic society but into categories based on the practice of like techniques and common ideas and functions.

Co-operation also resolves several points of conflict in many problems and spheres. It succeeds in replacing the opposing party or interest by a group or a society to perform the same function, eliminating the conflict. In an industry or a workshop the productive unit is jointly owned by the producers themselves ; in the matter of housing, the structure is erected by the society and the members who comprise it are the claimants to the houses. It is a shop actually run and owned by the buyers. In each event the element of conflict caused by the clash of two opposing interests is absent. This principle is now extended to almost any type of production, consumption or services and in addition, it also eliminates the middleman

who is one of the chief villains in the modern day economic affairs. In a world that is resisting and struggling to avoid delegating vast powers to a few individuals working by the sole motive of money-profits, co-operation offers a happy solution.

The task which faces us today is not only one of increased production but getting that increase quickly. So far this aspect has been largely thought of or planned in relation to factories, fields and mines. It is really unsound both psychologically as well as in practice to neglect in this connection other aspects, chief amongst them being the system of distribution. In fact this has assumed terrific proportions since the introduction of control and rationing. Although this may mean larger employment because of greater absorption of people, it in reality serves to reduce the per capita production in proportion to gross and employed population. It is in fact worked out that to raise output per head in distribution by 10% is equivalent to saving half a million workers. It is therefore as necessary to emphasise efficiency in distribution as in production. Moreover it is also a pretty good indicator of the distribution of the national incomes. When the working class income goes up there is more consumption of goods, while in the rise of the middle class incomes, the demand is for more and better services. The system of distribution has also another bearing on the tempo and volume of production.

Production is able to take longer runs if larger bulk orders are placed at regular intervals instead of a series of small orders coming in spasms at irregular intervals. In other words, wholesaling in its proper form of financing stock and bulking orders is indispensable for the stepping up of efficient production. Once again, co-operation is the answer. For, this is a consumers' movement as much as the producers. The two are closely linked. Moreover, as free trade is being slowly replaced by regulated and state-controlled trade, the influence of the consumers is on the wane. The consumers co-operative safeguards that interest.

Co-operation is of special significance in a socialist state and if the latter should be prepared to accept the content of co-operative thought and provide for the widest variety in its own application to contemporary economic and political conditions. For this method being built on voluntary basis and able to operate through the smallest unit, can play a useful part, in the production, distribution and services. It will help to create new social units with new incentives combining the individual and collective interests, usually very difficult to balance, and a task that needs delicate handling especially in the transitional stage. It is obvious that the older coercive incentives of the capitalist era are inadequate to meet the demand of socialist transformation. And if new coercive

methods as practised in other countries are to be avoided, then the only way is the fostering of co-operatives. Moreover while basic industries will be nationalised, it will still leave countless small industries and the problem of small traders untouched. The co-operative institution made up of millions of producers and consumers can stimulate and maintain a democratic basis for planning and wide interest on the part of the general public in the new economic and social experiments. It will also give opportunities of action to all units. Moreover with the advent of shorter hours and increase in social security measures the demands for leisure hour activities will grow. The co-ops can develop new services to meet these needs. In co-ordination with municipal bodies it can provide public utility services.

The co-operative movement in India suffers from some big handicaps. We are so impressed by big figures that we usually miss the tree for the wood. We feel elated because of our large number of existing societies, which are predominantly credit bodies. We have hardly any other type to speak of in proportion to the vastness of our country. Due to the excessive preoccupation of all our society conscious leaders in the political struggle over several decades, the co-operative movement could gather round it only the loyal supporters of the foreign regime in India, many of them seeking favours and titles from the alien masters through

offices in co-operatives. Co-operation therefore, continued to be run mostly under Government ægis. It failed to take on the least vestige of a people's movement. Moreover, the emphasis to this day has continued to remain on the economic aspect. To the conventional co-operator it is an agency for advancing credit, if necessary arranging sales for his goods. The social value of co-operation is hardly thought of.

The Indian co-operative movement consists of two wings. The conventional old gentlemen still adhering to the beaten track and the co-operative departments of Provincial Governments. There is no doubt the former have served in building up a network of credit units in rural areas specially. But few of them can supply the dynamics a reorientation in co-operation calls for in the present setting. Ironically enough several of the co-operators lend only a superficial support to co-operatives for they are themselves capitalists, with their interest completely linked up with that system, which makes their role an anachronism. They are, moreover, socially conservative and think of co-operation as kind of by the way. Co-operation to them is not case of the important factors in the replacing of the present order by a newer social system. Some of the Registrars of the co-ops, especially the younger ones are genuinely enthusiastic and view the movement with a new vision. As good administrators, they are doing their best.

But the dynamics of the movement has to be provided by the younger men and women that see the infinite potentialities of the co-operative way of life. They have to be social workers fired by zeal and faith in this method. To judge the values of co-operation by the experiments that the co-operative department are making, is misleading and even dangerous as data. That is not how a co-operative movement is built up. It has to come from the people, aided by experienced and technical people. For, it is essentially a people's movement. The need is compelling. The competitive system is cracking up. It can only be replaced by co-operation, for competitors have either to come to terms or destroy each other. The question is posed for all the socially conscious people of this country who wish to work for a new social order.

Social Insurance

For Agricultural Workers.

4

Social security as a social concept is influencing the social policies in every country. Although in its widest meaning it stands for freedom from want, at the present moment it is accepted to mean freedom from want as assured by the benefits in cash and in kind of social insurance, or social assistance schemes covering the principal risks which deprive workers and their dependents of their means of subsistence. Were it possible for individuals to cover these risks which threaten their means of subsistence, social security services would be superfluous. But such contingencies as illness, death and unemployment may occur with disastrous effects at any time and they cannot be provided for by persons in isolation. It, therefore, becomes necessary to transfer the risk from the individual to the community to which he belongs and the community has to muster up the resources that will enable it to honour these claims. For the permanent security of a community is dependent on the amount of security the individual in that society enjoys. The creation of such a condition raises

the moral value, relieving directly the physical and mental distress which afflicts a vast section of the people, reduces the causes of these disasters and strengthens the structure of the society as a whole. In fact, it enables in transforming the incoherent masses into a genuine social unit. It also serves in stimulating amongst the toilers an awareness of their larger social and economic responsibilities, at the same time bestowing upon the state the role of the promoter of real national welfare. So far, however, the social security schemes have been promoted only for industrial labour and are designed to meet urban needs and the technique used for the most part is applicable to "employed" persons, and is extended to them when they happen to fall out of employment.

As a matter of fact the overwhelming majority of the people in the world are engaged in agriculture and allied rural pursuits, many of which are seasonal in character. This is particularly true of the countries of Asia. The question which confronts us immediately is how best to provide social security for them. Where an agricultural worker is regularly employed as a wage earner, he can be brought within the scope of a social insurance scheme on the same pattern as is devised for the industrial worker. For as long as a *definite* wage exists even if it be partly in cash, benefits can be administered fairly efficiently. But when it comes

to covering the peasant proprietor and tenant farmer not to mention the seasonal field worker, it calls for a different treatment. In fact the very approach has to be different.

Let us take first the independent peasant proprietor and cultivator, whether he owns or rents the holding. Assuming that normally the income from the holding is able to support him and his family, in his case social security would mean in the first instance security against the loss of his crop and livestock. For what industrial slump and drop in employment means to the urban wage earner, climatic catastrophe spells for the rural agriculturist, and he can be reduced to complete ruin even just as a long period of unemployment resulting from depression would for the former. To an increasing extent many of these evils can today be eliminated or brought under control by science, such as agricultural engineering works, irrigation, weed and pest controls and instruction in preventive measures. Even then there is a large measure of risk that lies beyond this.

The case of agricultural labourers is much worse. Their figure is put at between 60 and 70 millions by Dr. Gyanchand. This number has been on the increase and the rise is said to be by 7 millions. In 1921 the proportion of landless labour to cultivators was 291 labourers to a thousand, in 1931 it was 407 to a thousand. The majority of them

belong to the socially depressed classes, condemned to live and work under the meanest conditions possible. They are illiterate and inarticulate and it is only recently that any attempt has been made to organise them systematically to bring about some improvement in their present conditions. They can be roughly divided into two categories : independent labourers and serfs. The former comprises that mobile class of labourers that work in the field during the sowing and harvesting time and in the off seasons migrate to the towns and cities hiring themselves out as casual workers. In any event their employment is impermanent and insecure. The other class consists of those who are tied to the landlord and his property, that is, bonded slaves and those bound by debts. These services also include those that are given as payment of interest on money borrowed for marriage, dowries, festivals either by themselves or by their parents or grandparents, which means that they get caught in a kind of a vicious circle, and for more than one generation. Where this labour is part of the property and a wage is paid, it is hardly above 9 as. a day and usually varies between 5 and 9 annas, and is much lower than that paid to independent labour. Some are paid in kind. In any event the agricultural labour class which forms a considerable part of our agricultural population lives in a condition which calls for drastic amendments.

The development of an insurance scheme to cover the loss of crops and livestock is an idea which deserves immediate initiation in the form of a workable plan. The fact, that a small farmer's or tenant farmer's income is irregular, while his expenses are bound to be regular, makes the need of some kind of social insurance, under which he can obtain the necessary advance of funds, imperative. For in the absence of such a system, he is compelled to resort to usurers and in course of time sinks deeper and deeper into debt. For small owners who are in a position to borrow on the security of their property, rural credit co-operatives can carry on this function.

There is one major difference in the nature of the personal risks between the urban and the rural workers, for sickness, accident, old age and even death do not have identical meaning to the two. In the case of the agricultural worker, his earnings do not take the form of fairly equal payments received at equal intervals. His income comes haphazardly and at unequal intervals. In part, he consumes his own produce, in part ; he hands it over and sells it; some of this may be in a single transaction. The intensity of the activity is also not distributed evenly throughout the year. It fluctuates greatly from season to season. The entire family shares practically in the work of the farm—the larger the family the greater the elasticity in the distribution of the tasks. This means

that the illness of any one member does not stop the functioning of the whole machinery. It merely throws a greater burden on the others. Old age too does not mean such a complete cessation of work for him as for his urban opposite number, for he can still carry on with some of the minor jobs. Equally, even in the event of death, if the widow and minor children can carry on if necessary with some outside hands. The farm may suffer but not collapse.

At the same time while in the case of the urban worker he may be able to save, the margin is little or practically nil for the rural worker. In fact, he often mortgages his crop in advance to raise ready cash even for his mere subsistence. Even where he can manage to save he has to invest that little in improving his land. All these factors make the chances of working the conventional type of social insurance scheme, where he has to make a regular contribution to the common fund, hazardous, which means he may be unwilling to collaborate with such a plan. After appraising all the pros and cons one cannot but feel that in terms of the primary needs of the cultivators, security can only mean an assurance that all the hard labour they put in will be rewarded by a return that would enable them to be free from want. It is in this setting and against this background that one could do the redistribution on the basis that no land-owner should be entitled to hold more land than

he and his family could cultivate, so that the rest of the land could be made into collective or co-operative farms with some of the landless labourers settled on them. The other would be reclaiming of new land to bring it under the plough and settled by the agricultural labourers. This, however, would still leave some gaps to be filled up.

For, this, a plan for social insurance has to be evolved for the peasants as a means by which the principle of collective duty and responsibility may be put into operation. Besides, the co-operative system, there is also the method of setting a part of a section of the village to be collectively operated for the benefit of relief. And until the existing subsistence level of the peasant in our country is raised up to a human level, the alternative of collecting contributions in kind is worth trying and when the agricultural income is sufficiently raised, the case for cash contributions may well be considered. In some of the advanced European countries this is already in vogue. For instance in Sweden and Finland, the old age insurance scheme applies to cultivators as to other citizens. Bulgaria has a special old age insurance scheme for those peasants who are members of co-operatives and which is financed by a uniform contribution from every member and by a tax on the export of agricultural produce. Australia and New Zealand grant all or most of the benefits to all citizens,

whatever their occupation. Denmark, Norway, Canada and the U. S. A. provide universal old age pensions or assistance, all of which draw a substantial part of their revenues from general taxation.

Socialism and Society

PART TWO: *Political Issues*

BOOK

II

Socialism and Democracy

5

The gradual decline of the Socialist Parties in Europe and their being put on the defensive, is a disturbing factor for progressives all the world over. In a manner the answer partly lies in the incapacity of the Socialist Parties to meet the repeated challenges offered by periodical global wars, especially with a fresh one in the offing. Thus in a way can be explained, the collapse of the Second International after World War I and its failure to revive itself as a vital force even afterwards. For an inability on the part of its constituents to rally the rank and file to meet the challenge stoutly and effectively, was bound to bring disaster to the socialist movement on its very heels. Such a collapse can only come of an absence of a deep experience of a positive social philosophy. For it is not enough to talk of faith and conviction. Faith may spring instinctively from a strong mental attraction towards an ideal, reiterated wishful thinking, or a favourable temperamental bias. But for that faith to pass into conviction, experience has so step in like an alchemist who transforms.

The question is, how is the experience provided? Of course, through the programme of work which is the instrument by which the Socialist State is built up. That is why revolution in the sense of a mighty upheaval is not enough to create a Socialist Society. The process has also to be faithfully worked out through the entire period of effort and striving.

It is necessary to bear in mind that human beings cannot live together in the world without conflict of interests arising at some point. Harmony in living comes out of an inner satisfaction, a fulfilment of our dreams, hopes and aspirations. But at the same time life is fraught with limitations of all sorts. Life cannot meet every demand, nor satisfy every material or psychological need. A society that can find everything for everybody at the same time, on any plane, seems too utopian for practical purposes, at least at this stage of human development. Conflict is inevitable, even with the attainment of a highly efficient society. In fact, conflict is as much of a human ingredient, as friendliness. One may as well say anger will be unknown in a socialist society. One can certainly venture it to be reduced in proportion to better adjustment of the individual to the society, and the creation of a more harmonious atmosphere. What a social philosophy aims at, therefore, is negotiating these conflicts with a view to reducing the

clashes to the absolute minimum. Socialism has therefore to create institutions and methods, that can execute these delicate tasks. In democratic socialism, the ideal is to evolve only such techniques and institutions as will smoothen out the frictions with *a minimum of coercion*, overt or implicit, and *a maximum of collective participation*. In working up towards a Socialist Society one keeps this as the regulative ideal.

Disappointment followed by disillusionment usually results from a misconception of equality, by taking it to mean sameness or uniformity. As a matter of fact, uniformity never does mean equal justice or even fairness. For what is right and proper for one may be injurious to another, except perhaps, in the case of payment for identical work such as a basic wage, although generalisations even in this instance would be dangerous. For, all types of socially useful work, though of equal concern to society, is not of equal concern to the individuals concerned, where personal liking, aptitude, physical capacity and such other factors play an equally important part.

The only criterion, therefore, is to have the democratic ideal as a regulative barometer—or, as has been often said, equality of concern. Emotional adjustments are comparatively easier in a family though not without friction. But far more difficult in a society, especially modern society, where

individualities have become more pronounced with the gradual loosening of the community traditions which made for close ties and co-operation. Therefore something analogous to the role of emotion in a family has to be evolved to regulate the social mechanism of a large and heterogeneous group such as present-day society, with a far wider diversity of interests.

