Radical Humanism

The Philosophy of Freedom and Democrac

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ISBN 81-202-0087-X

First Published 1983
Second Revised Edition 1992 by
AJANTA PUBLICATIONS
P.O. Box 2192, Malka Ganj, Delhi-110007
A Publishing Unit of
AJANTA BOOKS INTERNATIONAL
1 U.B. Jawahar Nagar, Bunglow Road, Delhi-110007
(PRODUCED IN INDIA)
Typesetting By: Ravi Computers
Printed at: Cambridge Press, Delhi-110006
on behalf of
AJANTA PUBLICATIONS (INDIA)

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FOREWORD

To The First Edition

The basic framework of the philosophy of Radical Humanism was prepared by M.N. Roy in 1946. It was published in the form of the Twenty Two Theses.

From its inception, I felt Radical Humanism to be my own philosophy. The feeling has become a conviction during the years which have elapsed since the basic tenets of the philosophy were formulated. It has become an integral part of my thinking, and since I have been living by that philosophy all this time, it has acquired some new facets which I hope have enriched it. That is why, in the following pages, while acknowledging my debt to M.N. Roy, I have described the philosophy of Radical Humanism in my own words and as my own cherished philosophy.

Radical Humanism is not a mere academic exercise. It is intended to be a philosophy of action, a philosophy to be practised in daily life. It is a post-Marxian philosophy. Regarding its connection with Marxism, Roy has said, "The positive elements of Marxism, freed from its fallacies and clarified in the light of greater scientific knowledge, are consistent with a more comprehensive philosophy, which can be called Integral or Radical Humanism: a philosophy which combines mechanistic cosmology, materialist metaphysics, secular rationalism and rationalist ethics to satisfy man's urge for freedom and quest for truth, and also to guide his future action in pursuit of the ideals." (Reason, Romanticism and Revolution, Vol. II, p. 220).

This book is addressed to those who desire to have a framework of ideas and ideals which may help them to lead a life of personal fulfilment and social utility. It is particularly addressed to those who want to work for the upliftment of the deprived sections of society without getting involved in power politics.

If any such reader, after going through the book, finds himself in a disagreement on any issue or requires a clarification, I will be glad to enter into correspondence with him.

New Delhi,
1983

V.M. Tarkunde

FOREWORD

To The Second Edition

In preparing this second edition, substantial alterations have been made in the first chapter entitled "What Radical Humanism is About". As humanism in my view is the philosophy of a multidimensional democracy, every genuine democrat is necessarily a humanist. In this broad humanist brotherhood, one school consists of scientific humanists who do not believe in the existence of any supernatural power. Radical Humanists in India belong to this school. Another school consists of religious humanists who have no faith in any organised religion or who believe that all religions, including their own, are different ways of reaching one and the same God. There are also other genuine democrats, who as such are also humanists, but who are not consciously committed to any particular philosophy. In the course of my modest efforts for the protection and promotion of civil liberties and human rights, and for the dissemination of humanist-democratic values among the people, I have received substantial cooperation from these categories of humanists. In the revised first chapter I have given due recognition to this humanist brotherhood, while emphasising that Radical Humanists are scientific humanists with a radical approach to all human problems.

The second chapter on "the Relevance (of Radical Humanism) to the Contemporary Situation" has been revised in order to notice the enormous changes which are taking place in world communism and which, in my opinion, are in the direction of the humanisation of communism. Reference is also made to some significant developments in the Indian situation.

Some alterations have also been made in the thirteenth chapter on "Political Organisation: Organised Democracy" in order to give greater clarity to the ideas expressed therein. Minor changes have been made in other chapters.

I am greateful for the response received from the readers to the first edition.

25.9.1991. V.M. Tarkunde

ONE

WHAT RADICAL HUMANISM IS ABOUT

Humanism may be defined as a philosophy and an attitude of mind which gives primacy to the human individual and recognises his or her right to live in freedom and with dignity. Its basic tenet is that man is the measure of things, that he is an end in himself and is not the means to any superior end.

Humanism, when broadly defined, would comprise a variety of views and attitudes. Recognition of the dignity of the individual and of his or her right to live in freedom is basic to humanism as well as democracy. If democracy is regarded as a way of life and not merely as a form of government, it is quite legitimate to say that every genuine democrat is also a humanist. This equation is extremely useful in situations where a struggle is to be undertaken for the defence and promotion of democracy against any form of authoritarianism. Situations of this type are found in all Third World countries and also elsewhere.

In this widely conceived humanist-democratic brotherhood, one category consists of scientific humanists. Scientific humanism rejects the view that the affairs of the world are determined or influenced by any supernatural power. It believes that the future of man is determined, not by divine will, but by natural forces, the most important of which is the force of the human will. Scientific humanism also insists that man, being an end in himself, cannot be required to merge into, or sacrifice himself for, any imaginary collective ego such as a nation, a community or a class. Rejecting the existence of any supernatural power, scientific humanism traces all the mental attributes of man, including his will, reason and emotions, to the millions of years of physico-biological evolution.

As will appear in later chapters, freedom, rationalism and secular morality are the three main values of scientific humanism. Scientific humanism claims that these values arise from certain mental attributes acquired by man in the course of physico-biological evolution. These mental attributes are converted and developed into values by man's reason, which is also a part of man's biological heritage.

Humanists other than scientific humanists cherish the same or similar values but with different degrees of intensity and with less logical consistency. One such brand of humanists can be designated as religious humanists. They believe in the existence of a supernatural power and its active role in human affairs. They somehow believe at the same time that the conscious subordination of man to divine will does not affect his commitment to the value of freedom. They also accept the value of rationalism but to a limited extent, because they believe that there is, besides reason, a supra-rational way of acquiring knowledge. Their morality is derived, not from biological impulses guided by man's reason, but from divine will expressed either in religious texts or in the voice of one's conscience. Although intensely religious, they are also cosmopolitan, because they either do not believe in any organized religion or they regard all religions including their own as different ways of reaching God. Religious humanists are a minority among religious believers, but they do exist and are a valuable part of the humanist brotherhood. Some of them cherish the ideal of freedom with utter sincerity and would undergo any sacrifice for the sake of that ideal.

There is another category of non-scientific humanists, consisting of these who instinctively cherish the humanist values of freedom, rationalism and secular morality, without being bothered with the philosophical moorings of these values. They generally cooperate with scientific and religious humanists for the defence of freedom and democracy, but sometimes their reactions are unexpectedly contrary to humanist principles. They may be designated as sentimental humanists, provided the word sentimental is used in a purely descriptive and non-derogatory sense.

The present treatise deals only with scientific humanism. Whenever the word humanism occurs hereafter without any qualification, the reference is to scientific humanism.

Humanism derives the value of freedom from man's struggle for existence. Struggle for existence is the basic attribute of the entire biological world and man, being a part of that world, shares that attribute. But on the human plane, the biological struggle for existence takes the form of a struggle for freedom. Since struggle for existence is the basic attribute of all biological beings, freedom is the basic value of all human beings.

Rationalism consists of recognition of the value of individual human reason. Humanism says that since the entire universe is law governed, instinctive reason is an attribute of all animals which have succeeded in subsisting in the natural struggle for existence. Different animals have instinctive reason at different levels of development. By far the highest level of development is found in human beings. Human reason, used for understanding the experiences of life, is the source of human knowledge. Truth is the content of knowledge. Humanism says that quest for freedom and search for truth constitute the basic urge for human progress.

Freedom can be enjoyed by an individual only in society, and this requires that a free individual must be an autonomous moral being. An individual who is incapable of moral behaviour of his own volition cannot be a free person, because in that case society will have to adopt coercive means to make him conform with the required norms. Humanism finds in the millions of years of biological evolution the source of man's moral impulses as well as his rationality, which together make it possible for him to develop into an autonomous moral entity.

The social ideal of humanism is to help in creating a society of free and moral men and women. In pursuance of this ideal, a humanist strives to build up and maintain a fully democratic society. Humanism realises that democracy cannot be confined to the political organisation of society and that the democratic values of liberty, equality and fraternity must pervade all aspects of social life. These values must be fully reflected in the production and distribution of economic goods and services, in the imparting of education, and in the norms which govern the relations between various communities, the sexes and the different age groups.

The creation of such an all-pervasive multidimensional democracy presupposes a radical transformation of society, a comprehen-

sive cultural and institutional revolution. Surrounded by poverty, ignorance and extreme economic inequalities, humanists cannot be true to their philosophy if their moral sense does not impel them to participate in such a revolutionary effort. Humanism under the circumstances has to be Radical Humanism.

The State as conceived by Radical Humanism will be a participatory democracy where power will remain vested in the people and will not be concentrated in a few hands. It will be a co-operative commonwealth in which the right to gainful employment will be available to every individual and economic inequalities will be narrowly limited.

The revolutionary work of radical humanists will be guided by the principle that a cultural transformation must precede every worthwhile social revolution. The main task of radical humanists will be to educate the people in the democratic values of freedom, equality, rationalism, co-operation and self-imposed discipline, and to set up appropriate institutions based on these values.