A genuine socialist ideal starts from the premise that the aim of social living is the creation of a society of creative personalities, not mere automata that conform to an ordered plan. Conditions have therefore to be created for the interplay of free individuals who will discipline themselves out of a conscious realisation of their own responsibility towards the collective. The socialist ideal respects the human personality and is fully aware of its delicate shades and tones that would grow discoloured and discordant or fade out into neutrals, unless nurtured by the breath of free air. Hence its emphasis on democratic practices.

The current apprehension, in some cases a dogmatic assertion, that Marxism inevitably means totalitarianism, has no doubt been greatly accentuated by events in Russia and then in Germany, in the latter, in the guise of National Socialism. To most observers, the two seem identical, in each instance a complete state domination, that state in turn dominated by a single-party leadership.

Although the leadership may shift from a class to a political group, one has seen that group leadership in itself becoming exclusive, rising out of a new aristocracy of, say, the *Stakhanovites*, which can in course of time become filled with its own technological power, as the old upper class was by the weight of its wealth or blueness of its blood, and ultimately cease to speak for the masses and lose its real identity with them. Such a state of affairs, we have seen is quite consistent with "equality of opportunity," for the lad from the slum may rise to a managerial post. That is, however, not the cornerstone of socialist society. It can only warn us not to be blinded by shibboleths which socialists also too often indulge in. What usually happens in a pseudo-socialist society is that an economic class is replaced by a political, or may be another economic class based on other standards and qualifications—the class rule continuing nevertheless. We therefore work back again to the character of the technique of achievement, the steps of progress. Means are to a large extent ends, for an achievement is in its essence an experience. Therefore democratic practices have to be the way of life with every socialist, and the recognised technique of a socialist party which aims at setting up a Socialist Democratic State.

It is usually erroneous to lay the responsibility for the growth of totalitarian tendencies, for instance, at the door of a single man and heap upon

him all the blame as in the case of Stalin. We have to look back further over his shoulders into the pre-revolution era and appraise the character of those parties who worked for the ushering in of the socialist state in Russia. Did they believe in democracy? Did they devise such instruments as would bring this principle into every operation? Were they sensitive to the flowering of personalities? Were they mindful of the deadening effect of the suppression and coercion? For therein lies the key to the puzzle of Russia—there the solution to future socialist problems. Similarly, in Germany, all evidence proves that totalitarian tendencies did not follow the revolution but preceded it. Both the Bolsheviks as well as the National Socialists, although differ in their historical role in setting the class alignments, had nevertheless one character in common—they were undemocratic in their practices and processes of functioning. This is indeed the crux of the whole problem, for, it determines the entire character of the order the group evolves. The two parties were not concerned with democracy; their aim was seizure of power in the quickest and most effective way. They could not be bothered by scruples over means or the negotiating of conflicts, to ensure conscious responsible action. On the wave of an upsurge, they came to power. The destruction of democracy was implicit in the totalitarian character of the parties which set no store by the ideal of collectivism; for they

attached no value to individual freedom in collective action. To them all this was just so much bourgeois nonsense. They had neither the time nor the patience for such niceties. Any social set-up by such groups, can only be along totalitarian lines. Their entire present approach and methods of execution can be traced to their original philosophy and the processes which it necessarily shaped.

It is these very experiences which urge us socialists not only to cling to but also give effect to the ideals of democracy, which should be "the distinguishing characteristic of a socialist"—for democracy must be an indivisible quality of real Socialism. Pseudosocialist forms, however, are making such a discussion necessary and are compelling socialists to be qualified as "Democratic Socialists" lest the common association in the public mind of socialism with totalitarianism sully it, at least till the public mind is dispossessed of this fallacy; as also of a native inference that because democracy came into form with capitalism, with the decline of the latter it too must end. At the same time the historical process has to be intelligently worked out, so that all the gains of human knowledge, because of their birth under capitalism, are not destroyed only because of that, but preserved for a happier and better organised posterity.

Far from Marxism going inevitably and helplessly along the road of totalitarianism, it definitely

assumed that the historical development of planned society would lead to the disappearance of the State, which is but an organised form of coercion, aided by popular convention and legal sanctions. However utopian the philosophical anarchism may seem to our practical minds, it is at least clear that Marxism did not conjure up the totalitarian dictatorship that has subsequently been set up in the name of Marxism. It definitely aimed at the discovering of conditions, particularly material, wherein the ideals of cultural and political freedom, as formulated by progressive minds and movements from time to time, could attain greater fulfilment. Orthodox Marxism, of course, believed that the economy of a culture was the decisive factor in determining its social and political character, and at any given moment this character may be predicted if one knows at the time the relationship of the various economic factors to each other. Though, in the main, these laboratory-like formulas may be right, human affairs cannot be oversimplified like natural or chemical elements. We have seen that more than one political form is compatible with capitalism in the different stages of its development. It is, therefore, equally misleading to conjure up collectivist economy automatically with totalitarianism and to declare that socialism is incompatible with democracy. What faces all revolutionary reformists is the place of the individual in collective living. There is the answer to "why

democracy?" Large societies, such as ours today, cannot be knit together by mere pulpit sermons of "love thy neighbour as thyself." Men may be temporarily moved by eloquence or by personal example of stray leaders, but unless they are convinced of the truth that the good of the single is indivisible from that of the whole and vice versa, it cannot be made to be translated into action. To achieve that, the will of community in one form or another must play a big part. Just as by our contact with those whom we love and who matter to us we get inspired and exhilarated—life-giving force as it is called—in a less complete form may be, it occurs in all kinds of healthy associations and arises out of mutual personal awareness, mutual enrichment and responsibility. The other is the lethal relationship in which each tries to exploit the other for one's own personal interest. Human minds have to be encouraged to be independent, free-thinking, not conditioned to a single mould to discriminate yet be tolerant; to appreciate cultural and individual differences, not as dividing hyphens but as foundations for enriched co-operative community life. Democracy like freedom is best nurtured and preserved by living it, not preaching empty slogans. Lastly there must be developed a strong tradition of mutual responsibility—responsibility of course includes kindness and consideration. Such a responsibility also means integrity, intellectual as well as social. Therefore, while the individual is

made aware of his or her responsibility towards society, not merely in thought but stimulated into intelligent action, the society in turn is made equally aware of the significance of its duty towards the individual. In its practical application the question arises in planned economy. The term is itself ambiguous, for it has no intrinsic meaning of its own. The meaning it takes on is from its context. The meaning therefore shifts from one social context to another. There is as much planned economy attempted under capitalism and fascism as is envisaged under socialism. In capitalistic economy, the purpose of planning is primarily to assure profit for the industrialists, all else is incidental; in fascist economy, it assures power and control for the State; in socialist society the aim of planning is public welfare or the economic and social security of the masses. The chief components of public welfare are social efficiency and the strengthening of those rights of personality which are associated with the ideals of democracy.

The purpose of planning under democratic socialism is the achievement of efficiency, elimination of waste, and maximum service. While we may not want to encourage duplication, we certainly do not want to destroy variety. As some one has said: "Diversity, creative individuality and catholicity of tastes" should be its characteristics. The erroneous conception of planned society as a rigidly and centrally directed control must be abolished.

Decentralisation has not only a place in democratic social planning, but in the view of its very purpose very desirable ; as in the case of certain commodities and services, decentralisation would make for greater social satisfaction and efficiency. All that is necessary is to see that all such schemes have a place in the total national plans and do not lead to conflict, which would mean waste and inefficiency.

In conclusion, one may confess that no specific device or any set of them, is by itself sufficient for the preservation of democracy in a planned socialist society. . Generally speaking, we may ask for the guaranteeing of a few essentials, such as the freedom of individuals to choose occupations for which they can qualify ; to move freely round the country ; to be able to select from among an ample variety, goods, services, amusements, etc.; a vested right in a job, i.e., a minimum income or annual wage which cannot be alienated once certain qualifications of skill have been met ; trade unions independent of the Government, whose function is not to stimulate production and save money for the State, but to insure the best working conditions and to protect their members from arbitrary administrative power ; and independent judiciary ; control of public services as newspapers, radio by co-operative bodies ; and such like measures. One cannot be very dogmatic about details. Once the principle is established, ways and means can always be worked out to keep the principal content intact.

However annoying or out of date democracy may seem to the bourgeois, it is more than necessary to the masses—it is indispensable. For it alone develops those processes and creates those agencies through which alone it can sustain its own political power, such as the system of franchise, voting, parliament, etc. Through it alone can this class be able to fulfil its tasks and play its legitimate role.

Socialism and Individual

6

Scientific Socialism had always taught that Capitalism prepares by its own development the conditions for Socialist revolution, that by the expansion of productive forces it creates the objective basis for collective property, that the capitalist evolution brings with it a constantly growing working class, more and more concentrated in huge factories, better and better organised and disciplined in trade unions and political parties, acquiring the indispensable education and capacity for the control of the economy; for the emancipation of the working class is to be the act of the workers themselves.

This prediction of a laboratory formula has however failed to run to type. The intervening world wars have more than upset the schedule, even though Engels had prophesied that 'war where fifteen to twenty millions of armed men will slaughter one another and devastate Europe as it never has been before, that war either would set up the immediate triumph of Socialism or would leave behind itself such a heap of ruins that the

old capitalist society would become more impossible than ever and the social revolution, delayed for ten or fifteen years, would then follow its course more radically and rapidly. A Second World War has followed the first and the third is threatening us. But that European Socialist revolution is nowhere in sight. After the first war, a revolutionary wave did sweep over Europe and for a while it almost seemed as though a Socialist Europe would emerge. But the tide receded leaving behind what now seems like a drab back-wash in Russia. The Second World War has, if any thing, set the clock back at least in the West. Nowhere has Socialism appeared in a vigorous and vital form in any of the continental countries. True, Britain has made a brave showing but it promises to be still uncertain and isolated. In particular, the developments in Germany have been devastating. Socialism seems at least for the time being at a low ebb. Reaction in religious and national guise raises once again its ugly visage. Obviously the present collapse of economic life in Europe is much deeper than what the early Marxists like Engels had calculated. While their premises were correct, their conclusions were miscalculated. For while European society has become more impossible than ever, as foretold, the shambles to which the economy has been reduced are so colossal, that they dim the immediate prospects of a change over to Socialism. The chief consequence of a modern

war and one which has repercussions on the entire world economy, is the tremendous destruction of the heritage which the proletariat is to inherit when the working class overthrows capitalism. For it must be remembered that the industrial potential of man is also his socialist potential. In addition the human potential has been seriously damaged too, either physically killed or greatly demoralised, its intellectual sensitivity blunted into apathy. Too many young people were uprooted before they could trace the familiar patterns of organised life and were too raw to desire the mellowness of mature experience. To them political ideologies and democratic processes mean nothing, just mere phrases. They are bitten by considerable cynicism which kills idealism, and without idealism there can be neither social change nor revolution. Pathetically Rosa Luxemburg had prophesied this in 1915, while languishing in a prison. "If there will be still another World War, the perspectives of Socialism will be buried under the rubbish of imperialist barbarism." Karl Kautsky too, dealing with the situation in Germany after the First World War in the book "Way to Power" commented similarly when he said that it has to be recognised that war had rendered the conditions for socialism much less favourable than before, because it had destroyed so many productive forces and impregnated a part of the working classes with "Lumpenproletarian" spirit, that is, the mentality

of mercenaries. This evaluation can now be extended to all of Europe. In addition the fact to be borne in mind as of equal significance is that America is in possession of the productive forces that Europe needs for her recuperation, and for the restoration of its industrial potential, which rather vitiates the whole situation as is evident in the working of the Marshall aid plan. The tragedy deepens when we find the absence of any Socialist force in the United States that can approach the problem of recovery in terms of social regeneration and not as a joint stock bank advancing credit to a mere bankrupt party. The plight of the British socialist movement illustrates this clearly. The objective conditions for a social transformation have to be definitely induced and not left to the accidents of exigencies. The threats of further destruction by such ruthless weapons as atomic and chemical warfare tend to paralyse the social incentives rather than stimulate them.

Equally troubled by this developing phenomenon, Leon Blum, the noted socialist leader sets himself the task of analysing the situation and unravelling some of the confused strands as follows: "The bourgeois that had exercised in the name of the nation the Sovereignty, had just collapsed ; a dreadful tragedy had revealed its decadence and its poverty ; had shown itself not only incapable of wielding power but unworthy of holding it, and these had appeared as the cause of and the

justification for the disaster. Its final sin was to consider its own ruin as that of the whole nation. When Bazaine was court-martialled for his surrender at Metz, he cried, 'what could I do, there was nothing left.' The President of the court flung back 'France was left.' France herself, carried away by the wave of panic and despair, forgot that she remained. She saw a gaping abyss at her feet and was seized with all the vertigo of fear." What follows is a big question mark. For since the people constitute the sovereignty why do they not assert themselves and claim their legacy? What holds them back when they form the pivot on which converges regeneration? For humanity is for equality and justice, for the supersession of a social structure based on artificial and hereditary distinctions by one based on national and personal qualities; for collective responsibility in production and distribution, that is substitution of public interest for that of private profit; and international amity based on freedom. All this in essence Socialism stands for. The people as the reserves of new forces had to provide the sap for the renovation in the face of the decay of a decadent by-gone social order. The masses are organised, united and disciplined, wedded to democracy for they were the core of it, and faithful to their political ideology and programme in which alone lay their own salvation. In short the people had all the qualities and pre-requisites to assume the leadership. Yet they failed.

Why and how this lag?

It is not necessary to be a Socialist to believe in Socialism, which is the natural capitalisation formed out of the inevitable nature of the existing order. Socialism was not the invention of Karl Marx or any other Marxist pundit. All that Marxism did was to build upon an existing fact as the premise and give it a synthesis. It was the existence of certain grave problems and a deep search for their solution that evolved the Socialist way of thought and the Socialist form of living. Socialism offered to cut the Gordian knot which tied life up in a vicious circle and unravel questions that seemed insoluble. The question posed for us is even when in every country of Europe the masses have seen the old order decline into decay, why do they not put forth their natural weapon of Socialism? Briefly this may be laid at the door of a weak leadership, rigidly doctrinarian in its mental make up, ambiguous and hesitant in its attitudes that it failed to stand up to any crises, divided within its own ranks and this often resulted in mutual cancellations and reduced its potential for action to impotence. All these factors taken together in the context of a devastating World War, analyse the weak spots in the Socialist and working class movement of Europe.

No doubt the objective situation as it has developed in the colonial and semi-colonial countries,

especially of Asia, has been different. The dominant movement here has been the nationalist struggle for freedom from foreign control. But this necessarily had to incorporate a social movement. For the collaborators and the henchmen of every ruling foreign power were the big interests of the country. Moreover to the masses exploited by them and ground down by extreme poverty, liberty could mean little if it were not to release them from this bondage. Economic emancipation had to be an integral part of political freedom. It is by the social content of the life the new state offered, that it would be judged by its people and gain their loyalty and confidence. The Asian struggles, particularly of the South Eastern countries, have been characterised by strong left trends. But here again, actually in the task of the assumption of power, the principles and promises made to the people in order to rally them into the national freedom struggle, have sometimes been betrayed, especially has it been so in India. The field is therefore open to Socialism and the masses. The latter with their disciplined organisation and political urge can through the Socialist movement which is their natural and legitimate expression, realise their dream of a Socialist people's state. But are the seeds of genuine transformation active in the body politic of the mass movement? It is important to know that, to be sure who is going to really wield power in this new state. A strong

totalitarian vein has been let loose mainly by the Communist technique which makes its impress especially on the raw youth, who when they combine a doctrinaire approach to living problems with a narrow possessive sense, can become a danger. With them the Party becomes synonymous with the people, and in the new state instead of the producers democratically owning and administering the productive machine and its political expression, the state, the party now identified with the Government would become the owner and be able to more effectively control the workers, subsidise their poverty with social security schemes as socialist processes, gradually regimenting them into a passive groove, suppressing those who dared to disagree.