In striving to build a genuinely democratic State as conceived by them, radical humanists will not form a political party and will not participate in power politics. They will work as the guides, friends and philosophers of the people. Their political practice will always be rational and therefore ethical. They will work with the objective that the people themselves may secure increasing political power and economic well-being by virtue of their education in humanist values and participation in appropriate democratic organisations.

Radical Humanism does not believe that a world of freedom can be created through the establishment of a dictatorship. Radical Humanism defends the limited democracy of today in order that it may be transformed into a comprehensive political, economic and social democracy of the future.

Radical Humanism is not a closed system of thought. Being a philosophy of freedom-loving individuals, it is always open to revision on the basis of fresh additions to human knowledge. Radical Humanism is both a personal and a social philosophy. Since the basic tenet of humanism is the centrality of man, the individual, there is no discordance between its personal and social aspects.

An attempt will be made in the following pages to explain in easy non-technical language the personal and social aspects of the

philosophy of Radical Humanism and its political and social practice. In doing this, no reliance will be placed, as far as possible, on any authority, for the only authority to which an appeal is intended is the reader's rationality.

Before explaining the different facets of Radical Humanism, however, it is necessary to deal with its relevance to the contemporary situation in India and abroad, the failure of current ideologies to meet the situation, and how that failure led M.N. Roy, the most eminent revolutionary philosopher of modern India, to lay the foundations of Radical Humanism.

TWO

ITS RELEVANCE TO THE CONTEMPORARY SITUATION

Radical humanism provides the cultural base of a free, moral, democratic society. A radical humanist movement is required wherever freedom is denied or restricted, moral principles are widely violated, and democracy is absent or is only partially realised.

Even a cursory survey would show that these ideals are far from being realised to a satisfactory extent in any part of the world, though conditions of life from a humanist point of view are much worse in some countries than in others. Most of the countries of the Third World are under despotic authoritarian regimes of indigenous origin, except a few like India which continue to have a weak and unstable form of political democracy. Even here the scene is characterised by extreme poverty, growing unemployment, and glaring economic and social inequalities. In countries under communist dictatorships, there is relatively less economic inequality and insecurity, but this has been achieved at the cost of extreme political inequality and drastic curtailment of individual freedom. Communism has already collapsed or is in the process of collapsing in most of the communist countries because of its dictatorial character and its inability to provide a decent standard of living to the people. What is necessary in these countries is to democratise and humanise all political, economic and other social institutions. In the western democracies, the conventions of political democracy are relatively firmly established, but this is accompanied by extreme economic inequality, extensive unemployment and quite a few pockets of abject poverty. There is, moreover, a growing disillusionment of

the people with the values of post-industrial society and even a resort to oriental obscurantism. In all parts of the world, the prevailing moral standards are much below the requirements of a free society.

The primary cause of this state of affairs is inadequate cultural progress. The effects of cultural inadequacy, however, are aggravated by certain modern developments, such as the increase in the functions and powers of a modern State, the conditions of economic insecurity arising from the capitalistic mode of production, the extraordinarily rapid development of technology in recent years, and the increasing inability of parents and teachers to promote the moral development of youth.

The gap between the prevailing cultural level and the requirements of a modern democracy is more clearly marked in the countries of the Third World. Of these countries India is the only large and populous country where political democracy continues to exist, but in a shallow, shaky and precarious form. Indian experience shows which cultural values are essential for a successful democracy and how democracy remains weak and unstable if those values are not cherished by the people to the requisite extent.

DEMOCRACY AND HUMANIST VALUES

The reason why authoritarianism appears to be always round the corner in India is that the majority of the people in the country continue to hanker for a saviour who will lift them from the mire of poverty and provide them with the means for a human existence. The attitude they have in politics is similar to the attitude they have in religious affairs. It is not an accident that there are numerous holy pretenders in India with large followings. People flock to them for protection from present and future calamities. What is significant is that some of these Babas and Yogis have started getting a large following in Western countries also, particularly in the U.S.A. The faith which people have in Babas and Yogis is not culturally different from the faith they have in political saviours. Faith in political saviours leads to the establishment of a benevolent dictatorship which, once established, need not continue to be benevolent.

The faith in political saviours, like the faith in religious Babas and Yogis, is not based on experience. It is not even based on any deep-rooted conviction. It is in reality a reflex of the lack of faith in oneself. A person who has not learnt to rely upon himself tends to find some external object as a psychological prop and invests that object with various imaginary virtues. If that object fails, he would shift his faith to another object. Self-reliance, replacing such hankering for external support, is the main cultural requisite of a democracy. Self-reliance is the essence of freedom. It implies a free mind--the mind of a person who wants to think for himself and has the confidence that he can reach satisfactory conclusions. The humanist values of freedom and rationalism are both involved in one's faith in oneself. Such a free mind is free from the weight of tradition and current dogma. Mental freedom is the precondition of political, economic and social freedom.

In addition to self-reliance, the other cultural requisite of democracy is self-discipline. It is only self-discipline--discipline imposed by oneself--which prevents liberty from degenerating into license. Self-discipline arises from the recognition and acceptance of social responsibility. It is an aspect of moral behaviour. As will be shown later, reason plays a decisive role in the moral development of individuals and of society. Moral standards in a society improve with the growth of rationalism. Mental freedom, when widely shared in society and guided by reason, prevents liberty from degenerating into license.

The absence of an adequate degree of self-discipline in India is evidenced by the frequent closure of educational institutions by student action, the frequent suspension of court work by prolonged strikes by lawyers and the frequent stoppages of productive work by avoidable strikes and lock-outs. Such instances give credence to the cynics who say that India requires a strong authoritarian rule in order that liberty may not be so abused as to paralyse society.

What is said above about the gap in India between the prevailing cultural level and the requirements of a successful democracy should not lead to the impression that the cultural gap is exceptionally large in this country. It is, on the contrary, likely to be smaller than the cultural gap found in the majority of the countries in the Third World. It is not without significance that a country so large and

populous as India, and so divided by religious, linguistic and regional differences, has been able to maintain even a superficial structure of political democracy for over forty years. What is relevant to the present discussion is that the values which are required to be disseminated in India for closing the cultural gap are precisely the values of radical humanism--the values of freedom, rationalism and secular morality.

DEMOCRACY AND THE RENAISSANCE MOVEMENT

History also shows a direct connection between humanism and democracy. After the disappearance of the city states in Greece, there was a period of relative darkness in Europe which lasted for over a thousand years. The darkness was dispelled by the humanist movement known as the European Renaissance. The starting point of the Renaissance was a revolt against the dogmatism of the Middle Ages. It has been often described as Man's revolt against God. It was inspired by the conviction that man must be the source of his own strength and that his future is made by himself and not by divine will. The Renaissance movement developed over a long time, mainly in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Being essentially a movement for man's mental freedom, it had three major consequences. In the first place, it blasted the basis of the divine right of kings, inspired the great French Revolution, and led to the establishment of democratic regimes in many countries in Europe. The humanist revolution brought about by the European Renaissance provided the cultural foundation of modern democracy.

Secondly, the climate of mental freedom created by the Renaissance led to an unprecedented growth of science. The knowledge of the earth and of the universe obtained by man as a result of the growth of science in the last three or four hundred years since the Renaissance is far greater than the entire stock of human knowledge acquired in the prior period of over a million years.

Thirdly, the growth of science and the underlying inventiveness led to an industrial revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries. We are now witnessing what is aptly described as the second industrial

revolution, caused by a phenomenal advance in technology. In the result, the productivity of human labour has increased manifold.

Curiously enough, the precarious position of contemporary democracy is largely the result of the continually expanding industrial revolution and our relative inability to develop adequate cultural values and appropriate economic and political institutions to cope with that revolution.

Before examining that problem, however, it is necessary to see what happened to those countries like India which did not go through a cultural transformation similar to the European Renaissance.

INDIA'S ABORTED RENAISSANCE

In the first millennium B.C., India went through a glorious period of intellectual enquiry and philosophical development comparable to that in Greece. Various philosophies--monistic, dualistic and downright materialistic--contended with each other for critical acceptance. This was followed by a prolonged period of literary and artistic efflorescence. By the 8th century A.D., however, the school of thought which came to prevail in the country was the other-wordly Vedant philosophy. It regarded physical existence to be an illusion, the human body to be the prison-house of the soul, and escape from the cycle of births and deaths to be the highest human ideal. Self-denial, abstinence, celibacy, desirelessness and meditation became the highest virtues. The best spirits being thus preoccupied in other-wordly pursuits, the rest of the society came easily under the domination of ambitious princes and self-seeking priests. The theory of Karma, which says that our sufferings of today are the result of the sins committed by us in previous lives, reconciled the poor to their miserable lot and consolidated the prevailing caste system and the barbaric custom of untouchability. An age of cultural and intellectual darkness, an Indian version of the Mediaeval Dark Age of Europe, descended on the country.

Unfortunately, the mediaeval darkness in India was not dispelled by any indigenous Renaissance. No democracy was born to replace the rule of any despotic prince. No scientific invention of any significance shook the placid life of ignorance. Industrial revolution

left the country untouched. It is not surprising that India was soon over-run by Muslim invaders from the north and was eventually subjected to British rule.

It is one of the myths created by the imagination of Indian nationalists that prior to the establishment of British rule India was a culturally and economically advanced country and that its material and moral degradation was caused by foreign domination. Even a cursory look at Indian history would show the baselessness of this supposition. If India were indeed an advanced country, it could not have been conquered so easily by a handful of British traders coming over a distance of nearly 6000 miles in wind-driven wooden vessels. India was then a country of despotism, injustice and near anarchy, and the bulk of the people welcomed the law and order established by British rule.

Although British rule in India ceased to have any progressive potentiality by about the beginning of the present century, its initial impact on the country was highly beneficial. Due to the exhilarating contact with the spirit of freedom, rationalism and human dignity represented by British liberal thought, a belated Renaissance began to develop in India. It took the shape of a movement against religious superstition and in favour of social causes such as abolition of Sati, legalisation for widow remarriage, promotion of women's education, prevention of child marriage and opposition to the custom of untouchability. Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar in Bengal, Lokahitawadi, Jotiba Phule and G.G. Agarkar in Maharashtra, and other free spirits in different parts of the country, were the leaders of this movement. Liberal thinkers of this type were also the leaders of the Indian nationalist movement which started with the formation of the Indian National Congress in the eighties of the last century.

This belated Indian Renaissance did not, however, get the opportunity to make a substantial dent in the superstition and orthodoxy prevailing among the masses. By the beginning of the current century, the leadership of the nationalist movement was taken away from the liberals by persons like B.G. Tilak and later by M.K. Gandhi. Both Tilak and Gandhi were persons of exceptional courage and spotless personal purity, and they were responsible for developing the nationalist movement into a mass movement. They,

however, represented the values of the prevailing Indian culture, the very values which were at the root of India's stagnation for a period of a thousand years. This was more true of Gandhi than of Tilak. Gandhi[1] was opposed to modern science, modern industry and even modern medicine, and preached the virtues of abstinence, celibacy, desirelessness and devotion to God. He understood the problems of rural India better than anybody else, but he also represented the religious orthodoxy of the people. He brought religion into politics by trying to forge Hindu-Muslim unity on the basis of the Khilafat movement. The spirit of free thinking, rationalism and revolt against tradition had little appeal to him.

The result was that, although the nationalist movement reached the masses under Gandhi's leadership, it became a negative anti-British movement with little democratic content. Gandhi was a convinced democrat in his own way but the movement led by him was a movement for national freedom, not for individual freedom. Although several persons with democratic inclinations joined the movement, its appeal to the masses was purely nationalistic and not democratic. The appeal was for the end of foreign rule and its substitution by some form of native rule. Given the prevailing tradition of blind faith and lack of self-reliance, what the Gandhi-led masses aspired for was Ram-raj (benevolent absolute rule) rather than Swaraj (self-rule).

HOW INDIA BECAME INDEPENDENT

Such being the character of the Indian nationalist movement, it was not surprising that nationalist India remained unmoved by the sweeping successes of international fascism in the earlier stages of the Second World War. These successes were actually welcomed by Indian nationalists. Every Indian who had reached the age of understanding at that time will recall that the reports of Nazi victories used to evoke unrestrained jubilation in Indian nationalist circles. The fact that every hope of democratic freedom for India would be blasted for generations to come if international fascism won the war, was a matter of no concern to them. Their negative nationalism

1. For the positive aspects of Gandhism, see the next chapter.

led them to wish for the defeat of Great Britain even if it meant the success of international fascism and the end of democracy in the world. Leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru adjusted their anti-fascist conviction to the prevailing anti-British sentiment by taking the position that India cannot fight against fascism except as a free country. They even accepted Gandhi's plan to launch an anti-war movement (the so-called Quit India movement) in August 1942 just when fascist forces from the East were about to invade and overrun the country. The Indian nationalist movement contributed nothing to the defeat of international fascism and the resulting independence of colonial countries including India.

Here we come across the second myth created by Indian nationalism, the myth that the country's independence was won by the Indian National Congress under Gandhi's leadership. The fact is that a negative nationalist movement which developed under Gandhi's leadership was never capable of overthrowing a mighty imperialism. History records that the Quit India movement started by Gandhi on August 9, 1942 had subsided by November 1942. British Imperialism came to an end, not because of the Quit India movement, but as a result of the economic and political changes brought about by Great Britain's involvement in the Second World War on the anti-fascist side and the ultimate defeat of the fascist powers. M.N. Roy in India had publicly anticipated such a result and advocated war support on that basis. The Indian nationalist movement did little at the last stage to achieve India's independence. What it achieved was that the power voluntarily surrendered by the British rulers after the Second World War came into the hands of the Indian National Congress, and that too after the partition of the country and after a fratricidal communal carnage in which hundreds of thousands of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs killed each other.

INDIA AFTER INDEPENDENCE

With this background, it was very likely that India should have developed an authoritarian regime after the attainment of national independence. That this did not happen was largely due to the

peculiar personality of Jawaharlal Nehru. Himself a man of democratic instincts, he was nevertheless the unquestioned leader of a country where the appreciation of democratic values was confined to a small minority. This result was achieved by his infinite adjustability. If politics is the science of the expedient, he was a perfect politician. Such politics, however, being power politics, is liable to degenerate into an unprincipled scramble for power. This did not happen during Nehru's lifetime because his leadership was never seriously challenged. He hardly ever tried to swim against the current of popular sentiment or to dispel the blind faith and orthodoxy of the masses. In spite of this, however, some improvement in the cultural climate of the country took place during his regime. This was because of the modernising effect of industrial development, the spread of primary and secondary education and the devoted work of a few democrats and reformers who were not interested in power politics.

The technique of populist politics initiated by Jawaharlal Nehru was carried forward and improved upon by his daughter Indira Gandhi when she became the Prime Minister of India. But as soon as her power monopoly was challenged by a mass movement led by Jayaprakash Narayan, she proclaimed an Emergency, put the entire opposition leadership behind the bars, and enforced a servere press censorship the like of which was never seen in India even under the repressive phase of British rule. The ease with which the democratic rights and civil liberties of the people were wiped out by Indira Gandhi exposed the superficiality of Indian democracy. If Indira Gandhi had not committed the monumental blunder of ordering a general election in March 1977, her autocratic rule might have continued indefinitely.

The Indian electorate exhibited a degree of political maturity when it defeated Indira Gandhi's ruling party, the Congress(I), by a substantial margin in the March 1977 general election. But the post-election experience shows that democracy in India continues to be shaky and unstable. The Janata Party, which came to power on the electoral defeat of Indira Gandhi, was riven with internal dissensions. Because of the personal ambition and mutual rivalry of its main leaders, the party split into fragments and was thoroughly discredited. The result was that Mrs. Gandhi came back to power

after the 1980 election, and the country again started drifting in the direction of authoritarianism.

It is not necessary for the purpose of this treatise to deal with the subsequent political events in India including the assassination of Indira Gandhi, the assumption of prime ministership by her inexperienced son Rajiv Gandhi, the defeat of the ruling Congress (I) Party in a general election under Rajiv Gandhi's leadership, the setting up of a relatively more liberal minority government of the National Front under the leadership of Vishwanath Pratap Singh etc. What is necessary for us is to highlight the main features of the Indian situation so that one may judge the relevance of radical humanism to this country.

The weakness of Indian democracy is highlighted by the fact that over 40 years of national independence have made little dent in the miserable economic condition of the bulk of the people. There has been a good deal of industrial and agricultural development, but the benefit derived therefrom has been neutralised partly by a rapid growth of population and partly because the benefit has been appropriated by the richer sections of the people. Destitution, unemployment and economic inequality have been constantly on the increase.

What is more disturbing is the continuous fall in the standards of all the democratic institutions in the country, the increasing criminalisation of Indian politics and the enormous rise in administrative corruption. There is, on the whole, a progressive decline in the status and dignity of the Presidents of India and Governors of Indian States, in the competence and integrity of Central and State ministries, in the stature and moral standards of legislators, in the independence and incorruptibility of the judiciary, and in the democratic content and fairness of the electoral process. There are a few exceptions to the rule but the general tendency of democratic degeneration is unmistakable. One of the consequences of this degeneration is that criminal and anti-social elements have been gaining acceptability in the political arena. There are several areas in the country where mafia leaders have become political bosses. Administrative corruption has increased by leaps and bounds and has become all pervasive. It threatens to become a way of life, so that it would not evoke any moral revulsion.

This democratic degeneration appears to be a natural process. Those who joined the political movement in India during the British rule were inspired by the ideal of national freedom. Politics for them meant a life of self-sacrifice. Political power came in their hands when the British rule came to an end. They naturally set up comparatively high democratic standards commensurate with their moral and intellectual stature. In the course of time, they left the scene one by one, and were replaced by individuals who joined politics for the sake of the power it gives. Because of the comparative political immaturity of the Indian electorate, the elected legislators did not have the same standards as their predecessors. Moreover, the struggle for power in a country where the bulk of the people are weighed over by superstition and blind faith has a logic of its own. It brings about a lowering of moral standards in political life. Persons who have a flexible conscience, and who are able to flatter the prejudices of the electorate, succeed in the struggle for power and become political leaders. These are the causes of India's political degeneration in the post-independence period.