Such dangers are latent in every political party, today more so than ever, for science and mechanisation makes possible the control of vast numbers by a handful as could never be before. Very constant vigil is called for on this account in the Party itself, for as the party shapes, so will the future Government.

To a large extent the responsibility rests with the more intelligent and socially conscious amongst the masses themselves. Unfortunately the more vocal public busies itself so much more with finding fault with the workers, heaping upon them the burden of all economic ills, it forgets that this is just the thing that will drive the masses into sullen

obstinacy instead of a warm awakening. The public which accuses the workers of greed and being self-seekers overlooks the self-evident tragic fact that the progressive march of scientific technique of production, should have automatically brought these toilers release from the oppression of unrelieved hours of work and improved general conditions, instead of most of them continuing to live and work under the most primitive conditions. The public grouses because the workers demand their rights, and say they should be more mindful of their duties, forgetting how little concern it has itself shown about its own duties towards the workers. The workers demands are there in fact because the employer class has slipped over its own obligations, busy only enforcing the poorer folk to keep to their duties and obligations. It has been very much of a one-sided bargain. If there are no rights without duties, there can be no duties without rights either.

Nevertheless the masses and their leaders need to be awake and alert to certain trends. It is not only power that corrupts, the denial of it can undermine moral standards too. Too long has society been dominated by bourgeois standards; what they have ruled as right for themselves they have ruled as wrong for the toilers. Even the existing social turmoil has not been able to shake that off. Subconsciously the masses try to pattern themselves on the employer class, to imitate them and their

ways, to engage them in their own game, to outwit them through any means ; for, all this gives the sense to a long suppressed class of being put on the same level as those who had posed as their superiors. This is the tragedy of it. For the possessing class has been petty, mean, grabbing and corrupt. Now the tendency on the part of the workers to beat them at their own game is disastrous. For evil is not to be destroyed by similar evil. That merely intensifies the poison which must eventually destroy all society. Something of this sort has happened in Europe already. The workers are perfectly within their rights in exposing and fighting their employer's motives of mere personal profits and their corrupt ways. But if they stoop to pettiness and meanness and debase their own weapons of fight, they forfeit their claim to a better and nobler leadership and destroy the hopes and prospects of establishing a finer society. For, in the final analysis, democracy is not merely the rule of the many but it is also the rule of the just, the better and more moral section of society. The greatness of society is not in the weight of its capacity to steam roller but of its creative vitality. If the aim of socialism is collective ownership and responsibility, then it should not be allowed to become the vested interest of any coterie. The working class organisations have to loyally adhere to the principles Socialism advocates, not in a puritanical hybrid sense but in

the genuine human sense. Today the fight against the system of exploitation is there not merely because the few boss it over the many, but because intrinsically the very act of exploitation is crude, ugly, humiliating. We cry for social justice not just because the majority must get it, but because we believe that every human being is entitled to it. Equally, it is always better for power to be distributed rather than to be concentrated, for in the hands of an individual or two, it becomes a blind tyranny. Every economic and political ideology is based on a principle, a moral concept to give it a conventional definition. The motive of a social struggle is for freedom which has a reality and meaning in terms of the fulfilment it brings to the human being. The history of man is nothing if it is not the narrative of man's eternal struggle to live proudly with dignity and self-respect.

The workers tend to become cynical and contemptuous of certain qualities because they have so long known only their perversions. Take for instance honesty or self-sacrifice. Actually they are the attributes of civilization, not barbarism. But so long have they been used by the ruling class for their own selfish ends, that to the workers the association is one of being duped and fooled by high sounding platitudes. In a society that is fundamentally unjust, every thing gets out of focus, and the loveliest shapes and forms get awry. This is how a great socialist leader exhorted those

who would join the socialist ranks; "Let me tell you what you promise to do if you join our party; you undertake to set an example always and everywhere, to be a model to others and to inspire them by your conduct. In the workshop and in the field you must set the pace in ability and conscientiousness. The private life and the working life of every member of the party have a propaganda value in themselves. Help us to prove to our enemies that to make men free is to make them live better lives. No aggression merely because others attack us, no insults merely because others insult us, should be our rule. Everything we did should prove this."

The socialist leadership, in thought, word and deed has to appeal not to the cruder instincts of mortal mind, though it is such appeals that bring the galleries down with applause, but to the inborn instinct of justice and decency. For where such sentiments are stifled as "bourgeois," their respect for human life is destroyed. There only fanaticism and cruelty reign. Adherence to principles and convictions has always constituted the base of human morale which creates the environment in which man can live in harmony with others. In fact, progress would have been impossible without such bedrocks of sanction, that cannot be reduced to written codes and even if they were, they would wither. Other ruling classes fell because they proved unworthy of these human codes and it is

for this very reason that the ruling class of today has to be replaced. But it is logical only if the new society that is being moulded has better standards. Sovereignty signifies superiority, a large vision, a magnanimous spirit, readiness to sacrifice the individual interest for the larger good and the ever burning beacon of idealism. Without this the proletariat rule can turn to dust in spite of its success to political power.

Capitalism *and Colonial Economy*

7

The impact of Western economy has created in the colonial countries a peculiar type of economy which has within it some elements from the East and some from the West. It is a complicated situation because it represents not a blending but a clash between two social and economic systems representing two divergent views of life and may be termed a dualistic economy. This dualistic economy prevails today in countries which are otherwise nationally homogeneous like China, Burma, Thailand or India.

Broadly speaking, these two may be interpreted as Western or capitalistic and Eastern or pre-capitalistic. The two represent much more than two techniques, they also stand in each case for a particular philosophy and attitude to life, a definite type of mental urge that has given rise to a particular phenomena. In the case of the former, the basic features are: a money economy; individualism as characteristic of the economic subject; unlimited

wants on the part of the economic subject. This works out in the direction of organisation in every department of life and of technical development such as mechanisation, concentrated enterprise, mass production, commodity character of the products, specialisation, growing division of labour, etc. While on the personal side it shows a multiplication of wants and a tendency to make self-interest supreme. In the case of the latter one sees a set rural economy built up mostly around agriculture, based on manual labour; traditional professions acquired mainly through inheritance, little capital, tendency to be self-sufficient, etc. Each of these different phases from pre-capitalism to the later fully-developed capitalism colours the present social pattern; that is remnants of a past age, the present developing stage and fore-runners of phases still to come. It is this which gives it a dual character. This dualism must of necessity today pervade all departments of life beside the economic, political organisation, social concepts, standards of living, moral values, attitude towards work and a host of other things.

To understand fully the import of both, let us briefly state the genesis of each. The pre-capitalistic unit is the village community which is primarily a social and religious one. It is more than a corporate body, it is a natural community determined perhaps by geneological, territorial or communal factors. In such small communities,

where the moulding of the community is done by individuals rather than established organs as in Western society individual initiative and perfection counts for more. Life is regulated more by social needs than economic customs, manners, food, dress and other externals. Certain social standards are expected to be conformed to and social prestige takes precedence over other factors. Hence it is the few individuals in a small community that form its aristocracy. There is also more scope for personal prestige. The social standards too are differently evaluated, measured for instance by reason of certain possessions such as land, house, cattle, ornaments and the like. Moreover it is not the usefulness of the possessions so much as the fact of the possessions themselves that counts; not the services they render but more what they symbolise in the mind of the community; not even whether a particular possession affords comfort or satisfaction matters, for the act is in the nature of a social obligation to be performed by a member of the community.

In Western society social needs are not unimportant, but they are secondary to economic needs which might also perhaps be called individual needs. For there wealth and fulfilment are measured in terms of possessing the means—in the present economy that is represented by money—wherewith to buy things. And things are mostly measured in terms of monetary value. If land is

bought, it is with the expectation that the return from it will be greater than the money invested on it.

No doubt all material wealth was originally evolved to satisfy man's social needs. But in the West they have gone beyond it. All types of utility objects, telephone, cable, aeroplane etc., represent conveniences translated in terms of investment rather than human satisfaction. These gadgets represent saving of time, and time in modern terminology represents money. In fact, when a man in the West wants to give himself a chance to live, that is to satisfy his inner self and needs, he prefers to turn primitive, go on a trek or in a row-boat or some such thing. In the Eastern society needs are bound to be limited, for production is primarily for satisfying personal needs, and self-maintenance is the basis of its business existence rather than large-scale exchanges. With family as the unit, the entire gamut runs round the hub of self-sufficiency, in which production on a business, that is, price-basis determined by costs of production, etc. is not known. Therefore, income of the Western concept, that is what a man gets as a result of acts of exchange in terms of money or something that can be evaluated in terms of money has not been current coin. In the Eastern agricultural production too, it is the use value that is the main object, not the exchange value.

Western economy tends in a diametrically opposite direction, the starting point being unlimited, towards ever-expanding needs. Here a man reacts quickly to every economic stimulus, avails himself of every opportunity to express himself under the law of the greatest profit and largest income, with the least sacrifice, by selling his working power or his goods at the highest price. He has developed an economic watchfulness that enables him to make something out of the smallest opportunity.

Moreover, in the Eastern economy, agriculture was regarded as the basic factor and industry only supplementary even where the latter was highly developed. The normal way of adapting the supply to the needs of the family was by increasing or decreasing, as the case may be, the area under cultivation, by purchasing land in the former instance or renting it out in the latter.

The impact of the Western economy on the East was bound to have powerful repercussions, for the latter was vaster and organised in a concentrated form. Moreover, it came to the East as the conquering force, to subjugate and subordinate the traditional and the older system. It was inevitable that the East should be the victim and the sufferer. For the Westerners who have come to the Orient, are not independent individuals and it would be completely misleading to lay the

emphasis on the personal factor. They are agents of capitalism, representatives of the capitalist spirit, arms of a powerful well-knit organisation; men who are not alien merely ethnologically, socially, or economically but individuals whose very character is bound to be moulded by their connection with an impersonal enterprise which must inevitably make the business interests of that concern paramount, with every other factor coming as secondary. Moreover, it is a group that is purely materialistically economic in orientation and interest, and its presence in the colonies is to be traced to the same motives. It is bound to create organisations and connections with an active forceful dynamism, compelling the other party to adjust itself as best as it may to the new set up. It consists in addition of elements who have broken with their traditional ties that more or less held them in check in their home surroundings, and now are induced to push on unimpeded in the almost unquenchable thirst for money-making.

Now although the Western economy has barely touched the fringe of the masses in the colonies, nevertheless the colonials have grown to become independent of this highly developed imported system. Western colonial penetration has deeply affected these scattered unrelated elements by bringing to bear upon each, a common force which rendered them equal like fishes caught in net, without however, developing any inner connec-

tion between the two, the older humanity and the new economic order except one of exploitation of the weaker by the stronger. Under the new system, agricultural as well as industrial products are turned into agencies of wholesale enterprises. And in this role the colonial is at a considerable disadvantage. The very unfamiliarity with this mechanism is a serious handicap to him. He is definitely the weaker party and his dealings in the field of commerce when so inadequately equipped for that task, must necessarily prove a serious handicap. The modern technique of currency, price-basis and the like are conundrums to him, and this sheer unfamiliarity leaves him very much at its mercy. Western business methods usually work out in large-scale enterprises of compound structure which are the result of a long-evolved complicated organisation, involving a certain type of industry, discipline, punctuality, precision, capacity for co-operation and like, totally unknown in the Eastern organisation. Dealings under the Western scheme are purely business, while in the East they are more personal. Contracts of a technical nature which are as much of a trap as a safeguard, are unknown in the East, where purely social codes have made it incumbent on a man and even on his descendents, to honour the word. Whereas in the Western scheme, if a man can wriggle out of a contract on some ground of technicality, he will not hesitate to seek the aid

of law to do so. The Western scheme is highly centralised and forms one economic whole, the various interests such as manufacturing, banking, insurance, transport, shipping etc. being closely interlinked, while the Eastern system is decentralised and diffused. Therefore, that the colonial masses have had so little aid and education to adopt themselves to the economic ramifications of an alien system, must necessarily spell danger to them. Money dealings are yet strange to them. Their cash incomes are meagre, irregular, precarious, coming from a strange world where they do not know their way about. Their only understanding of money is their ceaseless want of it and the latter's nature of demanding always more than what he is able to give. They are thus never able to estimate the correct value of currency in the currents of their daily life. It assumes an awe, a compulsion that is beyond the power of their calculation. This accounts for their ready susceptibility to succumb to credit whether in the form of loan or advance on a crop still unharvested, on fruit not yet ripe, or on articles yet to be completed. In fact there is hardly a field in which advance credit has not penetrated completely vitiating the chances of a fair deal for the producer.

In addition, the Easterner is small producer, and it is part of his own supply that he takes to the market, whether it be food or clothing—the part or size being determined not by the demands of the

market but by his own cash requirements. This cash, being rooted in a world beyond his own, confuses his sense of money. He has no ideas of market values. For the Easterner is a single individual brought face to face with seemingly individuals like himself but who are in truth highly complex organisations, well provided with funds and unlike himself, can mark time and wait for the market to rise or fall, so that the highest profit can be reaped. Thus while the Easterner is a seller of surplus, the Westerner is nearly always a monopolist. For the Westerner, principle of organisation is now applied outside of industry too, for instance to Government, resulting in a deep gulf that separates the two, giving rise to coercion in the absence of understanding co-operation. This has also resulted in further strengthening the money-economy as mostly dues in the way of taxes, contributions etc. have all to be paid in cash. This has naturally meant that the Easterner's obligations to the outer world keep outweighing his assets. When in his desperation he provides himself with the necessary credit, it is always to his detriment, drawing on his family savings or a draft on the future, by loan at a devastating rate of interest, 70 to 72 % even, or sale of produce at a loss or converting the household ornaments into cash.

The indigenous producer never gets beyond the limits of his little village. It is the purchaser who has to seek him out at the point of production,

where it is turned out in small lots and spread over scattered areas. Thus has come into being the speculator middle-man as a link between these insignificant retail producers and the big distributing and exporting commercial firms, the middle-man getting the lion's share of the vast profits at the expense of the producer. A striking difference prevails in the conception of and attitude towards labour. The Easterner is not moved so wholly by the incentive as the Westerner whose formula is as defined in the Marxian terminology—money—labour—goods—money profits. In the East routine tasks are performed more to sustain existence. Thus a rise in prices and wages has not always meant a rise in sales and work. Colonial labour over long decades—nay centuries—continued to remain ignorant of and therefore easily exploited by the Western mechanism—not realising its own worth and the wealth it accrued to Western capitalism which reaped profits in hundred percentages and even more. But slowly yet surely a new social stratum has sprung up in the colonies which has imbibed the Western values and standards, adopted the Western economic concepts. This has to some extent taken over part of the old role of the Westerners. One may, in a way say, that Eastern capitalism in the colonies has tacitly and sometimes even actively gone into partnership with Western capitalism.