The Indian situation, however, is not uniformly dark. It has a brighter aspect also. Just as there is rapid democratic degeneration from above, there is a slow but perceptible democratic regeneration from below. There are two features of this regenerative process. In the first place, the Indian electorate is gaining in maturity with the experience of each successive general election and of the performance of the elected government during the period between two elections. Secondly, there are a large and growing number of social activists who are working in non-party organisations at the grass-root level for the upliftment of the people in rural and urban areas. Quite a few of them are, consciously or unconsciously, working on humanist lines to help the people to be self-reliant and to cooperate with each other for the solution of their manifold problems.

A powerful radical humanist movement is necessary in India to promote and hasten this regenerative process from below by the dissemination of humanist-democratic values among the people and thereby enhance the political maturity of the electorate, so that the process of democratic degeneration from above may be halted and reversed.

We have examined at some length the past and present of India because this country occupies a pivotal position in the Third World. The prospects of freedom in the Third World will be affected very materially by whether India surrenders itself to an indigenous dictatorship or develops into a stable, genuine democracy.

FREEDOM IN COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

The news of a successful communist revolution in Russia in 1917 was received with surprised jubilation by all the freedom loving people of the world. Later, despite the purges and executions of prominent communist leaders engineered by Stalin, Soviet Russia continued to receive a good deal of international allegiance, which was at its peak during the crisis of the capitalist economy prior to the Second World War. After the end of the War, however, Soviet popularity has been continuously on the decline. The subsequent success of communism in China and later in some other countries did not get the same enthusiastic welcome that the Russian revolution had received.

The experience of communism in power was increasingly disappointing. The communist State, instead of withering away as fondly anticipated by Marx and Engels, became formidable, oppressive and autocratic. Individual freedom, which was to bloom and blossom in a classless society, failed to surface. The people had no civil liberties or democratic rights. A good deal of economic development did take place under centralised planning and the economic disparities among the people were reduced to some extent. But because of excessive centralisation, economic progress came to a halt in Soviet Russia by the end of the nineteen sixties. Similar was the experience of other communist countries. While economic development was taking place at a fairly rapid rate in the capitalist world, the communist world experienced economic stagnation and scarcity of essential commodities.

In the first edition of this book it was observed on the basis of available evidence that apparently a process of gradual humanisation of communism was on the way. This gradual process became a torrent when Mikhail Gorbachev achieved the leadership of Soviet

Russia's Communist Party and induced the party to adopt his programme of glassnost and perestroika. He has already brought about a revolutionary change in the international situation. The danger of a nuclear world war has to a large extent abated, and the process of dismantling nuclear weapons has commenced. Superpower rivalry between the U.S.A and the U.S.S.R. has come to an end and the prospects of a detente between the two are bright. A number of East European communist States have been converted under popular pressure into parliamentary democracies. Democratisation of the political structure of Socialist Russia is also taking place at a rapid rate. A strong wave of democratisation is sweeping through the entire communist world. Since humanism is the philosophy of democracy, the democratisation of communism means a triumph of humanism. Indeed Gorbachev in his speeches has often referred to his faith in humanist principles.

How far Russia and other communist and ex-communist countries will succeed in liberalising their economies and making them competitive and progressive is still in doubt. The people of these countries will have to undergo a great deal of hardship during the process of economic liberalisation. In the end, however, it is likely that these countries will develop into social democratic welfare States with a competitive economy which will not be capitalist-dominated. It is to be hoped, moreover, that producers' and consumers' cooperatives and cooperative banking organisations will play an increasingly vital role in these economies. As will appear in a later chapter, radical humanists look upon a cooperative economy as a democratic alternative to both capitalism and State ownership. It is of some significance that in Gorbachev's perestroika a great deal of encouragement is being given to producers' cooperatives.

PROBLEMS OF WESTERN DEMOCRACIES

During the Second World War western democracies escaped being crushed under the iron heels of fascism by the skin of their teeth. Why countries which had gone through the humanist revolution represented by the European Renaissance all but succumbed to the appeal of fascism requires some explanation.

The establishment of capitalism as a result of the expanding industrial revolution freed agricultural serfs from the exploitation of feudal landlords. They were at the same time deprived of the security provided by the feudal order of society. They were free to seek employment with the new captains of industry and be exploited by them. If they were unable to find employment, their freedom from feudal bondage meant physical starvation. The problem was aggravated by the frequent periods of industrial depression resulting in large-scale unemployment. It is not surprising under the circumstances if a growing number of industrial workers were persuaded to escape from the fear of insecurity by merging their individual identities into a powerful collectivity. Such a collectivity was provided by the deification of the working class or of the nation. Individual freedom, which is the basis of democracy, was suffocated between the twins of communism and fascism. Of these two, fascism had a relatively greater initial success in western democracies because of the support it received from sections of the upper classes.

Renaissance humanism and the post-Renaissance enlightenment were not strong enough to prevent the cultural degeneration which the growing success of fascism implied. This was because the humanist values of freedom, rationalism and self-sustained morality, which were recognised and highlighted by the European Renaissance, did not then have a solid scientific foundation. The evolution of man as one of the many biological species was not scientifically established till 1860. The science of psychology hardly existed. The origin of human reason was not known, nor was there any secular justification for the assertion that a human being is an autonomous moral entity. In the absence of a firm scientific foundation for humanist values, it was not surprising that the naunting insecurity of the capitalist order of society was met by recourse to mysticism and teleology. One of the theories which gained ground in this cultural background was that the nation was an entity having a destiny of its own and that the salvation of the individual lay in merging himself in that collectivity.

Human civilization was fortunately saved in the Second World War by the narrow success of western democracies over international fascism. After the end of the war, however, capitalism in the industrially advanced countries has shown a remarkable resilience.

Two factors are responsible for this capitalist rejuvenation. One is the adoption of Keynesian measures--manipulation of interest rates and public spending--to reduce the upward or downward swings of industrial booms and depressions. The other is the adoption of wide ranging social security measures, often with the conscious object of creating a welfare state. Both these measures involve State interference in the free enterprise capitalist economy and contradict the doctrin of *laisses faire.*

It does not appear that the anarchy of capitalist production and the inequity of capitalist distribution have been neutralised by these measures. Controlled, or not so well controlled, inflation is now a permanent feature of the capitalist economy, and so is a high degree of unemployment. Real wages of workers have been on the increase, but so are the economic disparities in different sections of society. In the midst of increasing prosperity there are also several pockets of abject poverty.

The main objection to the capitalist order as it prevails in western democracies is not that it is unworkable. The main objection is that it is morally unacceptable. Capitalism breeds a value system in which primacy is given to individual selfishness. A person who, besides being intelligent and efficient, is the most ruthless has the best chance of success in an economic order based on unbridled competition. A society governed by such ruthlessness tends to be indifferent to economic disparities and to the deprivations of the poor. A morally sensitive individual is bound to be repelled by a social order in which individual selfishness at the cost of others becomes the main qualification for success.

The post-industrial consumer society has begun to show some unmistakable symptoms of serious illness. With the increase of multi-nationals and other large-scale production units, levels of business morality appear to have gone down. Honesty is no longer the best policy. Bribery of political heads by multi-nationals and deceitful practices to stimulate consumption are on the increase. There is also an increasing revulsion among the people from the excessive economism of the post-industrial society. Young persons take to drugs, or become Hippies and wander about on sea beaches or hilly areas in countries like India. Others take to oriental

obscurantism, join the puerile Hare Krishna movement, or become the followers of Yogis and Babas. Contemporary western democracies appear to be groping for a satisfactory ideology.

A Twentieth Century Renaissance, based upon a reassertion of the values of humanism on a scientific basis, is as necessary for the post-industrial capitalist societies as for the under-developed parts of the world and for the countries currently ruled by communist dictatorships.

THREE

FAILURE OF CURRENT IDEOLOGIES

The contemporary situation described in the last chapter brings out the failure of current ideologies in promoting a free and genuinely democratic society. It would be useful to know why the ideologies which had a humanistic objective failed to achieve it.

The ideologies which require to be considered from this point of view are liberalism, Marxism and democratic socialism. A fourth ideology which is relevant in the Indian context is Gandhism.

INADEQUACIES OF LIBERALISM

Liberalism carried forward the humanistic revolution brought about by the European Renaissance. It has the great merit of being a secular ideology, having the freedom of the individual as its central value. It fired the imagination of several generations of political leaders and social reformers. It provided the ideological basis of modern democracies in the West. Eventually, however, its appeal began to fade and its failure resulted in the birth of the twins of communism and fascism. Even after the defeat of fascism, the liberal faith has not regained its former hold in the western world.

The main reason why liberalism did not succeed as a philosophy of freedom was it acceptance of the doctrine of *laisses faire*. Liberalism endorsed the principle enunciated by Adam Smith that capitalism is a self-adjusting economic order, that the greatest good

of society as a whole is achieved when every individual is free to work for his self-interest, and that, therefore, the best policy of a democratic State is to desist from interfering in economic affairs. With this doctrinal commitment, which obviously favoured the capitalist class, liberalism had no real answer to the exploitation of industrial workers and the increasing economic insecurity which they had to face. Liberal politicians did initiate legislation from time to time to mitigate the rigour of economic exploitation, but they as a group never became the champions of the weaker sections of society. If the ideal of freedom includes the objective of economic well-being, as it undoubtedly does, liberalism in practice failed to be a philosophy of freedom.

Another reason for the failure of liberalism is the superficiality of liberal democracy. The parliamentary democracy of liberal conception is only a nominal or formal democracy. It embodies the principle of rule for the people and not rule by the people. Except in periodic elections, when they choose their rulers, the people in a parliamentary democracy play no part in the governance of their country. Between two elections, the political power of the State is concentrated in a few hands, and the people as a whole remain atomised, helpless individuals having no political task to discharge. Civil liberties are guaranteed by law, but in the given economic situation they are availed of by the upper classes and rarely by the weaker sections of society.

A further and very serious inadequacy of liberalism arose from its failure to provide a naturalistic basis for moral conduct. Utilitarian ethics sponsored by liberalism--the theory that "the greatest good of the greatest number" provides the yardstick for morality--clearly implies that the morality of any action is to be judged by the result it achieves and not by the means employed in achieving the result. The dictum that the end justifies the means is the natural corollary. Utilitarian ethics denies the absoluteness of moral values, and being relativist in character, amounts to ethical nihilism.

Utilitarian ethics, moreover, is wholly unrealistic. If you help a blind man to cross a street, you are not trying to promote the greatest good of the greatest number; you are only acting on your natural impulse of sympathy. Utilitarian ethics in fact provides no answer to the question why you should act for social good in pref-

erence to your own good, why your yardstick should be social utility in preference to utility for yourself. In the absence of any answer to that basic question, liberalism has to rely on the State to enforce utilitarian principles by appropriate legislation. Utilitarianism thus becomes a theory of law and not a theory of morality. And even as a theory of law it is not wholly democratic, for a genuine democracy has often to protect a weak minority against a strong majority, contrary to the tenet of the greatest good of the greatest number.

The failure of liberalism led to what M.N. Roy called the "twins of irrationality"--communism on the one hand and fascism on the other.

A distinction should--however, he made between the ideology of liberalism and the liberal spirit. While as a system of ideas liberalism must be deemed to have failed, there can be no doubt that the liberal spirit--consisting of free thought, mutual tolerance and regard for individual freedom--is a permanent contribution to the future of humanity. Contemporary humanism can claim to have inherited this positive aspect of liberalism.

INADEQUACIES OF MARXISM

Marx was the greatest humanist of his time. His early writings, which curiously enough remained unpublished for over a hundred years, show that he had originally named his philosophy "New Humanism".[1] He later re-named it as Communism at the time of issuing the Communist Manifesto in 1948. Freedom and sovereignty of the individual was his cherished goal. In the Communist Manifesto, he declared: "The free development of each is the condition of the free development of all." He was a great moralist and an impassioned fighter against cant and hypocrisy. And yet the philosophical school founded by him led to the establishment of long-lasting dictatorships in large parts of the world and a power-oriented political movement which was distinguished by moral cynicism and participation in unprincipled power politics.

1 Raya Dunayevskaya in her article "Humanism and Marxism" in The Humanist Alternative, ed. Paul Kurtz. Pemberton, 1973, p. 156.

Scores of books have been written on Marxism and it is not the intention here to add to them. A short account may, however, be given of why Marxism failed to achieve Marx's cherished goal of a society of free individuals.

It must be observed at the outset that some of the recently published writings of Marx differ to some extent with the earlier published writings which have gone into the making of what is understood as Marxism. In this discussion, however, we are concerned, not with the appreciation of Marx as a revolutionary thinker, but with that system of his ideas which is understood as Marxism and which has provided the basic principles of the political practice of communist parties in different parts of the world.

Almost all the major shortcomings and failures of Marxism can be traced to the theory of economic determinism (or the so-called materialist interpretation of history) which is the cornerstone of Marxian philosophy.

It is hardly necessary to say that economic determinism does not merely mean that, in a poverty-stricken society, the principal aim of its people will be the removal of poverty--a proposition which is self-evident. Economic determinism is a philosophy of history, a mode of interpreting the basic causes of historical developments. It says that the economic structure of society, characterised by the ownership of the means of production and the class relations arising therefrom, constitutes the basic reality; that moral principles and cultural values are essentially the reflections of that basic economic reality and have little independent force of their own; that men and women act according of their economic (class) interests; that consequently the history of civilization has been the history of class struggles; and that a revolution takes place as a historical necessity when the existing property relations act as a fetter to the irresistible growth of productive forces.

Before explaining how the theory of economic determinism led to the failure of Marxism to attain the cherished goal of its prophet, it is necessary to point out that such an interpretation of history was not a logical deduction from materialist philosophy. Materialism (which is referred to in the following pages as "monistic naturalism") does not accept the duality of matter and ideas, but recognises ideas as the product of the human brain. Ideas,

therefore, are as "materialistic" (i.e. naturalistic) as any other part of the total physical reality. Materialism does not require that the role of ideas in the course of history should be under-rated or that ideas should be regarded as a mere superstructure reared on the basic economic reality and having little independent force of their own. In fact, with the growth of language and literature and with the increase in cultural exchanges, the role of ideas in the shaping of history is constantly on the increase. The relation between the development of ideas and the dynamics of social events will be brought out at a later stage while dealing with humanistic historiology. What is being emphasized here is that economic determinism does not follow from the basic philosophy of materialism or monistic naturalism. It is derived from a misinterpretation of that philosophy, from the unjustified assumption that what is "physical" is the genuine reality and what is mental is merely its reflection. In fact, ideas are the creation of the human brain and although they are influenced by the existing physical and social facts, they have an independent force and play a positive role in social development.

One's ideas are influenced to some extent, but only to some extent, by one's economic interests. The theory of economic determinism is therefore a half-truth, and like other half-truths, is doubly misleading. The Marxist prognosis of a proletarian revolution was based on a number of conclusions which were deduced from the theory of economic determinism, and the conclusions were, therefore, partly true and have been proved to be increasingly untrue. This can be shown by examining the following main features of Marxism.

(1) Inevitability of Proletarian Revolution

Consistently with economic determinism, Marxism assumed that despite the increase in the productivity of labour by the use of advanced machinery, the wages paid to workers by their capitalist employers will always be so low as to be just sufficient for their bare maintenance and reproduction. There would in consequence be a conflict between the forces of production, which would produce an ever increasing volume of goods, and the capitalist prop-

erty relations, which would keep the bulk of the population, consisting of a constantly increasing working class, on the level of bare subsistance, so that they will be unable to purchase the goods produced. The severity of this conflict between the forces of production and the capitalist property relations, between the increasing production of goods and the limited capacity of the people to consume them, would be reduced to some extent by a series of industrial crises, each crisis destroying a part of the productive capacity, and each succeeding crisis being more severe than its predecessor. The problem of over-production would also lead to a search of foreign markets and to imperialist exploitation. These palliatives, however, will not save capitalism for long. The increasing forces of production, leading to a growing number of pauperised proletariat, will burst and disrupt the capitalist property relations and give birth to socialism. The victory of the proletariat is therefore inevitable.

This brilliant prognosis, being based on a half-truth, was apparently borne out by the march of events during Marx's lifetime and for many years thereafter. Eventually, however, it became evident that events were taking a different turn. Wages did not remain at the maintenance-cum-reproduction level in industrially advanced countries. They were always on the increase, and the present position in those countries is that the level of wages is keeping pace with the increase in the productivity of labour. That is why, inspite of the manifold increase in production in western countries after the Second World War, the increased forces of production have failed to burst and disrupt the existing capitalist property relations. What has happened is that the capitalist class is not acting according to the theory of economic determinism, because it has allowed the workers' wage level to rise with the increase in productivity. Capitalism continues to be an unsatisfactory economic system even in industrially advanced countries, but that is because of the anarchic nature of capitalist production, the economic disparities that it creates and its lopsided value system, and not because of the divergence between the productivity and the earnings of the working class.

While, therefore, a proletarian revolution as visualised by Marx did not occur in any industrially advanced country, non-proletarian

revolutions under communist leadership did take place in industrially underdeveloped countries like Russia in 1917 and China in 1949. The Russian Revolution was not a proletarian revolution; it was a "pacifist putsch" by peasant soldiers returning from the First World War. The Chinese Revolution of 1949 was even more clearly a peasant revolt, the proletariat being wholly out of the picture. In both the cases, the most determined revolutionaries came from a section of the middle class elite who formed the communist parties. In fact the whole communist movement has always been a predominantly middle-class movement, consisting of persons who cared little for economic gain for themselves and who, therefore, disproved by their own motivation the theory of economic determinism.