The national economy of these countries, however still remains dualistic for that facilitates a smoother

exploitation by the imperialist powers, by keeping the masses at a disadvantage. But the growth of Western industrialisation in these parts still being controlled by Western domination, the rise of colonial-born capitalistic class has barely touched the fringe of the masses and their economy and the dualism still continues to hold sway.

It is only the economic and political awakening amongst the masses and the formation of their organisations and the education imparted through them, that is slowly bringing to them an awareness of another world, another set of standards and values of which they have been too long victims. It is only their organised and determined action that can end this vicious dualism and evolve in its stead a modern but indigenous system suited to the needs of the soil, and terminate this long drawn-out exploitation of millions.

Socialism and Society

PART THREE: *Social Issues*

BOOK



Socialism and Education

8

Perhaps no other branch of human affairs has been treated as an exclusive class possession as education. It seems to have about the longest tradition of being the privilege of the few. In fact so zealously and fiercely has it been guarded as a rare possession that only the elect could be permitted to approach. Knowledge was treated almost as a mystery-cult that would have its gloss rubbed off.

The world has no doubt been changing and travelled away from that exclusiveness so well expressed in the legend of Prometheus who was put in chains because he stole fire from the Gods and gave it for the enlightenment of common humanity. Buddha revolted against an intellectual oligarchy which had made knowledge its sole prerogative in order to restore to mankind its heritage. And although the concept that the claim to knowledge is an essential and inherent right of man has gained ground and the target of universal

knowledge is being held up as the general aim, actually the large masses of the people have hardly come into their own in the field of knowledge. Even in a country like England which has a long tradition of political democracy education was treated as a class possession until barely half a century ago, the upper classes resisting every effort for universalising education. Even today what conditions are like can be best described in the words of Prof. C. E. M. Joad in an article in *World Review*: "The English have discovered that their development has hitherto been prejudiced by a double system of education, a system, which by producing a semi-feudal caste, has set its seal upon a grave social inequity. This inequity the English have decided must now stop. Through out our history we have been as Disraeli pointed out, not one nation, but two: the educated and therefore the privileged few, and the unprivileged, because uneducated, many. We are increasingly loth to retain an educational system under which 80 per cent leave school at the age of 14, while the remaining 20 per cent continue to receive education until they are 18 or 20, their higher education being dependent not upon their ability to profit by it or to render service to the community because of it, but upon the size of the bank balance of their parents. Thus the conviction that there is something profoundly wrong with our educational system, and that it must be transformed from a double

into a single system, a system which is the same for all of us is one of the most important changes the war has sponsored." Equally precise and conclusive in stigmatising the class character of that system is the speech of another, Arthur Greenwood, in the British Parliament introducing the recent Education Bill when the English ruling class strenuously opposed even the raising of the school leaving age to 16. "We had during this war developed a comradeship in war effort irrespective of social classes, and it would be out of harmony with the spirit of the nation if we perpetuated an educational system which brought a greater educational advance to the sons of the well-to-do than could be obtained by the lower sections of the community." When democratic countries can blatantly tolerate such a pronouncedly class educational structure it is inevitable that such a system should prevail in countries under British subjection. The number of poor children who can rise to eminence in professions or public life, can be counted on the fingers. The plums of office are still largely the monopoly of the ruling classes. The portals of the public schools are still delicately protected from the contaminating breath of the toiling masses.

These gross inequalities of educational opportunity that now obtain with the heavy weightage in favour of the richer class are only a reflection of our present social structure and the answer is to be

traced to the conscious and sometimes unconscious assumptions on which our entire social order is based, which is that intelligence, talent and capacity are the property of certain socially and economically more fortunately placed classes and not spread out amongst the common mankind. For the rest it is enough if some rudimentary education is provided. Thus not only in our own country but in most countries, to a greater or lesser degree, universal education has been looked upon as some sort of a philanthropic institution, shouldered by the state or charitable bodies, and any elementary instruction is found good enough, devoid of proper cultural amenities or material equipment. The tragic result of this dubious technique has been that vast sections of society are left in a mentally depressed state without the vigour and flavour of intellectual enrichment or cultural stimulation. And yet we have no scruples in point to this sad spectacle as an agreement in favour of maintaining the very system which produces it. We conveniently overlook the fact that a defective education kills the source of self-expression in the youth and deprives them of that progressive ideology which can bring meaning to their life, through an ideal they can strive to attain and transform the dross of their frustrated life into the shining metal of fulfilment.

The same mode prevails in the working of our social organism. Man today needs not merely

bread, butter and jam, he needs intellectual food. He alone amongst animals had developed other organs of perception and feeling which crave for things other than material that is those that satisfy the mere creature needs and animal comforts. To-day the good things of life include in addition to the physical needs mental ones. Just as the material good things are even yet the privilege of the few, so also the goods and services which cater to the human intellect. The same callous indifference that accepts the condemnation of 90 per cent of the people, to slums, semi-starvation and social humiliation also accepts an education which is sufficient, meagre in quantity, poor in content, inadequate in equipment, backward in method and out of date in organisation. In addition it is entrusted to those who are forced to perjure themselves in calling their profession by the dignified name of "teacher", on a miserable pittance which will not assure them even a minimum human standard. For, education should be judged not by the handful who get the opportunity to unfold their talents and distinguish themselves, but rather by the maximisation of such opportunities so that the general level of masses is raised. The true wealth of a country cannot be measured by the handful brilliant that stud the tierra, but the lustre of every dew drop that glitters on every blade of grass. The true measure of the national dividend is the size and height of its humblest citizen and his cultural quotient.

Therefore the provision for universal education not of a nominal sort like the three R's of to-day but of equality, is inextricably bound up with the wider and more fundamental question of providing a better social order in which the fruits of science and industry and the advance in human thought are reaped by all and not mobilised by a few. It is impossible to bring about social justice without equality of opportunity. The inadequacy of education is due as much to governmental indifference everywhere as to the poverty of the parents. Mere free education under the current social conditions is very nearly useless, unless accompanied by adequate measures to change the existing living conditions of our young. Their home surroundings today tend to make anti-social element out of them, rather than ennobling them to become personalities of stature. The home atmosphere is as important an influence, may be more important, as that of the school. All educationists are agreed that the early atmosphere in the life of the child is the most determining factor in its life. Therefore when we think of education we have to think of all the forces that react on the mind of the student. To talk therefore of education within the existing social orbit is to camouflage under the cover of attractive words and neat sentences, a tacit acquiescence in perpetuating the old social order which in essence and in form frustrates the genuine aim of education.

There is no waste in life either in magnitude or intensity than the colossal waste of human talent that goes on for want of the educative stimulant, scientific training and congenial modes of expression. Nowhere perhaps is this neglect greater than in this country where the literacy figure has not reached even a paltry 20%, where a mock attempt is made to educate a child at the annual cost of Rs. 8 as against the minimum of Rs. 132 worked out by the Educational Adviser to the Government; moreover of the hundred children that enter class I, barely 5 reach class V. The figures become more discouraging as they reach the higher classes.

Higher education is only a far away dream to the larger section of the people. As Mr. K. G. Saiyidain, Director of Education of Kashmir has pertinently pointed out in his Educational system : "While life is practical, pragmatic and constructive, the school is a place of bookish learning. When the child enters the school, there is an abrupt and upsetting split in his life, because of the conspicuous lack of continuity between the home and the school atmosphere. On account of its predominantly academic approach, the school fails to train its students for the practical demands of an active, social and productive life.....the real object of education is to enable them (students) to take their place in the community life with greater intelligence, understanding and appreciation. The ordinary run of our schools fails to achieve this not only be-

cause their curriculum is narrow and one-sided and their methods passive and unliberating but also because they lack adequate accommodation and equipment and work under such adverse material conditions that it becomes impossible to create any traditions or tastes or truly educative atmosphere in them. Many of the social and artistic aptitudes of children wither away because they never get any chance for self-expression, and the country suffers an incalculable loss of talent and creative capacity." How can then the stature of personalities or the standard of culture be raised when the people continue to dwell in a perpetual abyss of dark insecurity that stunt all creative energies? It is possible only where the minds of the people have been enabled to flower by the full utilisation of all the natural as well as acquired resources, and superstition has been made to give way to rational thought, bubbling sentiment to scientific curiosity, fear and slavishness to courage and free expression. To achieve this a wide-spread education of noble quality is absolutely indispensable, for that alone can bring on the best in each individual, offering the fullest scope to the diverse aptitudes so vital for the attainment of a full and satisfying life.

Even the figures we get in Governmental statistics are not for education but what is called literacy, which is but the ability to sign ones name which is the criterion adopted by the census authorities.

Literacy figures are therefore not even an indication of literateness, leave alone education. Therefore a mere raising of these figures would become rather a mechanical process from our experience. For unless education is conceived with vision and imparted with imagination, it is not possible to secure an educational influence magnetic in its practical stimuli and dynamic in its social content, one that will shake the masses out of their traditional obscurantism and render them capable of assimilating the benefits of modern thought and scientific modes. If to-day our general public shows little enthusiasm for striking out new paths, if we have to-day to look to countries beyond the seas for technicians, it is the educated society which has to bear the blame. Even with a little stimuli, our people have responded with rare talent, proving that they are capable of quick assimilation of knowledge as the last war so elaborately proved. The potential talent is all there and all that is needed is the proper stimuli to draw it out. For we have travelled a long way from that antiquated habit of dividing human beings, clever and stupid beings. Our very conception of human talent has undergone a change. It is today recognised that every normal human being has inherent qualities that are capable of development. They vary from individual to individual in form and character. The so-called idiots are partially developed mentally ; it is for the psychologist to find out the cause which is retarding the

normal growth and remove that impediment. It is due sometimes to physical causes such as under-nourishment or more often to the deadening effect of the social atmosphere from which they spring. In either event they are capable of being remedied. In any case there is hardly an instance which has not some faculty or other, active or latent which is capable of development.

We now see that education is a part of society. It is therefore the sociological side of education that is the link between the educational centre and the wider world beyond and therefore the most important. It is the link between theory and practice—moreover the sociological factor is implicit in the very fact of a number of individuals congregating together for definite purpose. This inter-relationship is in itself of immense importance. It is an old accepted belief which educational experts today confirm, that the first few years of children's life are the most significant as they set the basic pattern for its later life to come—and all that comes later usually does no more than deepen and crystallise the impressions of the earlier years.

Those social qualities that make for the maximum of harmonious adjustment between various members of society, and between the individual and society, are to be developed as part of the social training in education. It is the codes which are worked out for this purpose that form the cord of social

morals. Social training has therefore to be an integral part of any real education, and it should address itself to intelligent and purposeful cultivation of these qualities so that the budding minds are encouraged to conform to the social standards with a conscious sense of responsibility, not because of blind fear or coercion. Now this training cannot be determined by preaching the Gita or the Quoran or the Bible, it has to be evolved in reference to the nature of the actual social order either in existence or one which should be brought into existence.

Let us now briefly glance at some of the basic social problems we have to grapple with : securing a decent human standard of living for all ; social security ; elimination of unemployment, and co-operative enterprise. If the aim of education be fearless rational enquiry and the courage to try to apply moral standards to the existing social order, that is to be definite in its sociological teaching, it must see that the process of change has wrought in our society conditions to which even the most elementary standards of reason and morality can no longer be applied. Equally if education stands for a sincere vision and an honest approach to the solution of social problems, then it must realise that for it to be content with existing things is to pervert its mission. If it is to fulfil its purpose it must bend its efforts to the construction of a new society which will answer to three main

qualities that are indispensable for our conception of a moral: it should be classless, co-operative, democratic. The first proposes abolition of the rigid stratification of society which impedes progressive movement. The second envisages what must logically follow from the first, the end of exploitation of one class by another, production and distribution being regulated not for private profit but to meet the essential needs of mankind. The third is the mode of functioning which is only possible in a socialised society as just described. It has long been realised that for the proper working of a democracy, universal education is absolutely indispensable. But it is necessary to qualify education by adding "social education." For once education realises its mission as training for citizenship of a society with the three above mentioned minimum qualifications, then naturally and inevitably all aspects of the school and college work have to be planned to further those objects—organisation, method of instruction, curriculum. They must cultivate in the pupils a co-operative way of thinking and a socialised technique of living. Unless all the forces which influence a student's life are so re-oriented, the new conception cannot become experience. It is only such a definite socialised directive that can open up to the young minds a picture of the main social forces that mould our life and make them appreciate the significance of each social phenomenon. In the

the same way the co-operative method teaches them to appreciate the importance of group work in dealing with constructive projects and attacking intricate problems, the joy of community achievement as against individual, competitive triumph and the like. All this is not mere idle platitude, it is the actual experience of those who have attempted training youth in a well-planned social environment and seen them acquire a high quality of socialised behaviour. To-day society has stultified itself by condemning vast millions to ignorance and poverty—for one means the other; the moving in a vicious circle, and from this unholy premise we blatantly proceed to conclude that human nature is innately selfish and exploiting. We have first to ask ourselves, what chance has humanity been given? It is for education to provide that chance. It is for the sports field to toughen, sharpen and sensitise the social faculties of man. It is the innate right of every student to be faithfully taught why unemployment exists and how to build a system from which it will be eliminated. The solution for the present educational ills does not lie in maintaining slum and drab rural schools for the vast masses side by side with luxury schools charging fabulous fees for the *elite*, which merely accentuate the social division of society. The remedy lies as we have seen in wiping out the yawning gulf between manual labour and intellectual study, between city and rural schools, by

introducing an all-inclusive national system which will cater to the psychological aptitude of each and not the financial status ; maintain practical, constructive and creative activities, manual work finding as honoured a place in them as mental, for in a way it provides greater scope for co-operative endeavour and incidentally develops keener social kinship than book-work ; give the city and the rural children ample opportunities to get familiar and gain experience with each other's environment so that the existing artificial remoteness, which prevents a strongly integrated society, may be broken, and a strong bond forged instead ; for the expansion of one's normal environment, expands one's vision and knowledge. In such a context discipline is found to be more readily self-imposed, rising out of an awareness of one's social responsibilities which are necessary incidents of an organised community life. Therefore where an educational institution is organised as a social community, the realisation must grow on the student through trial and experience that while freedom is a necessary condition of discipline, even so, discipline is an equally necessary condition to the full realisation of freedom in a corporate life.

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A child comes into the world not like a blank slate on which parent and teacher may write what they propose, but like a seed pregnant with infinite

possibilities that need to be carefully brought out with least hurt to the child's personality. In other words, the primary function of education is to provide the necessary environment, stimulus and the vehicle of expression, which alone can help towards the fullest growth of the character of the child. To-day, there is considerable controversy between acquiring knowledge and training for life as educational objectives. There is still too much tendency to pigeon-hole life and the individual. Education is a whole continuous process and does not stand chopped up into divisions. Society, the home, the schools, and all the conscious and unconscious influences which constitute these various phases of life as a whole contribute to the growth of the child. It is only when these factors are drawn together into a complete pattern, that education can fulfil itself, that is, realise its purpose.

Education in India, whether of boys or of girls, almost more than anywhere else, suffers from certain specially severe handicaps, in that, education is merely academic in the sense of its being very unrealistic, with little relationship to the thoughts or the living modes of the people. Too many irrelevant and extraneous influences have been forcibly borne down on it, so much so, that to call it education is in itself a misnomer. If the purpose is to adjust the relationship between the child and its environment, having the feel and the perfume of its air, the colour of its skies, the depth

of its traditions, the profundity of its background, the music of its waters, the rhythm of its winds, the cadence of its dreams, all of which are entirely lacking in the Indian system. Education can have purpose and meaning only if it is a sapling of the soil and is embedded in the nation's bosom; if the curriculum has a direct approach to life, and the school-work forms a part of the environment in which the students live and have their being, and if it becomes an active factor in enriching and enlivening that environment. Only through such an approach can the growing people be brought to an understanding of the world in which they are burgeoning out, comprehend the forces they have to face and work with, and realise the significance of the issues on which they are to be called upon to take decisions. Indian education is singularly free from any such essentials. It is merely a passport for a job, a means of earning one's bread, if by luck a job does materialise. Such education is like a well-worn path along which men and women move mechanically. It has no philosophy—for philosophy is like a well-designed structure whose foundations go deep into the ground of ancient tradition and whose motifs are shaped out of the nation's spring-time dreams; its moral values are vague, spiritual springs, halting, and life a mere drift, lacking the rudder of an ideal.

Socialism and Art

9

Art in the ancient human society was a social expression. It expressed, not the mood or the idiosyncrasy of an individual but rather the social consciousness of the community as a whole. Art was not a luxury, an exclusive commodity on sale to become the sole possession of the highest bidder, but the normal everyday detail of life. The artist was not an alien being, looked upon as a freak, living outside the pale of the common herd, employing a strange language and flaunting a mode of living in deliberate defiance of the normal accepted social code and pattern, as artists like doing these days. The artist of those days was a social fellow-being, for the entire community lived in close touch with the beauty which became woven into every social commodity, be it the humblest, the commonest article, the tiniest detail ; each was elaborated with loving and aesthetic precision. In fact, every man and woman was an artist in his or her own way, and each created out of the joy of giving shape and form to dreams and

inspirations. The woman's deft fingers as she drew designs in white or coloured powder in her yard, the dishes she cooked, the flowers she strung, expressed the innate creative genius. Every craftsman was an artist; every cloth he wove, every image he chiselled, every piece of pottery he moulded, was a perfection of colour, harmony and rhythmic balance. A wealth of care and imagination went into the making of the most mundane and insignificant of articles, be it a churner, a rolling pin or a kitchen mat. Art meant loveliness of form, balance and proportion pervading every single detail. One lived, breathed and fed upon art, for art was an essential part of life, more, a necessity like bread and love and home. Moreover all the arts rubbed shoulders and formed a common fraternity. Their greatness lay in being the simple and loving expression of a common humanity and its life. Big works of art, such as public buildings, places of worship, ornamental objects for beautifying the city, were a community responsibility in the execution of which it participated and co-operated, making each its collective expression.

But life was simpler then. It revolved chiefly round small-community, self-sufficiency economy, when needs were simpler, living harder, and the complexities of the present-day economy had not yet come with their varied sophistications. The artist then held a fairly defined place in society for art was still regarded as a practical craft, something

essential to the community needs and satisfied that urge, and not as a leisure hour hobby of the rich who alone can sport it to-day as a privilege.

But competitive society altered all that. It isolated the artist throwing him upon himself, facing the public, not as one of its servicemen. Gradually he found himself become a tradesman selling his works as wares to those who could afford to buy them. He connoted for the first time a private luxury article with no community or social importance, more or less catering to the tastes of the patron or else starve. This has naturally not only suppressed the creative freedom of the artist but has also served to isolate him gradually from the people, which means also isolation from reality. The idiosyncrasies of cultural expressions the frustrated spirit of the artist resorts to, and which decadent society sometimes welcomes for its sheer novelty, are a symptom of the hiatus between community life and its true expression. It is an art of despair, not life which society must take as a serious warning. The evidences of waste and frustration are as obvious in the cultural field to-day as in the material. Just as the quantity of material production is determined by the necessities of private profit and not by the volume of human needs, similarly the nature and strength of cultural production is equally determined by financial factors, whether in the matter of the human element or formal technique. Even where

a higher standard may be attained, the character of culture is debased in a society run under the influence of monopoly interests. In such a society opportunities are limited to the few ; which means that a large part of society is prevented from giving its best to society. As it has been said, the Promethean fire is being used to stoke up the furnaces of private profit. Intellectual workers in all fields should beware of this frustration of their powers, the falsification of values and the absence of a unifying synthetic spirit. One can only quote the indictment of capitalism by the Poet that "It has stripped off its halo from every occupation hither to honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the philosopher, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the scientist, into paid wage labourers."

At no time was art so isolated and therefore shorn of its real vitality as in recent decades, especially after the advent of modern industrialisation. Gradually, the isolation spread. Paintings moved away from public walls, statues from monuments and places of public worship to private mansions, to be retransformed into individual portraits and figures of private patrons, who now secured for exclusive use what was for centuries public property. Slowly and inevitably public buildings and monuments lost touch with art and became loud symbols of wealth. The new society had no taste and little of community consciousness, for it

symbolised individual success, the man who had won the race in commercial competition leaving the others behind, perhaps rudely pushing them back and even trampling on them. Competitive society has little time or mind for aesthetic pursuits. To-day where art objects and their patronage have become a mark of wealth, usually experts are hired to deal with them. For such objects too are an investment and often represent wealth that escape State taxes. It is rarely, and more by accident, that money goes hand in hand with love of beauty.

It was but natural that this degradation of art should lead to the banishment of the artist from the common fold, label his natural instinct as a strange freak that troubles the emotions of a few who henceforth would be best outside the high fence of "respectability," to dwell on cagey fringes to be only tolerated, misunderstood, for ever suspect, despised, and worst of all, mostly ignored. "The history of Art in the nineteenth century," writes Roger Fry, "is the history of a band of heroic Ishmaelites, with no secure place in the social system, with nothing to support them in the unequal struggle but dim sense of a new idea, the idea of the freedom of art from all trammels and tyrannies....."

Art can not live by the artist working for another for the sake of patronage. Art expression has to be allowed to find its own natural channels by

the artist working under the pressure of his creative urge. It is only in this way that art can serve humanity, for then alone can it fulfil its function. It is when such natural expression is thwarted that artists, to record their protest against a blind society and age, indulge in excesses, freakish clothes, daring unconventionality, and the like. They are but the pitiful devices the artists weave in their solitude, when relegated to the outer margins of life.

Artists are after all only men and members of society, open to the influences of the society in which they live; and it is their ideas, feelings and attitudes towards the problems of life which really go into the works they create. An artist does not cease to be a man and become a productive machine, functioning detached from the vortex of human affairs. Therefore, all art expressions have to be considered in human and social terms. The artist inevitably projects into his creations his own personality with varying degrees of directness or indirectness, which is but the sum total of his attitude towards life itself. The subject of his treatment is no accident but an indication of his mental outlook and his emotional affinities, which are but his sociological expressions. Therefore, to talk of art as an isolated factor, entirely cut off from the other serious activities of life, is unreal. If art is as vital as we feel then it is bound to be closely related to all those other factors which are

important in our life. We realise that every human being is a product of the society and its environment. The form and the content of cultural expression of any given period can therefore be explained only in social terms, whether that expression be literary, musical or pictorial. In other words the creative force takes shape with the clicking of two currents, the individual trends and the social. The dynamic is lent to the situation by the powerful impact of these two on one another.

The few artists who have refused to be isolated, and maintained their links with the people and their sensitiveness to reality, have not needed to resort to any of the evasions. For inevitably as the struggle of the social forces grows more dominant, those who slip behind the curtain of isolation instead of sharing in the most dynamic and important of functions—the social revolution society goes through from time to time, are bound to devise or resort to an escape of mechanism of some kind, which is but the subconscious urge in them to find a compensation for losing the reality. One of the greatest services rendered by the Mexican Revolution to the painters, was to break through the vicious circle of private patronage and establish State patronage, to enable the artists to maintain their links with the community and not only with individuals who patronise.

Therefore art can only have meaning and

influence where it is vitally linked to the normal currents of the social life of the period and is able to assume a clearly defined collective function. Otherwise it remains outside the social hum and web. The existing gap can only be bridged by restoring beauty to its central pivotal place, whereby it endows the common threads of daily existence and the mundane details of ordinary life with uniqueness and originality. One sees today attempts to bring art to the common man by indulging in loose phrases like "Proletarian Art." This merely betrays a mind incapable of thought or action free from sectarian bias. For such symbolic slogans as "Proletarian Art" inject once more into a community the sectarian virus and start just another process of poisoning instead of pumping out the existing sectarianism and restoring to the entire community its precious, lost legacy.

Just as a social revolutionary change has to come out of the giant stirrings of the entire strata that have been made inane and dumb through centuries of suppression, so, too, its varied expressions must surge up from its moving breast. It is not to be imposed from above as a gift of benevolence or political act. It is not uncommon to find cultural expressions being exploited for sectarian and factional propaganda in the name of the people, while in reality toeing what is called the "Party line." It is not an attempt to rouse and organise the

burning lava sizzling in the breasts of the vast masses, but just to bolster up a certain political group or party through the negative process of undermining the existing bourgeois standards. The aim should be to create conditions for the masses to fashion their own instrument of expression. It has to be the manifestation of life, not of a political idea or party organ. For we must realise the fundamental fact that art is the appeal to the instinct of communion, the indivisible unity of mankind. We recognise each other with a growing awareness of our oneness by the echoes beauty awakens in us. "Intuition is only a flame spurting forth at the point of contact of an infinity of previous analysis and of accumulated reasoning. . . . There is no hero of art who is not at the same time a hero of knowledge and of the human heart," so says Elie Faure, the French poet and art critic. Art enables man to penetrate deeper than science. Within the heart of the artist are the earth, the vast spaces, all that lives and moves, even the tissues of the stone which to the naked eye seem inert. How much more truly and intensely he must feel the emotions, the passions, the joys, and hopes, the despairs and sorrows, of those made in his own image. The artist is not sufficient unto himself—if he believes that he is no artist. The very language an artist employs is universal. It overleaps all narrow boundaries and divisions. Art enables man to penetrate into the very core

of existence, and pierce the social structure. Thus man can see himself as well as the entire social fabric he has woven, even as a woodland mirrored in a clear surface of water, when all the intricacies of foliage are disentangled and finely posed. He who wants to create cannot do so unless he feels within himself all the flow and pattern of the social life ; is consumed by the flames raging in the hearts of all men, those who have passed beyond and those yet to draw their breath ; is able to capture abstract ideals and raise them to the plane of laws which determine the everyday relationship of man to man. It is this quality alone which enables art to make of life a perfect whole. For each fragment of the work, because it is adapted to the entire whole, however humble in itself, extends as though in silent echoes and invisible strands, throughout the deepened breadth, to weave the complete pattern. Therefore a great work of art lives even in the least of its fragments.

It is also to be realised that technique alone can accomplish nothing, it is the artist's soul or ideal and concept of life that can give quality. Therefore great souls or characters only can accomplish great works of art. Such personalities cannot be encased in narrow ideas or ideals. Great works have been inspired by broad human personalities ; by human ideals, containing mankind, not a section or nation. Genius rises above itself, its surroundings, its epoch so that we can enjoy for all times the

great, broad, humanity of its creations, which is not possible if these creations were rooted in the service of ideas or ideals of one time or one country, which are but transitory or relative. The element is broadly human or temporal. Every expression is a panegyric on humanity for it is a manifestation of a human attribute, general or specific.

Art distinguishes us—it poses us as a part from the rest of nature or holds us up to ourselves like a mirror put in front of us in which we see our own reflection. We see the essence of our being which emphasises the common human attributes which embraces all of us and links us into a single community despite smaller differences of language, colour or what may be termed racial characteristics. It is therefore degradation to step down to eulogising narrow sentiments, in conflict with essence of art. Art may use its immediate environment of objects, but more symbolic than real. High achievements synchronise with high achievements of history. High water marks of a civilization are periods when the renowned artistic creators could rise above the conventional or artificial boundaries to the wide human plane of thought or function—otherwise it is a distortion of confused, paltry minds. Great works cannot be dated—they are timeless, ageless, raceless.

Culture is an imaginative reflection of life, and since life is not static, adhering to realism in art

does not mean photographic naturalism ; for that would not reflect the fundamental realities of life which do not come to the surface except through scientific penetration and historical perspective. A rubber-stamp realism conveys no impression of either the weight of the past or the possibilities of the future or the dynamics at work beneath the surface of life. For the one who creates has to reveal not a static present but the future which is already getting shaped in the vortex of the present currents. A work of art is true in so far as it not only reflects faithfully the thoughts and feelings of the time but also survives the test of practical experience. For a theory or idea is true only in so far as it can be made meaningful in action.

If art is to give expression to each particular age, it must break loose from the frontiers of a bygone age and shake off the limitations of the old imaginative and mental make-up. Life is a continuous flow. Its tempo is accelerated during the process of a revolution when changes are more rapid and radical. At such a time social necessity compels advanced trends in culture and a loosening of the old roots, which creates a conflict between the old pattern and the new, struggling to be born. The protagonists of the old culture who fear changes, in a desperate attempt to maintain the *status quo*, declare themselves as the guardians of morality and civilisation to stave off the new oncoming tide, while the advocates of transformation cannot but

defy the old standards and codes. For every stage of social change calls for a cultural form that expresses its own needs, as the old which a past age had created can no longer utilise the new forces or techniques or reflect the new ideals in its content. In this struggle, the defenders of the old culture resort to uncultured and even barbaric methods which they had themselves once despised and condemned. For, when a force ceases to be progressive it becomes repressive. It is the new society which alone can provide the artists scope for the fullest development in every department of culture and science.

To-day the synthesis of life is broken by a disorganised society in which each branch of activity is isolated from the other, the philosopher from the scientist, the artist from the engineer and each and all from the massive web of a great pulsating indivisible life, in which each is a vital supporting factor adding to the balance, beauty and contours of the total. For instance, it is time when even the mechanised machine ceased to be regarded merely in terms of rigid geometrical contours, a generator of murky air and smokes, static without passion, and came to be assimilated as easily and simply and as profoundly as the landscape below and the firmament above; mastered and made to live as heroically and movingly as the ancient tales of historical narratives. Machines have to-day become extensions of man's limbs. They portray the

power man has come to establish over the forces of nature, his conquest of the elements. This tussle is as old as man himself. The struggle is full of beauty, rhythm, music, and colour. If man in his weakness has allowed the machine to master him, it is not the fault of the machine which is but a creature of man, to be made and destroyed by him. One may as well censure appetite itself, for it often overpowers man. The radio is only an amplification of man's lungs, the telephone of his ears. To frown upon the aeroplane and sing of the creaking country-cart, is not even poetic justice. It is sheer conservative sectarianism. The plough was as outlandish an innovation once as the tractor is today. To ignore man's inexhaustible genius for forging new implements is to ignore the very laws of social change, and no true artist can afford to do that. "An artist produces more as a biological function," says Rivera Diego, the great Mexican artist, "just as a tree produces flowers and fruit nor mourns their loss each year, knowing that the next season it shall blossom and bear fruits again." Art should express not merely what is but also what might be not the diluted average but the concentrated aspiration, not the sheer discouraging defeats but much more the transforming possibilities. All aspects of art expression must embrace and portray vitally the ambitions, hopes and struggles of humanity, must universalise figures to make them symbols of vast vision and action; give them that broad human

significance which must fully rouse and rally the community's interest. Art has to be like a free, large building, where men and women can congregate and feel their communal oneness, their large physical and social unity. It must be public in its function, and though integrated to a social structure, yet prepared for the most sweeping social changes.