(2) Nature of the State

The primacy given by Marxism to the basic "economic reality" led to the view that the State is a coervice machinery devised by the dominant class, the class which owned the main means of production, to safeguard its economic interests. According to this view, parliamentary democracy is essentially a capitalist dictatorship, despite the deceptive cloak of civil liberties and periodic elections. A cabinet in a parliamentary democracy is, it was claimed, an executive committee of the ruling capitalist class to protect and promote its economic interests. A necessary corollary was that such a State must be ended and cannot be mended. The State cannot be altered and improved by gradual reform, but must be overthrown by a revolutionary effort. If the representatives of the proletariat begin to reform it, the ruling capitalist class would discard the cloak of civil liberties and democratic rights and would crush the proletarian leadership by the naked use of force. "You can peel an onion leaf by leaf", it was said, "but you cannot disarm a tiger paw by paw". That is why a political revolution by the proletariat was deemed necessary for bringing about an economic revolution.

This view about the nature of the State appeared plausible during Marx's lifetime and for some years thereafter, but is now seen to be entirely at variance with experience. Laws have been passed in democratic countries for curtailing the rights of employ-

ers, for promoting the interests of workers, and even for nationalising a substantial part of capitalist industry. No sensible person will now claim that the cabinet of the last Labour Government in Great Britain was the executive committee of the British capitalist class. It is clearly wrong to say that even in countries having a democratic constitution, a basic alteration in the economy cannot be brought about except by a violent revolution.

What is more, a violent revolution of Marxist conception is not only unnecessary but is virtually impossible in a modern democratic State. This is because the State of today, compared to the State in the middle of the 19th century (when Marx wrote the *Communist Manifesto*), is a far more powerful organisation, having a formidable military machine at its disposal. It is true that even now a revolution is possible in countries having a weak and unstable democracy, but in such countries it is more likely that the successor government will be a military or religious oligarchy than a communist dictatorship. In fact, the majority of the ruling dictorships in the world today are of the military or religious variety, and Marxists have little to say on how they would be replaced by proletarian dictatorships.

These considerations show that new ways of revolution, different from the way visualised in the *Communist Manifesto*, are required in the contemporary world. And a common feature of these new ways of revolution must be that they would be designed to enlarge and expand the limited democracies of to-day and not to replace them by dictatorships in any form.

(3) Dictatorship of the Proletariat

The concept of the State as a coercive machinery in the hands of the dominant economic class led Marxism to the conclusion that, on the success of a proletarian revolution, the proletariat will establish a dictatorship whose function will be to use the necessary force required to liquidate the capitalist class and establish a classless society. A further corollary was that the State, having no coercive function to perform in a classless society, will soon "wither away". Marx and Engels did not pay much attention to what would

happen thereafter, except for a vague statement by Engels that the governance of men will then be replaced by the "administration of things". In any case, what Marx and Engels expected to happen after the establishment of a classless society was the disappearance of the proletarian dictatorship, perhaps leaving behind an attenuated apparatus of a State having no coercive function to perform.

This certainly has not happened, although several generations have passed after the disappearance of economic classes in Russia, China and the East European Communist countries. The question which arises in this situation is, for what purpose are these dictatorships continuing, whose interests are these dictatorships serving? It cannot be claimed that the primary purpose of these dictatorships is to serve the interests of the people, for it is obvious that after the abolition of classes the interests of the people in any country can be best served by a genuinely democratic State. The question is not why the Russian and Chinese States continue; the question is why they continue to be dictatorial. The only acceptable answer is that in the contemporary world, ambitious persons are attracted more by the lure of political power than that of economic power, that to-day economic power is in fact subservient to political power, and that the real purpose and function of all contemporary dictatorships is to protect the vested interests of power-oriented rulers. This is true of all dictatorships, communist and non-communist. Some of them are benevolent dictatorships and some are not, but the reason why they continue to be dictatorships is to be found in the political vested interest of those who are in power.

The theory of economic determinism tells us that political power is the handmaid of economic power. That was probably so in Marx's time. Since then the powers and functions of the State have grown manifold, and the position now is that economic power is the handmaid of political power. Political vested interests of to-day are greater enemies of democracy than economic vested interests.

The theory of economic determinism is wrong, not only because it underrates the altruistic impulses of human beings, but also because it assumes that the only egocentric impulse worthy of notice is the lure of property. Experience has shown that lure of

political power can be a more potent egocentric impulse than the lure of property.

(4) Class Approach and Economic Appeal

On the background of the theory of economic determinism and the primacy which it gives to the class struggle, it is inevitable that the propaganda on the strength of which communists seek to come to power is confined to an appeal to the economic interests of workers, poor peasants and other pauperised sections of the people. It is forgotten that, although the main concern of poverty-stricken people is the removal of their poverty, they are also human beings having the same aspirations for a cultured life that the well-to-do sections of society have. It is forgotten that the struggle for economic betterment is part of their struggle for freedom. They are treated as economic beings, and not as the whole human beings that they really are.

What happens in practice can best the illustrated with reference to Indian politics. Not only the communists and socialists, but most of the other political parties and groups in India believe in the efficacy of the exclusively economic approach. The whole of Indian politics, therefore, is rife with populist slogans of leftist vintage. None of the political parties carries the message of individual freedom and human dignity to the masses or tries to rid them of orthodoxy and blind faith, or teaches them to be self-reliant and self-disciplined. No attempt, in other words, is made to spread the values of democracy among the people. The whole of Indian politics, including communist politics, has in consequence become an unprincipled scramble for power. If Indian democracy survives and becomes stabilized, none of the political parties can claim the credit for that consummation.

There is another grave consequence of the one-sided economic approach encouraged by the theory of economic determinism. It is that other social issues of great importance are driven into the background. Little attempt for instance is made by the general run of Marxists in India to stimulate among the masses the desire for education, or to teach them the evils of untouchability and of the

hierarchical caste system, or to motivate them for family planning. The justification offered is that issues of this type would not interest the masses so long as their economic problem remains unsolved. It is only after the removal of poverty, it is claimed, that the masses would aspire for a higher culture, seek education for themselves and their children, rid themselves of harmful social customs, and appreciate the necessity of family planning.

The implication is obvious. A party like the communist party must first come to power and bring about an economic reorganisation so as to end the exploitation and poverty of the masses, and only thereafter will the masses be fit for freedom and democracy. The economic approach thus leads necessarily to the preference for a dictatorial State.

(5) Relativist Morality

The main tragedy of Marxism is that it threw away what could have been its main asset--the moral revulsion which sensitive people feel against exploitation and the glaring economic inequality which it breeds. Marxism ridiculed such moral fervour as "sentimental socialism" and asked its adherents to adopt "scientific socialism" and be the harbingers of a historically inevitable proletarian revolution which will take place, not because capitalist exploitation was morally repulsive, but because capitalism was bound to collapse as a result of the development of the means of production. The present moral values were said to be not only useless but positively harmful, because they represented the interests of the dominant capitalist class. Different moral values, it was claimed, would emerge in a classless society.

This ethical nihilism led the communist parties to adopt in practice the principle that the end justifies the means. Communist tactics throughout the world came to be identified as ruthless, sectarian, and lacking in moral scruples. Communism lost a great deal of credibility on this account.

Classless societies have now existed in Russia and China for decades, but a set of different moral values characteristic of a classless society has not made its appearance in those countries.

(6) Spirit of Dogmatic Conformism

The Marxian movement is characterised by faithful conformism to whatever was said by Marx and Engels and intolerance of any departure from the sacred text. This spirit of dogmatism, always inherent in a dictatorial movement, was integrated into communism by Lenin's successful effort to convert the Russian Communist Party into a highly centralised revolutionary organisation and during the subsequent struggle for leadership between Stalin and Trotsky. What is called "revisionism" is the greatest crime that a communist can commit.

No scientist, however great, can lay down a scientific law which will remain unmodified as a result of knowledge acquired in the future. This is particularly true in the case of the social sciences. To regard any scientific conclusion as an eternal truth is wholly unscientific. Dogmatic adherence to what Marx said, and intolerance of any revision of his teachings in the light of later experience, have converted Marxism into another orthodoxy, a new religion, contrary to the spirit of science.

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM

Democratic socialism is not an ideology; it is at the most an ideal. Democratic socialists may be Marxists, or Gandhians, or liberals, or radical democrats, or just pragmatists. It is not possible to examine democratic socialism as a separate ideology, a distinctive system of ideas.

Even as an ideal, democratic socialism is vague, because socialism means different things to different people. Socialism, according to one definition, consists of the nationalisation of all the means of production, distribution and exchange. Others refuse to define socialism in mere institutional terms. They say that democratic socialism consists of an economic system in which certain values, such as liberty, equality and fraternity, are actually realised. To what extent nationalisation is useful in realising these values is, according to them, a matter to be decided on the basis of experiment and experience.

The latter interpretation of socialism, if socialism it can be called, approximates to the economic aspect of an ideal society conceived by Radical Humanism. However, the social ideal of Radical Humanism is more comprehensive than the above variety of democratic socialism.