Socialism and Medicine

10

The idea of social or socialised medicine has been becoming more meaningful and realistic with the changes in our social responsibilities and the emergence of a more dynamic concept and philosophy of social living. The upheavals of war have brought in their wake mighty social changes, intellectual as well as social. People are showing unmistakable signs that they intend to turn over the old squalid world and make of it something new, with courage and industry, a world in which the country's resources would be utilised for the well-being of all, not just a small privileged section. Similarly, sound healthy, that is, condition conducive to healthy living, is being admitted as one of the inherent rights the human being can claim, and the State's responsibility for providing adequate facilities for this purpose is emphasised. Although the term social or socialised medicine may be comparatively new, the idea definitely is not. For in primitive communities the welfare of each individual was the concern of the entire community

in a very real way. But those societies were simpler, more compact and easy of adjustment. In our present day complex social organism, to make health the aim of every citizen we need a full integration of medicine and society. We may therefore define socialised medicine as on the one hand the development of medicine in relation to social life and on the other the directing of social activities in relation to human well-being.

As medical science has grown, its emphasis on prevention, that is, the fostering of good health in the community too has grown. Prevention through observance of sound health rules, good sanitation, all mean men and women acting in unison in a corporate life. A healthy community is an impossibility unless every one of its members is given the fullest facility for maintaining good health. Individual health is dependent on community health and vice versa. For, individual life is private in only a limited sense. For, when he allows his health to be impaired in such a way as to become a source of infection or become disabled and cannot contribute to sound production, he becomes a social burden. It is therefore necessary to inculcate in every citizen the necessary inducement for care and preservation of health, rouse the appropriate social mood and conscience and rally together all the elements that can take a share in the prevention and cure of diseases. Medical science has to its credit a vast accumulation of

knowledge to enable planning scientifically and therefore effectively. For man realised a long time ago that in order to make the best use of his powers he must live and work in close association with his other fellow-beings. For he could face the hazards of life better and thus utilise the forces to his benefit. Through this corporate mechanism man has been able to consolidate his gains. Society ceased to be phenomenon and becomes almost a part of human biology. Health is no more a negative state. It is much more than freedom from disease. It is now defined as the fullest realisation of the human mind and body which makes for efficiency and effectiveness, especially as the health of body and the mind go together. Now when we make health as the basic aim of every individual and therefore of the entire society we need to formulate a social conduct or to use an academic expression, a philosophy of health for general acceptance. But it will not be a metaphysical doctrine but a social one to be applied to every day life. True, there cannot be a finality about these codes nor a categorical definition, for standards of health change as ways of social living change. What was true of one mode of life need not always hold good of another. But taking our present life, we cannot set contemporary standards and formulate definite objects for immediate achievement and a limited future.

These codes we formulate are to be practised by

the individual and the group, for the social environment is made by the group, and can be modified and adjusted only by its own efforts. Yet the eternal combat between the individual versus the group is part of our social expression; and any individual who seeks benefits at the expense of the group, constitutes himself into an anti-social element. Our entire social struggle is to-day waged around this phenomenon. Society must therefore be empowered to see that every individual is made to accept the restrictions and directives imposed by society in the interests of health. While at the same time society for its part provides the individual with the means of acquiring health and the opportunities to maintain and develop health, and curb any such tendencies as would constitute a threat to general health.

But for an intelligent practising of health regulations, knowledge has to be imparted to the members of the society through specialised field workers and through educational institutions. When a State seeks to apply these principles to a whole nation, it does so through appropriate legislative measures, embodied in a National Health Insurance Act. Briefly it may be described as a system in which all medical service is provided by physicians hired by the State, available alike to everyone and supported through State taxation. In some cases this may be partial, limited for instance to certain income groups. In a sense this

is an extended over-all form of existing state hospitals and clinics. Perhaps the widest form of this is in the army. The way it operates is this: when a soldier falls ill, he reports to his unit surgeon, who, if the ailment is a minor one, treats him as an outpatient, but keeps him under observation. But where it proves of a more serious nature, the sick man is sent to a hospital. The military hospital is a very complex institution which provides for a very wide range of treatment. Every patient who is admitted is thus able to receive all the care and attention he is entitled to and every sort of specialised treatment he is in need of.

Under the existing conditions so far as the general public goes, the procedure is subject to haphazards and chances, for the entire circumstances is ruled by the capacity of the sickman's purse. In the first instance, the private practitioner is called in, and he is also determined by the patient's ability to meet the fee he claims, not by any means that he is the best. If there is a further stage, calling for special expert care and treatment, in very many cases, it is beyond the average patient's financial capacity. In fact the more highly specialised and the more efficient the medical man, the farther and away, well beyond the average man's means he is bound to be. The most he can expect is some doubtful attention from the indifferent staff of an impersonal general ward of a hospital.

When the health insurance becomes law it provides complete medical care. It enables each family head and the members of his household the right to go to the doctor and the hospital of their choice. Nor are the benefits under health insurance limited to workers and their families. The farmer too enjoys a new measure of medical and hospital care. It will moreover mean more doctors and larger and greater facilities for medical services in rural areas. The business man too will have his share. Especially for the smaller business man it will mean lower cost and higher productivity. As a matter of fact, lots of people are aware of the fact that the national figure for absenteeism due to sickness in United States for instance is 5,00,000 man-days a year which is equivalent to having 10,00,000 people out of work for fifty days eachand was in 1945 14 times the loss caused by strikes in the entire year. According to Government figures, the loss to industry from such idleness add to about four billion dollars !

The medical profession as a whole and the hospitals too are expected to benefit by health insurance. The doctor's incomes will be more evenly distributed and remain stable. Their payments too will be more prompt and regular. While the patient can freely choose his doctor and the doctor his patient, the question of fee will not stand in the way of selection nor determine it. Medical services will be able to provide all the advantages of

consultation, laboratory and diagnostic requirements, without laying an undue and extra financial burden on the patient who is usually unable to bear it. As for hospitals and clinics, they will be assured their dues irrespective of the patient's status and income.

Whereas national health service promotes and guarantees better and organised service of a high quality to all, it is also a great social step forward, for on the financial side there is a move towards a fuller sharing of costs, and on the administrative side towards decentralisation and responsible participation of the local bodies as well as the public.

The absence of a sound health insurance scheme is also one of the basic factors that undermine the workman's life and accentuate his perpetual sense of insecurity, which is the root cause of labour strikes. The workman is stricken with fear all the time of losing his job through illness or accident and illness means a big drain on his meagre resources in the absence of a health insurance scheme in operation. The fear drives him to desperation, which in turn often accounts for accidents, as investigation have shown.

Two bogies are generally raised in this connection, that a totalitarian dictatorship is thereby established and patients would have no choice in the selection of the doctor and vice versa. The other question is, the country cannot afford it.

The first is a deliberate misrepresentation of what is proposed under national medical service, for it leaves the doctors and the patients free to make their own choice, accept or reject whomsoever they like without any coercion.

Under vigorous public education, enlistment in health insurance may become universal without compulsion, although in all probability a vigorous State policy and measure may be necessary, if voluntary adoption shows slackness or indifference. But in a voluntary system one must bear in mind the probability of a good deal of counter-propaganda to discourage and deter people from entering the health insurance scheme. For instance, in California a survey of the working of the State Medical Society's Plan for health insurance over 5 years shows an enrolment of less than 2 per cent. due to both lack of proper education and even more to virulent counter-propaganda that this was dictatorship and curtailment of individual liberty.

The other bogey is that financially it is not practicable. Social insurance of any type is never an additional burden on the community. It is by its very nature a redistribution of what we already possess, or in other words, it is a transfer of income from the fortunate to the unfortunate. It is a self-balancing principle, contributions being collected into a common pool and paid out to those who are entitled to certain benefits but are denied to them even though they may be very essential for

them. The sumptuous supply of a few is curtailed to add to that of several others who would otherwise go without any.

This is in essence the answer to the question whether it can be afforded. As a matter of fact this should and can be the only true basis for any national service. Particularly it is so in the case of health. Health is wealth is an old saying and never a greater truism was handed down to posterity. One of the functions of society is production of wealth and wealth which consists of commodities as well as services is the product of mental and physical effort on the part of human beings. A high level of production calls for a high standard of health. So in a way health is the prime source of wealth. Similarly, the higher the ratio of employment, the higher the national income. A deterioration in national health means a drop in production and a decline in national income, which in turn means less social services and therefore in turn fewer benefits to the lower income classes. Thus, it moves in a vicious circle. Maintaining a higher national health record is, therefore, an economic necessity as well as an asset. But, to really achieve this, the actual principle of social pooling or redistribution of wealth through some transfer of the wealth concentrated in the hands of the few to the many has to be put into effect. This cannot however, be achieved by the present method of equal contribution to the social pooling

of employees and employers alike. That becomes unfair. It fails to adjust social and economic inequalities, leaving them undisturbed. Moreover, it is also a deterrent to any further extension of social insurance, for every extension will involve extra finance which in turn will mean larger contributions from employees and severe strain on the lower income people. As a matter of fact the employer's contribution in a sense comes from the employees again. For any such demand on the former's purse is usually passed on by them to the price of goods and services, in other words, to the consumers. As a rise in prices again, devolves more heavily on the lower income people and as they everywhere form the major population, ultimately the employer's contribution too is filched out of the same hard-pressed workers. For while a rise in price by one or two per cent. is not even a flea-bite to wealthy employer, it makes a world of difference to men who sweat and live on their daily wages. Finally there is the State contribution which again comes out of the citizens' taxes. Here too the rich get off pretty lightly. Under the present economic functioning, particularly the system of taxation, almost half the total revenue in most countries (in England about 40 per cent.) comes from indirect taxation, which means through the prices, once again of consumers' goods. For a genuine pooling for the purpose of social services insurance and the like, therefore, both contributions

to the common fund as well as the method of taxation should be so worked as to redistribute the the national income in a way as to raise the spending power of the large section which it lacks today, to convert the surplus from the hands of the few, into satisfying the essential requirements of the many. That is the true implication of social security in any form, whether it be health or unemployment insurance.

One may therefore wonder why a measure of such essential and obvious service to all is so rarely to be seen in force. The reason is that such an effort is stalled not only by vested interests but even by certain interested elements from the medical profession itself. In it, as in every section of society, there is a ruling clique—the handful of *luxury* doctors, who charge fancy fees for even the most commonplace of services. They are more interested in maintaining their exclusive set-up than in extending the essential services to the masses, which will also incidentally raise the income of the general run of medical men as a whole. But this set opposes the move because that will only be at the cost of a fall in their own princely incomes.

The opposition tide also flows from another block—drug and patent medicine companies who feel they can thrive only on ill-health. In fact they are vastly concerned in making ill-health flourish by the production of spurious drugs and opposing any move towards drug control and

maintenance of standards of purity in drugs. Then there is the band of conservatives who resist any change especially if it means benefiting the masses.

But the growing demand for compulsory insurance is too forceful and insistent to be long resisted. This new conception was originally set forth in the Beveridge plan where Sir Beveridge insisted that repairing of damaged physique was as plain a necessity in the interest of national health as industrial efficiency.

The Labour Government in England has already begun to give practical shape to this principle through its National Health Service Act. As a matter of fact it was high up on the list of the Labour Party's election programme. In their "Let us Face the Future," the health section opened with the sentence, "By good food homes, much avoidable ill-health can be prevented".

The Act now provides for the first time a planned and comprehensive service in the place of the old haphazard patchwork with its gaps and redundancies—for that alone puts all the resources of the medical science at the disposal of every one, and makes them freely available, which is one of the basic principles of Socialism. The purpose of the Bill as set out is to establish a "comprehensive health service designed to secure improvement in the physical and mental health of the people and

the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of illness." Its three main provisions cover a complete health service, a unified hospital service, and the establishment of health centres. Its two chief merits are that it provides the patient a far superior service than was hitherto available to him : services of the doctor, dentist, nurse, specialist, medicines, hospital and convalescent treatment ; at the same time it offers health workers better opportunity to give their best. For the purpose of unifying, all hospitals are taken over by the Government which will henceforth be run by Regional Hospital Boards which in future are to be elected. Health centres are to provide facilities for general practitioners, health-visitors, midwives, and chemists, and for many of the special clinics supplied by local authorities, such as antinatal and infant welfare clinics. A universal dental service is the target, but until the existing shortage is overcome, priority will be given to the young, and the expectant mothers. There will also be a home-nursing service.

Local bodies are given special authority to take all preventive steps to mitigate illness as also provide after care of the sick to include such items as special foods, extra comforts and the kind. The wartime provision to provide homes during childbirth is now made permanent, and to cover a wider range of circumstances, such as domestic help where it is needed in the event of ill-health or

old age. These centres are to be equipped, staffed and maintained by the larger local authorities, and the general practitioners will be in contact with the local Executive Councils, half of which will be professional medical men representative of their colleagues in that area, while the other staff will be appointed by the local health authority and the Minister. The patient is given the freedom to choose the practitioner and the doctor to use his professional judgment in the treatment of his patient without dictation from any third party. The doctors will be partly compensated by salaries and partly by capitation fees. At present their distribution is unequal, those in richer areas being more numerous. To rectify this the doctors in the less popular areas are to receive a higher part salary and also the number of new medical appointments in areas already adequately covered will be restricted.

The health centres are designed to be different from hospitals. In the first place they are to be educational centres where instruction on care and promotion of health will be imparted through slides, films, etc., local discussions arranged on health problems; it would also cater to normal people who want routine check-ups.

Some of the old fears and prejudice as for instance the choice of the doctor for the patient and vice versa, are met by the present Act. Of course what people fail to realise is that "Freedom" which

is supposed to be enjoyed to-day is only illusory. What does interfere in reality with freedom at present is the complete commercialisation of the medical service in which the capital value of practice plays an essential part and which interferes between doctor and patient and tempts medical men to pander to the wealthy.

The U.S. shows its indication to follow the British line. The proposed stream-lined Wagner-Murray-Dingell Bill was the first extended and comprehensive social security measure intended to provide medical care for practically the entire population. It provides for insurance as well as good medical care through the pooling of $1\frac{1}{2}\%$ of every wage-earner's cheque and a similar amount from the employer. 3% from the self-employed (that representing the average spent by an American family on medical service at present), and the rest through State taxation. Dentistry, home-nursing, hospital and public health grants are to be paid out of national taxation revenue. The pay-roll deductions for health insurance would be collected as part of the total social security contribution of 8% equally divided between employee and the employer. The Surgeon-General of Public Health is to be the administrator of this new system with an advisory council of professional and lay people. Decentralised administration is provided through State and local agencies with similar advisory councils.

Any new social scheme that inherently calls for transformation in various social phases, also calls for general social reorganisation to stimulate all types of social activities. For all our problems are interlinked. None of them is capable of isolated solution. Their progress has to be on all fronts. Society must assure the satisfaction of the fundamental needs of men before we can venture on specialised schemes. Every individual must be entrusted to bear some direct responsibility and side by side technical experts to advise and assist and all appeal to the masses, such as they can understand and appreciate to give their fullest co-operation and make the smooth working of the delicate mechanism as much as possible in our society.

Socialism and Society

PART FOUR: *The Future*

BOOK

IV

The Task Before the Socialist Party

11

The commonest grievance against the Socialist Party is that it breeds and fosters class war, and is therefore a source of disturbance and a destroyer of peace. Obviously they are people who are either ignorant of the nature of social forces or choose to conveniently ignore them. They are usually people that have an innate fear of radical changes and are particularly haunted by the picture of violent upheavals and therefore try to cling fondly to constitutionalism or parliamentary methods as the only right course that can solve all problems, or in the event of a choice prefer to maintain the *status quo* as the lesser of the evils. But however desirable or undesirable this may be, social change is a continuous movement with many facets and whose nature is determined by as many factors. It is necessary to remember that any agency like the Socialist Party that is out to work those changes to a well thought out plan and not leave the rising forces to a blind exigency, does not function in a vacuum, but in the setting in

which it finds itself placed. Even as the Party reacts on those conditions, they on their part react on it too.

The policy of the Party is formulated and revised in relation to these objective conditions and the valuable experience it gleans as it progresses along. The experience is the measure of adjustment between the forces that move in the direction of change and those that combat it. It is the action and interaction of these factors that go into the shaping of the policy. And however varied it may seem, it has one basic pivot round which everything else revolves: the establishment of a Socialist society in which there is the fullest economic and political democracy—which means that the power is to be with the people and not with the bureaucracy. This however does not give a picture of the society the Party visualises, it merely outlines a general principle. Under the present society the entire pattern is determined by the urge for private profit, whether it is regulated by free enterprise or state control. In a Socialist society this is completely transformed and there is no more a class of private owners of the productive mechanism that employs labour for production. There is only one class, that of workers, whether they be in fields, factories, offices or professions. It is therefore obvious that this is a struggle between the *status quo* and a radical change, between a society that has more than one class in which the

interest of one clashes with that of the other, and a society which has only one class with a single like interest. Whether one wishes to admit it or not, the change over from the former to the latter is a terrific struggle of the classes, and it is the force generated by this struggle which leads ultimately to the termination of a class society which places a legal as well as moral sanction on the system of exploitation, and the establishment of another which is free from this taint. Well, if this is not a class struggle we should like to know what it is? The question of the methods to be employed is another, and needs to be separately discussed. But the method does not alter the basic nature of the process of the change over.

The transformation may be effected by the democratic medium or by the insurrectionary. The Socialist Party is not always in a position to determine the method. It rests equally with the ruling power. For while the Socialist Party can and should and does contribute to the maintenance and intensification of the democratic climate in which alone the democratic processes can function, there must be initially ample scope for it to function at all. Then, from this base it can proceed to try and enlarge and strengthen the democratic forces. The stronger the Socialist Party can become, the fuller shall be the democracy. The Socialist Party does not consider itself a mere cog in the wheel nor a leaf adrift in the wind. The

Socialist Party is no mere tool in the hands of circumstances. Rather the Party is itself a considerable factor in the shaping of circumstances.

But this is by no means the whole of it. The biggest factor in making the operation of democratic method possible is the State. This is a term that calls for a certain amount of elaboration. Even though we refer to the State as democratic, it is a misleading definition. It may enable certain democratic methods to operate but it is actually an organ of the economic ruling class. The State is to-day the political expression of the economic and social order. It provides the legal sanction and the armed might to enforce its smooth working, and to obtain the submission of the common masses, by willing acquiescence if possible, or terrorisation if necessary. It protects the bigger monopoly interests through various devices, price manipulations, tariffs, quotas and such other measures. With each succeeding economic crisis the relationship between the State and industry and banking has grown. The nineteenth century conception of the State as an impartial arbiter, a neutral factor in the evolution of society, is a mere illusion. The existing State machine is all the time being called upon to fashion itself on the economic pattern on which it rests. The key positions of each section of the State—legislature, judiciary, executive—are tuned into the ruling order and function as its arms.

The degree of modification it can be subjected to is in proportion to the strength of the toiling classes. With the rise of capitalism the State began to undergo large changes, for the contradiction in the capitalist system calls for growing State intervention. This imposes on the State more and newer functions. In a way this hastens the process of fusion of the two. But before that happens from the Socialist point of view the basic character of the State in its present form has to undergo a complete transformation. For the old liberal type of State has little place in the present-day world, as it is unable to indefinitely hold the delicate balance between the employer class and the employee class. In fact to-day we are witnessing a complete breakdown in this.

True, that the democratic forms of political life are unquestionably an indication of the evolution of the State in society. But within, the internal conflict continues, even in modern parliamentary form of government, unless it is definitely a Socialist State. For even though the parliamentary form of government is supposed to serve society as a whole and express all interests, actually in the working of the machinery in any non-Socialist State, the vested interest in reality dominate. Thus, though they be democratic in form, such representative institutions remain in content the instruments of the ruling class. And in most instances in a clash between the owning and the

dispossessed classes, the tendency is for the State to side with the former. Its comprehensive representative character thus becomes vitiated. Its policies take on more and more a class bias and come into conflict with forward social progress. Progressively the internal conflict too sharpens. For, on the one hand the modern state finds itself more and more pushed into the necessity of intervening in the general public affairs, due to the growing complexity of our present economic affairs and the rapid deterioration in the social and moral standards. Control of production, trade, distribution of essentials, prices, wages, are outstanding evidences of this. In this role the State has to try to maintain its universal character. But experience shows that the two conflicting classes in our society are on unequal footing in this. For, money almost always gets the better of poverty. In the final analysis so long as the dominance of the big interest continues in the economic set-up of the country, it is our experience that the State is pushed more and more to shift the pivot of its activity and to exercise its inherent powers to the advantage of that one class with only minor "concessions" to the toilers. We have seen how the State fails to uphold to the same degree the interests of the two conflicting classes. This is most graphically illustrated in the nature and method of taxation, tariffs, the maintenance of the armed forces, and above all the interpretation of

legal enactments and enforcement of law. Where such a State is challenged by the masses and feels their organised impact, and is called upon to live upto its democratic role and transform itself into an instrument of the people at large, it tends to throw away its popular garb, sacrifice its democratic character and become more authoritarian.

With this experience before us, for the Socialist Party to abandon the class struggle would amount to accepting the falacious theory of reforming capitalism by the gradual blunting of its sharp claws—that is reducing its processes of exploitation and extending of the social control. The deciding factor is the assumption of power by the people, the toilers, the producers and their setting up of the Socialist State. It is necessary to remember in this context that capitalism is not a quantity of money, but a factor of production, that the capitalist is not a fiscal unit but an economic unit. The modern form of a share-holding company is the complete domination of the process of production by the interests of finance-capital.

In the Socialist programme, trade union and parliamentary activities are not reformist, designed for immediate ameliorative purposes. They are dynamic and the two arms of the entire revolutionary process. They are important as part of the training and the preparing of the masses for the taking over of power, in short for creating the subjective factor of the Socialist transformation for

the actual realisation of Socialism. The entire struggle generates and sharpens the social awareness of the toiling class, which without education and knowledge, has remained dumb hitherto. The struggle by itself cannot aid in realisation of power. That is possible only when a political party is able to clothe it with a political philosophy and give it the proper political directive. This has to-day become one of the essential requisites because of the vast mess world economy presents itself. Socialism is no more an ideal, a mere Utopian dream. Rather it is a historic necessity. The pivotal point round which our entire present-day economy, spins is the ownership of the means of production, and as long as this remains within the framework of capitalism, real power cannot come to the people, to the toilers. That is the crucial test. This ownership can change hands only with the seizure of power by the masses. This alone can mark the end of capitalism and make it possible for the Socialist State to rise.

The dominant power in a given society is the determining factor. Once the Socialist Party gets complete power, it can make adjustments over little details, so long as it can keep control over the entire economy. Every big change is a painful travail and at the outset a Socialist State is bound to be faced by a crisis, since the very foundations of the existing order will now be in the process of liquidation and the new embryo form

struggling to be born. The crisis cannot be avoided and it is a mistake to slow down the pace on the hope of padding the shock. It is well to recall the axiom: "The hours of revolution count for months in history and their days for years." The upheaval must rock the society for its very motive power, i.e. being altered from that of private profit to one of common good. On the contrary only a strong, determined Socialist Government which will brook no sabotage or blackmail from capitalism that can bring the recalcitrant elements under control. For, it is a life and death struggle for those who have been in authority in a system deriving its dynamics from private projects to try and sustain it.

Apart, therefore, from any desire to resist or sabotage the process of socialisation, the present Civil Service in any country is quite incapable of tackling the task of socialisation. Socialists have therefore to fashion an alternative mechanism composed of elements who would not regard the rapid and far-reaching measures as the vandalism of the mob. For to only rely on the electoral and parliamentary methods alone, or to even regard them as the major aspect of the struggle is to overlook the nature of the modern State. Such methods are successful only when they reflect the vitality of a conscious movement of the people who fashion their own independent instruments for functioning. To bring about a major change such

as Socialism envisages, a frontal attack on all the citadels of capitalist power, is necessary. For then alone can a revolution in the existing administration be wrought. This can be wrought by the independent organisations of the masses, a new embryo machine to be fashioned out of the daily struggles and achievements of the common man. It is only when the strength of such a mechanism is reflected in the State machinery, that a proper vehicle for Socialist changes can be wrought. It is for this reason that Gandhiji had always laid so much emphasis on people's organisation and the constructive field work. Where a Government is bereft of both, woe betide it. It is only when the impact of popular will and expression makes itself felt that a social democracy becomes real, and Socialism ceases to be a doctrinaire, and is translatable in terms of the common man. Blue prints even have little meaning unless they have movements behind them. The Socialist Party needs to create a broad front of the people, united on a bold Socialist policy, within which each section has the requisite liberty to give expression to its own creative purpose. The usual setting up of planning commissions and departments is useless unless there exists some mechanism for carrying through the decisions with speed and effect. This will be provided by the people's organisations. So long as men and materials are available, there is no limit to the useful work which may be undertaken once the process of doing

away with the artificial limits imposed within capitalism by the fetters of private profit, gets going. But Socialism will triumph only if it is made synonymous with full employment, economic security, social equality and a decent standard of life. But to keep the continuous vitality of the productive forces—the working masses, to sustain the dynamics of our social living, to keep the administrative machinery keyed upto alertness and efficiency, in short to keep the stress of life moving on a creative force, the revolutionary urge like a generating power, must be kept up at a high level. This is mainly achieved by keeping alive the spirit of independence in the people by enabling them to shoulder larger responsibilities ; for democracy is an experience and it can become real only when people are made to live through the process. The closer the association of people with the machine of the State, the keener their sensitiveness to its moods and vicissitudes. Encouragement of people's organisations, through which they can voice their thoughts and formulate their disabilities are healthy forms which a democracy should welcome and encourage. Popular demonstrations are the spontaneous expressions of the mass urge, which no true democracy should be apprehensive of or attempt to curb. The existence of a critical public is the sign of a living people, alert and vigilant, just as an organised opposition party is the sure symbol of a robust democracy. To ignore self-pedal or sup-

press the free expression of the people and curtail their opportunities is to weaken the dynamism of social living. A revolution is a continuous process like the turning of the wheel and movement is the essence of life. Where it is obstructed or retarded, there stagnation must follow. The task of a revolution does not end when it installs a Socialist regime in power. Rather its real job only starts going. For the Socialist Government to usurp from the people all their initiative and freedom of independent expression, organisation and expression on the assumption that all those prerogatives have now passed into its hands, and to make them mere cogs in the wheel, would mean the reversing of the revolutionary process, in fact the starting of a counter-revolution. It is well to discuss here in broad outline what is meant by a Socialist organisation. It need be hardly emphasised that we are dealing not with a future millennium, but with the practical problems with which the present generation of Socialists will have to grapple in the not too distant a future.

Socialist planning is not a mere caprice or a fad. It offers the only sound and constructive alternative to the present chaos and needless scarcity which have begun to haunt the world like old family ghosts. The essential pre-requisites of a Socialist organisation may be broadly defined as socialisation of basic industries in each of its component parts, power, banking, transport, land; an author-

ity to control and co-ordinate ; a central planning commission, to think, plan and co-ordinate in terms of direct production, distribution and investment in accordance with resources and needs. A conscious planning under which economy is moulded to satisfy human needs, involves decisions as to what is to be produced in what quantities, who is to produce it, how much the community is expected to save, where this new capital is to be employed, what is the desirable balance between the claims of leisure and the production of additional wealth. These decisions would have to be based not upon arbitrary conclusions or judgments but upon close consultation with its subordinate agencies, territorial and functional. Socialist planning implies that the community is taken into complete confidence and fully associated with all far-reaching decisions; and the community then sets to work to employ its skill and talent fully and wholeheartedly to convert all the available resources and keep the country's creative veins pulsating with life. This would minimise the dangers of a centralised planning authority becoming a monster as is often feared. Man's conquest of nature emancipated him from the ancient slavery only to forge new chains on to him. The new order must eliminate every factor that may threaten to replace the old tyranny anew. But in any event unless the old monster of chaos and scarcity is slayed, merely drawing out the fangs and claws under the guise of State planning and

state control, without changing the core of that system, we shall be imperilling ourselves further devastation.

Planning is compatible with control from below, such as workers and technicians councils in the factory and peasant committees in the fields placed firmly in the centre to combat the growth of a new bureaucracy and over-centralisation which in course of time, with the best of intentions, leads to authoritarianism. Democracy can function only when men control the things of which they have a real grasp and where they are encouraged to intelligently discriminate. Nevertheless this is not the whole picture where the international situation is concerned, for the problem would not be solved by the mere over-throw of capitalism and feudalism in the various countries. The economic development has been very unequal. For instance in the overwhelmingly agrarian countries where population is rapidly rising, the ending of rack-renting or usury though important will not by itself transform the condition of the masses. Those of the countries which went in for high industrialisation out of all proportion to their raw material or population of markets on the strength of expanding empires or spheres of economic influence, obtained markets as well as channels of investment. But the very contradictions inherent in the system, have defeated that purpose. Heady imperialist competitions breaking out in crimson

flames that devour all around, leaving stark devastation in the wake. Economic balance has therefore to be restored between the disproportionate heavy industrial areas and the poverty-stricken agrarian countries. Autarchy in the West must be terminated for it was but a reflection of the underlying world crisis of capitalism resulting from the inherent gulf between production and consumption and monopolies were entrenched by restricting production to levels which yield the highest return on capital and the fruits of science made available to the less developed countries. This incidentally would also intensify agriculture and increase food production. The future of the world lies along economic unity. Despite a thousand academic predilections the compelling logic of economic facts dictates what might be called a super-national political authority to put through an over-all economic plan that can bring about the much-needed balance in the national economies, terminating once and for all the wide gulf dividing the rich areas from the poor, the latter paying interest to the former, for isolated efforts are ever in danger of splitting on the rock of this inequality and ending in splinters. Socialism is the way forward which can unify the world's diverse economic channels into a single stream.