GANDHISM

Gandhi never tried or intended to develop a comprehensive social philosophy. His personal life was guided by the prevalent Hindu Vedant philosophy, which places before the individual the ideal of Moksha or Nirvana, i.e., freedom not in this world but *from* this world, freedom of the soul from the body and from the cycle of births and deaths. The only comment which is necessary on this aspect of Gandhi's philosophy is that it is unreal and unscientific, and almost all the Hindus who accept it with great reverence act contrary to it during the entire span of their lives. Gandhi was one of the few persons who tried to practise what he preached, and is rightly respected on that account.

There was, however, a clear inconsistency in Gandhi's personal philosophy and his social outlook. Personally he believed in abstinence and self-denial, because he accepted the view that bodily pleasures were the cause of the soul's enslavement. Yet socially he strove to remove the poverty of the people so that their bodily wants may be supplied. The inconsistency is endemic to the philosophy itself.

Gandhi's great merit was to insist that politics must not be divorced from morality. Truth and non-violence were the moral principles which he introduced in the Indian nationalist movement. He was, however, not a rationalist, and the national freedom for which he strove did not have, clearly and unequivocally, the positive content of individual freedom. His morality was based on his religious faith, and those in the nationalist movement who had no active faith in religion paid only a lip service to his moral principles. After Gandhi's death, his followers belonging to one political party or another have been ruling over India, and to say the least they have not distinguished themselves by their personal or

collective moral behaviour. A minority of Gandhians remained outside party politics and decided to serve the country by working among the people on Gandhian principles. Many of them are persons of moral worth and by far the greatest of them, Jayaprakash Narayan, was a magnetic personality with a spotless moral character. He had a passion for the positive ideal of freedom, a passion which he had acquired before he joined the Gandhian fold. As I have pointed out elsewhere, he stands midway between Gandhism and Radical Humanism.[1] .

Gandhi contributed to the Indian nationalist movement a new method of struggle called "civil disobedience" or passive resistance. That method was suitable to a struggle against British Imperialism, the oppressiveness of which was limited by the fact that it emanated from a liberal democratic State in Great Britain. As observed in the last chapter, India's national independence was the result, not so much of Gandhi's civil disobedience, as of the economic and political changes which occurred in the world and in Great Britain itself during the anti-fascist World War. The ineffectiveness of civil disobedience against a ruthless and unprincipled authoritarian rule was demonstrated during the Emergency which was enforced in India in 1975 by Indira Gandhi. Civil disobedience remains nevertheless a useful method of demonstrating one's nonconformism to any unfair act of the establishment.

One of the abiding contributions of Gandhism to Indian politics is its insistence on the necessity of political and economic decentralisation. That is a common feature of both Gandhism and Radical Humanism.

Gandhi advised the owners of property that they shall regard themselves as the trustees of the people. He was against the abolition of landlordism and the nationalisation of industry. However, the doctrine of trusteeship did not have much impact on property owners and has a very limited practical value.

It has become fashionable with some intellectuals in India to pick up a few positive features of Gandhism such as his preference for political and economic decentralisation, omit the numerous teachings of Gandhi which are no longer tenable, and proclaim

1. *The Radical Humanist.* Sept., 1976, "Roy, J.P. and Indian Democracy" pp. 13-20

Gandhism as an ultra-modern philosophy. Such a misinterpretation serves no useful purpose. As least Gandhism, which regards truth as the highest value, should be truthfully interpreted. Gandhi disliked modern science, modern civilization, modern industry, modern medicine. He did not encourage the modern tradition of secularism and rationalism. He idealised simple rustic life with the bullock-cart economy. He was an intensely religious man, with active faith in a personal deity. His morality was dictated by his "inner voice" which he regarded as the voice of God. A modern philosophy must be based on individual freedom, rationalism and secularism, none of which go well with Gandhism.

Instead of either accepting or rejecting Gandhism as a whole, it is better to appreciate and adopt what is positive and enduring in Gandhi's teachings--his insistance on morality in private and public life, on the adoption of pure means to achieve a good end, on the necessity of political and economic decentralisation, and on the indomitable courage which is essential in the persistent pursuit of a high ideal.

FOUR

THE FOUNDER OF RADICAL HUMANISM

M.N. Roy, who founded the philosophy of Radical Humanism, was in many ways a unique person. He distinguished himself both as a man of action and as a man of thought. In both the fields, he lived an intense life. As a man of action, he was a devoted and dedicated revolutionary. As a man of thought, he developed into a profound and original social philosopher. There was a fine blend of romanticism and rationalism in his mental make-up. His practical experience and evolving thought led him through three distinct phases of political life. He started as an ardent nationalist, became an equally ardent communist and ended as a creatively active radical humanist.

M.N. Roy was born on 21st March 1887 in a Brahmin family at Arbalia, a village in the 24 Parganas District in Bengal. His original name was Narendranath Bhattacharya. At the age of 14, when he was still a school student, Naren as he was then called got involved in underground revolutionary activity. He joined a body called Anushilan Samiti, and when it was banned, he helped in organising the famous 'Jugantar Group' under the leadership of Jatin Mukherjee, who was known to his colleagues and followers as 'Bagha (Tiger) Jatin'. In the course of his underground work, Naren was involved in a number of political decoities and conspiracy cases. He was first arrested in a dacoity case in 1907 but was discharged. He was later arrested in the Howrah Conspiracy case in 1909, was an undertrial prisoner along with Jatin Mukherjee and others for about a year, but was eventually acquitted. It was as under-trial prisoners in the Howrah Conspiracy case that Jatin

Mukherjee, Naren and others drew up a plan of an armed insurrection to overthrow the British rule in India. The main work of developing a widespread organisation for carrying out an armed insurrection was done by Naren. For this purpose, he toured different parts of India as a Sanyasi. The organisation became known as the Jugantar Party. Naren was not only the main organiser but also the main fund collector of the party. For collecting funds, he had to organise a number of political dacoities.

On the eve of the first World War, which commenced in August 1914, Naren and Jatin Mukherjee had several meetings with the German Consul General in Calcutta for discussing the possibility of German help for an armed insurrection in India. It was eventually agreed that a representative of Indian revolutionaries should go to Batavia in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) to prepare a plan to receive German arms for the Indian Revolution. Naren was chosen as the representative and he went to Batavia in search of arms in April 1915. There he had discussions with the German Consul General during the course of which it was agreed that German arms would be transported through a cargo ship named Maverick and that the ship would be unloaded at a suitable place. Naren returned to India and helped in making elaborate plans for receiving the arms and despatching them to different centres. For some reasons, however, the ship Maverick and the cargo of arms did not arrive.

It was then decided to send Naren again to Batavia to discuss fresh plans with the Germans. Naren went to Batavia a second time, determined not to return without the precious cargo. In Batavia, he prepared a plan to get arms through a German ship to the Andaman Islands and transport the arms thereafter to the Orissa coast. The Germans, however, were not sufficiently cooperative. Naren, therefore, went in search of arms to Japan and from there, after evading the Japanese police, to China. At Hankow, Naren actually concluded a concrete agreement with a Chinese leader in the presence of the German Consul for the sale of arms which were to be delivered at the Indian frontier in the tribal area of Assam. With this agreement, Naren went back to Peking, saw the German Ambassador and requested him to furnish the necessary funds to purchase the arms from the Chinese leader.

The German Ambassador agreed that the plan was workable but said that Naren should go to Germany to secure the funds from the General Staff in Berlin.

By this time, Naren had begun to feel that the Germans were not serious about the offer of military help. He also learnt about the death of his leader Jatin Mukherjee in a clash with the police in Sunderbans in Bengal. This dimmed the prospects of a successful armed insurrection. Nevertheless Naren decided to go to Berlin as suggested by the German Ambassador in Peking. He managed to cross the Pacific Ocean and landed at San Francisco on 14th June 1916.

Naren's arrival in San Francisco was somehow published in the local press, and he therefore came under the notice of the police. Finding it difficult to move about in San Francisco, he went to the neighbouring town of Palo Alto, the seat of Stanford University, where he adopted the name of M.N. Roy.

Having come to a dead end in his search of arms, Roy began a serious study of the basic books on socialism, particularly the works of Karl Marx. It was not long before he accepted socialism, "except its materialist philosophy". He was, however, not able to remain in America for long. America joined the World War in June 1917, and soon thereafter a criminal case called the Hindu-German Conspiracy Case was instituted in San Francisco against several persons including Roy. Roy was arrested but was released pending trial on personal security. He managed to evade the surveillance of the police and found his way to the neighbouring country of Mexico.