Even though a Socialist Party is fundamentally international in character and wedded to the

establishment of a world order, in its statement of and programme it has to enlarge upon its indispensability. This is what it says: "Our picture of Socialism is unrealisable in full except on a global basis. Socialism defines a World order, a social epoch, and its frontiers are not geographical. Socialism in one part of the world and anti-Socialism in the other have no meaning except that the times are transitional. But ultimately there is only One World and that is the World of Socialism Hence World Socialism is our objective, and we work with other democratic Socialist forces to remove from world society the impediments to World Socialism, racialism colonialism and other forms of national oppression and inequality."

On the popular level the Party has therefore to strive to strengthen forces of peace throughout the world. A broad popular movement for world Government must be built up in collaboration with organisations with similar objectives.

India Faces the Future

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India to-day presents a pretty dismal picture, with scarcity of essentials on one side and the ineffectiveness of the government on the other side, and the general deterioration in the conduct of the public on the third. The three are closely interlinked and have their interaction on one another. The tremendous enthusiasm with which the new State was ushered in stands to-day in striking contrast to the general cynicism which is gripping the people. It is an evidence of the rapid disillusionment that followed in the wake of independence. Nor can all of it be laid at the door of partition. Two factors in particular have contributed to this gloomy situation : one is the collapse with a few singular exceptions of the political leadership built up by the Congress well over a quarter century ; the other the inherent weakness of the administration's executive machinery. The hollowness of the integrity of this leadership and the shallowness of its political convictions are self-evident. The obsolete governmental machinery

designed to *rule* and not to *serve*, its slowness and creekiness, the lack of imagination and humanness in the personnel that run the machine, its impersonal attitude to human problems amounting to callousness, all add up the prevailing national despondency. A combination of the two factors threatens the country with further disaster.

It seems hardly necessary to list these various cynical symptoms that almost everybody is familiar with. The useless din of oratory from the Ministers, the slovenly character of governmental procedures and their inability to deal with corruption either with its own framework or that of trade and business; the group rivalries and personal quarrels amongst politicians; the weakness and precariousness of provincial ministries devoid of staying power, and their lack of courage and competence that prevents their coming to grips with the pressing problems, means a poor yield in proportion to the money and national energy the administration consumes.

This state of affairs is having very unhealthy repercussions on the general public. It is discrediting the concept of freedom itself. Some people have seriously begun to question the benefits of freedom and democracy and some even cry out for a dictator. One may as well challenge the wisdom of taking food, if on eating the wrong thing one develops a pain inside. One may question the existing system of government, even the usefulness

of the kind of parliamentary system we have adopted wholesale. For it is by no means the only form of democracy nor the last word on representative government. We may look for and experiment with other forms which may prove more suitable. But it is dangerous to push the argument further and stretch the verdict to dismiss the principle of democracy itself, as the tendency is to-day. For the prevailing system and democracy are not necessarily interchangeable. The origin of parliament to begin with was oligarchic and a gradual evolution brought it to its present form. Its functions too have changed from time to time, and the last word has by no means been said. But to question democracy itself is to doubt the efficacy of freedom and all that goes with it such as for instance the sovereignty of the people, this concept of the State as an expression of the people, supervision of the executive power, the government and its responsibility to the nation, the guarantee of civil and personal rights of the individual. What is necessary is to seriously question and examine whether the prevailing order satisfies the conditions of democracy, that is, whether the government reflects the needs and demands of the people, and if not, then investigate the cause.

The period of freedom struggle in India was marked by considerable revolutionary urge and the masses rallied round it athirst for big economic and social changes. Gandhiji's advocacy of a State

based on social justice lent authenticity to the political movements as a precursor of its establishment. The Congress assumed in their eyes the shape of an instrument of social change. But once this political leadership got into the saddle it began to play for *status quo*, and for that in its mind became synonymous with law and order. It became obvious to the fact that where a revolutionary urge is prevented from fulfilling itself, disruption follows from stagnation, inactivity and the atmosphere of commonplaceness. What keeps up the public morale is movement, advance, creation. The fear of big changes that affects the present political leadership in the Government, betrays its mental make-up as being bourgeois. For the bourgeoisie is always alarmed at the popular upsurge which to it signifies hostility. For it apprehends power slipping out of its hands. All its past and present slogans of a Kisan Mazdoor Raj become empty shibboleths—giant prospects turned to mere dust and ashes. Under such a lead, every attempt to rally the public reduces itself to an appeal to the bourgeoisie who can only be moved by the instinct of self-preservation and resistance to change. The principle of unity which is so essential in party-rule, becomes in this case mainly negative, preservation of the *status quo*, the continuance of the existing order. The bond that is formed of a positive and forward-looking programme is necessarily absent in this instance.

It is this bond, fashioned out of a common creative effort that Gandhiji had sought to forge through his constructive programme and it explains the strong emphasis he put upon this activity as the very bed-rock of our political life. In the former case what discipline can be worked up in a party is out of fear. Mere resistance to change and haphazard patch-ups to meet emergencies renders the horizon barren, and in a world moving with such terrific rapidity, this reduces itself to inertia. This breeds within its bosom dissensions and petty quarrels over little personalities and cheap individual ambitions. Absence of any group fired by idealism, lack of team work, gradually leads to the weakening of Governmental policies and inability of the administration to act effectively. A facile tendency develops to meet every difficulty with doubtful and precarious expedients requiring the minimum of effort or sacrifice to run away from every compelling situation calling for bold action because they require firmness of conviction and courageous action. These are the characteristics of bourgeois conservatism.

A political body that looks upon a radical measure as risk must equally and for similar reasons fight shy of youth for it characterises audacity. A fearful pusillanimous policy has faith only in experience, even though that experience may have a touch of senility about it, so obsolete and out of date are some of the data on which prudence takes

its stand. A popular movement always brings forth a fund of youthful energy and leads into play an immense reserve of pioneering spirit ; popular organisations do not shrink from youthful leaders. The political leadership in India on the contrary has always set great store by age and accepts with stray exceptions, the slow methods of hierarchical promotion and is careful to preserve intact the rigid ladder of rank and age.

It now seems as though the energy and drive which this leadership could generate has well nigh been exhausted in the half a century of the national political struggle, and has no more the strength necessary to complete the task of that revolution which had been set into motion. A governing class that feels it can maintain its cohesion only at the cost of inaction and can survive only if it can avoid any big changes, is incapable of either adaptation or using the fresh rising energies of people. It is this that makes every element in the present crisis such as that of food, weigh so heavily on us. The food drive cannot be an isolated action. It comes in the complex context of the general economic affairs in our country. Only an all round effort at transforming the current scene and renovating the faded picture, can galvanise people's imagination and enthuse them into action.

The adulteration, corruption and decay are all of a piece, the triumph of individual interest at

the cost of that of the community at large. If we probe into the scandals, we find often enough a collusion of business and politics, which is characteristic of bourgeois-minded leadership. This is not determined by the worldly possessions of a leader but by his mental make-up. This decadence is reflected by a steadily worsening grade of products, which has meant a decline in the intellectual vitality. The bourgeoisie has thus ceased to be what it was originally supposed to be "enlightened." The wheel thus moves in a vicious circle. Acutely conscious of our own paucity and troubled by a subtle sense of inferiority, we try to augment our importance by drawing on the past, indulging in lyrical emotionalism of the ancient glories and try to compensate for the void by presenting ourselves as unique.

Thus of late India seems to have been getting more and more deeply involved in sermonising and moralising. Our representatives abroad vie with our leaders at home in holding forth in noble phraseology on our superior spiritual qualities. To this general exaltation is now added the Gandhian halo. We have talked ourselves so much into this spiritual heritage that we almost delude ourselves into believing that we really embody and practise these ancient precepts. The Government spokesmen never tire of boasting of following the venerable footsteps of Mahatma Gandhi and calling their governments Gandhian, meaning spiritual.

But before we get further sewed up in these great spiritual ideals of the East we would do well to indulge in a little introspection to find out the exact nature of these qualities we alone seem to stand for and which we deem to bestow upon us the right to look down upon the West as materialistic, mere clay and therefore inferior to us. Just what is this Oriental spirit of the eternal and religious which is special to the East? Is it really a peculiarity of a particular part of our globe and is it of such pre-eminent quality and for some unaccountable reason become only our special attribute? Have not others arrogated similar claims for themselves? Did not for instance Hitler speak in similar terms of his Aryan clan—the Aryan Geist—in the same manner and did not all of us treat it with contempt?

There have been differences in the strains and the influences generated in the development of the various countries and peoples, climatic, geographic and host of other factors contributing to this. The periods and eras of enfoldment have varied too. But these processes were not confined and completely localised. Their impacts were felt far and wide and at all times on one another. As man climbed the upward ladder of knowledge and achievement, he came to expand his vision, for he could look out on wider horizons and let his influence flower in further far off regions. Ideas and knowledge throughout history have flowed in

succeeding waves from one country to another, one continent to another. It has been difficult and becomes increasingly more impossible to draw the dividing lines. Dating civilizations and tracing the influence of one on another is an endless discovery that man continues to pursue with a thirst for perpetual excitement. The last word is never said on any of these hypotheses. For life has always been in a flux, a fluid moving stream. There has never been anything static about it.

To-day especially when this commingling has reached stupendous proportions, it seems an unreal pastime for any serious thinking mind to indulge in arrogating these special attributes to anyone country or region.

To understand history in a rational way one has to look at it in terms of its economic and sociological factors. Then the successive rise and fall of civilizations become apparent and we see that human development does not take a logical upward line like a student making grades, graduating and going on to post-graduation. Still each is characterised by a special mark that leaves its impress not merely on that particular region but on the entire world. It is quite beside the point who invented what language, script, numerals, gun-powder, steam-engine, printing machine, electric light or even atomic energy for the matter of that. It has all gone into the shaping of our life on this globe now, with terrific impact on our

very mode of thought and psychological make-up. When one looks to-day at the world now, one sees but a single globe, and when one tries to understand its diverse problems then this so called difference between the spiritual East and the materialistic West is more forward in modern science and technology and hence in mechanised industrialisation, while the East is more feudalistic and industrially backward. Even where industrialisation has penetrated more as in India, much of the thinking is still not free from the old feudalistic, pre-industrial psychosis. The spread of science means more rational thinking and generally a greater quickening of social consciousness. That in essence is the difference. In modern parlance it would mean a bourgeois-capitalistic frame-work in one instance with its emphasis on the factual, the concrete and the objective, and in the other the more feudal or semi-feudal culture, with its greater emphasis on birth, heritage, blood ties, closely-knit families and altogether a greater leaning on the subjective emotions. The tempo in the former world is naturally more accelerated than in the latter, which is therefore known as the abode of peace and there are even some Westerners who unable to stand up to their own inner crisis try to seek escape by drinking at the so-called Oriental fount of peace.

.There is no gainsaying the fact that the restless rush of the West is a terrific strain. But it is no

more an attribute of the West than is a refrigerator or an automobile. Where industrialisation steps up the rhythm of life, there the ease and tranquillity of the feudal life disappears. Take the more industrialised cities of the East. They are fast falling into step with the West.

What we idealise as peace and tranquillity of the East is actually non-activity. A good deal of it is the result of an over-stayed feudal order. We have just too many people without proper employment to keep them busy. Where a single man earns, a dozen or half a score hang on him like leeches. Those two hands feed six times that number of mouths. There are just too many souls living on the land which can support less than half of them. So our people have grown weary, indolent, lost heart, and sunk lower each day with nothing to hope for and nothing to look forward to. Most of them are political and economic slaves. Life flows quietly not out of contentment and fullness but of a passivity born of the oppression of hierarchical social structure under which they are weighed, a social relationship in which a small group because of the accident of birth enjoys all the wealth and power, living in utter idleness and often dissipation while the majority continue to crawl around in abject poverty, filth and squalor.

No doubt industrial society has less security and greater stakes. While the more feudal the society the tempo is slower and its working much simpler less

overbearing and ruthless. Still we are to-day deliberately turning on backs upon it for the gamble for a modern life with all its uncertainties. Joint families are broken up and its members scattered far and wide. We are desperately driving people to give up the old habits of sitting, doing nothing and grow brisk and industrious. The essential pre-requisite for a spiritual life is a certain degree of passivity; ability to do nothing, to detach oneself from the storm and stress of life. We have done our best to explode the virtue of endurance because it has become synonymous in our minds with servility. We find the old habit of disdaining life as something reprehensible. Escapism is regarded as dangerous for in practice it amounts to accepting the worst conditions passively without any struggle to change it. We interpret this old attitude as negative and we thunder for the new, the more positive, the more dynamic. We refuse to accept life any more as mere suffering a burden from which death alone is the salvation. That philosophy to us now is morbid. We try to inject a new dynamics into life. We say suffering is avoidable, for every adversity has a cause, and cause once discovered can be overcome. At least in its present form this dynamics has come to us from the West. Poverty is man-made, not pre-destined. Disease is actually being fought and overcome through prevention—we do not need to be ill—should never get ill. The West believes in life. It

struggles and suffers to live, even tries to live, even tries to defy death.

It is through this dynamism that we wish to find our release. What we need is not passivity but continuous striving, not to destroy but to construct and build that man may grow in nobility and stature. What we need in the East are machines, more scientific and technological processes, rapid and large scale industrialisation and to rid ourselves of our age-old languor and irresponsibility. We need machines even as we need the D.D.T. to be rid of our dirt and squalor which breeds countless diseases. If all this is materialism we need them all the same. Above all we need to rid ourselves of the hypocrisy of posing as superior beings, of covering up inefficiency and indolence under the camouflage of spiritualism. We have to intensify life, not merely accelerate the tempo; build up new standards and values to become efficient and reliable. If this be Westernisation, then we have to plead guilty to that charge. For we want its knowledge, its achievements and the process goes on, almost inexorably. But this knowledge and achievement is not the property of the West. The West has no more a monopoly upon it than the East has over the sun because it rises over the eastern rim. The age of exclusive privileges is over. Where the natural process of adjustment is delayed, the inexorable forces of change act ruthlessly and violently to restore the

balance. Hence the periodical global wars.

One very sincerely wishes however, that the East did have finer and a nobler social values, that it practised so, that it avoided all the coarseness and brutality the West displays. But, alas, inspite of all our tall talk of spiritual ideals and glorious heritage we show less social consciousness and sometimes even less sensitiveness. Our social divisions are rigid because of the lingering feudal influences. We have as much corruption in our public life and in our administration as the West and definitely worse standards in our commercial and trade dealings. We are as greedy for money and as unscrupulous. We continue to harbour barbaric instincts in maintaining social sub-divisions and hierarchies in our society, subjecting those in the lowest rung to worst humiliation one can think of.

Yet we are going through rapid changes, changes that are bringing us into conformity with the recognised world standards, which are neither in East nor West. If there is a deterioration in the West, it is equally so in the East. Often so much of this boast of spiritual greatness comes out of a feeling of inferiority—a complex that the East is not yet entirely free from and is not likely to—while the West continues to dominate parts of Asia.

All this self-deception however, far from helping us is doing us a lot of harm. We can become fine and great only if we see and try to remove

the defects that tie down our progress. We do not grow tall by merely proclaiming we are, rather we should measure ourselves and see our real height by recognised scientific standards.