When Roy reached Mexico, he had no money and no friends. His only asset was a letter of introduction. But he stayed in Mexico for 2½ years, from July 1917 to December 1919, during which period he led a very crowded life. He met the editor of the leading daily paper El Publo (The People) in Mexico city and wrote a series of articles on India which were translated into Spanish and published. Roy soon learnt the Spanish language, and wrote and published two books in Spanish during his stay in Mexico. He joined the Socialist Party of Mexico, then a very small and insignificant group, and was soon appointed its propaganda secretary. Conditions in Mexico were very favourable to the growth of a party like the

Socialist Party. Mexico was then facing a threat of an invasion by the United States and Mexican people welcomed the anti-imperialist stance of the Socialist Party. President Carranza of Mexico also wanted the support of such a party for the stability of his Government. With Roy as propaganda secretary, membership of the Socialist Party increased very rapidly. A highly successful socialist conference was convened in Mexico City in December 1918 and the Mexican Socialist Party was formally inaugurated in that conference. Roy was elected as the General Secretary of the Party. Within six months thereafter, a member of the party became a Labour Minister of the Government of Mexico.

In the spring of 1919, the well-known Communist leader Michael Borodin happened to be in Mexico City. He met Roy and stayed with him as his guest. It was as a result of the long discussions between the two that Roy accepted materialist philosophy and became a full-fledged Communist. By that time the news of the Russian Revolution had spread throughout Mexico as in other parts of the world. There was in consequence a demand that the Mexican Socialist Party should be declared a Communist Party. An extra-ordinary Conference of the Party was convened by Roy as its General Secretary and the party was declared the Communist Party of Mexico. Thus Roy became the founder of the first Communist Party outside the Soviet Union. The Conference decided to send a delegation, to be led by Roy, to the Second Conference of the Communist International which was to be held in Moscow in July 1920.

In the meantime, on the recommendation of Borodin, an invitation was sent to Roy to attend the Second Conference of the Communist International. The invitation was readily accepted. Due to the war of intervention in which the Soviet Union was involved at that time, the journey to Moscow was hazardous and time-consuming. Roy went from Mexico to Spain, from there to Berlin where he stayed for four months, and reached Moscow in June 1920.

The Second Conference of the Communist International met from 16th July to 17th August 1920. Prior to the Conference, Roy had several meetings with Lenin. One of the main questions to be discussed at the Second Conference was the nature of the nationalist movements in various colonial countries and the role of the local

bourgeoisie in those movements. On this question, Lenin had prepared a document called "Theses on National and Colonial Question," which was shown to Roy. Roy differed with Lenin on the role of the local bourgeoisie in the movement for national liberation. Roy was of the view that the bourgeoisie of a colonical country was not a consistently revolutionary class, that it would enter into compromises with imperialism, and that the movement for national liberation in colonial countries should be developed under the hegemony of workers and peasants led by communists. Lenin on the other hand favoured the view that communists should support colonial nationalist movements led by the local bourgeoisie. Lenin, however, told Roy that his own acquaintance with conditions in colonial countries like India and China was very limited, and he asked Roy to prepare alternative Theses on the national and colonial question. Roy prepared the Supplementary Theses and when they were shown to Lenin, the latter suggested, after making some alterations, that both the Theses, his own and those of Roy, should be placed for acceptance before the Conference. This was done and the Second Conference of the Communist International adopted both the Theses.

The question on which Roy differed with Lenin was of vital importance to the policy to be pursued by communists in colonial countries. The question continued to plague subsequent Congresses of the Communist International (Comintern) and meetings of its Executive Committee. It does appear, in retrospect, that in colonial countries like India and China, where there were semi-developed capitalist classes, history has corroborated the analysis sponsored by Roy.

The Executive Committee of the Comintern which met after the Second Congress appointed a Mali Bureau (Small Bureau) to act as its executive organ. Roy was à member of the Mali Bureau. A Central Asiatic Bureau was also set up for planning the strategy of revolution in Asia, and Roy was one of its three members. The main responsibility of the Bureau's work fell on Roy. In order to promote revolution in India, Roy decided that he should establish a base of operations as close to the frontier of India as possible. Far-flung areas in the Asian region of Russia such as Turkistan and Bokhara were yet to be brought under communist control

after the Russian Revolution. Roy accompanied the battalian of the Red Army which went to Bokhara and occupied it. He then set up a revolutionary committee at Tashkent. His plan of developing revolutionary activities in India through a base in Afghanistan had to be abandoned because of the opposition of the Afghan Government. Roy, however, set up an Indian Political and Military School for the training of Indians at Tashkent. Several Muslims from India who intended to go to Turkey to fight for the Khilafat found their way to Tashkent and were trained in the Indian School. On the insistence of some of the members of the School, the "Communist Party of India" was formed in Tashkent on 17th October, 1920. Later, the Indian School at Tashkent was closed and the Communist University of the Toilers of the East was started in Moscow.

Being mainly interested in the promotion of a revolutionary anti-imperialist movement in India, Roy shifted his headquarters from Moscow to Berlin in April 1922. By that time, he had already prepared and published his major book *India in Transition*. Several copies of the book were smuggled into India. Although the book was proscribed and many copies confiscated, some reached their destinations.

In Berlin, Roy was continuously engaged in trying to create a communist group in India and to goad the Indian nationalist movement along revolutionary channels. He wrote several articles in "Inprecor" (International Press Correspondence). He also started a fortnightly journal called "Vanguard of Indian Independence." When the journal was proscribed by the Indian Government, he changed its name to "Advance Guard" and for the same reason, the journal was later called "Masses". Roy arranged to send a number of trained communists to India, but most of them were arrested by the police. He also had voluminous correspondence with several public figures in India. Much of this correspondence was intercepted by the police, photographed and sent on to its destination. Roy also tried to influence the decisions of the annual Conferences of the Indian National Congress, like the Ahmedabad Congress of 1921 and the Gaya Congress of 1922. Because of his revolutionary activities, Roy was expelled from Germany. He then transferred his headquarters to Zurich, from there to Annecy in

France, and from Annecy to Paris. At each of these places, arrangements were made for the publication of his fortnightly journal. He was in communication with Dange, Muzaffar Ahmed, Singaravelu, Shaukat Usmani and others in India. He was urging them to form an underground Communist party and an open People's Party which would champion the economic demands of peasants and workers.

In order to put an end to these activities, the Government of India launched the Kanpur Conspiracy case against Roy and the known communists in India in 1924. Although Roy was accused No. 1 in the case, he could not be proceeded against because he was abroad. But the other accused persons, Muzaffar Ahmed, Shaukat Usmani, Dange and Nalini Gupta were convicted and sentenced each to four years' rigorous imprisonment.

The Kanpur Conspiracy case was not, however, an unmixed tragedy. It became clear from the arguments in that case that a person cannot be prosecuted merely for holding communist views. Encouraged by this clarification, a leftwing congressman named Satya Bhakta convened a Communist Conference in Kanpur in December 1925. The Conference launched the Communist Party of India on Indian territory. Roy heartily welcomed the formation of the Party.

By the end of 1926, Roy had reached the highest position of his career in the Communist International. He was elected member of all the four official policy making bodies of the Comintern--the Presidium, the Political Secretariat, the Executive Committee and the World Congress. By that time, however, it was decided that while Roy should continue to provide political and ideological guidance to the communist movement in India, the Communist Party of Great Britain should took after its organisational development.

The Seventh Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern considered the Chinese situation in its meeting held in Moscow in November-December, 1926. Roy urged that the Chinese revolution should be developed as an agrarian revolution based upon the economic demands of peasants. His view was accepted and the Theses drafted by him were passed by the Executive Committee. It was decided that Roy should be sent to China to look after the implementation of the Theses. Roy reached Canton in February 1927 and had to wait several weeks before he could

reach Hankow. Borodin was also another representative of the Comintern sent to China.

In the meantime, Chiang Kai-Shek launched a coup against the Communist allies of the Kuomintang on 12.4.1927 in Shanghai and other cities, with the result that thousands of communists were killed. The faction of the Kuomintang based at Human, now known as the Left Kuomintang, reacted by "expelling" Chiang Kai-Shek from the party. In this situation, the Eighth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern advised Chinese communists to increase their strength in the peasantry by adopting a radical agrarian programme, while preserving their alliance with the Left Kuomintang. Since the leadership of even the Left Kuomintang consisted largely of feudalists and militarists, the advise of the Executive Committee of the Comintern that Chinese communists should maintain their alliance with the Left Kuomintang while pursuing a policy of radical agrarian reform proved impracticable. Roy advocated that the Chinese communists should create a mass base by supporting peasants' demands and arming the peasants, even if this necessitated a break with the Left Kuomintang leadership. Borodin on the other hand desired to continue the alliance with the Left Kuomintang even when the latter adopted a policy of restraining the peasant and labour movements. Roy referred the question to Moscow but received a telegram from Stalin merely repeating the view of the Eighth Plenum of reconciling the conflicting goals of unity with the Left Kuomintang and promotion of a powerful peasant movement. In the result, the programme of agrarian revolution advocated by Roy was not implemented. In July 1927, a re-union between the Human Government of the Left Kuomintang and the Nanking Government of Chiang Kai-Shek was effected on the basis of a purge of all the communists. The communists were purged and the Russian advisors including Roy and Borodin were obliged to return to Moscow. It is significant that when several years later, the Chinese Communist Party under the leadership of Mao Tse Tung succeeded in bringing about a successful revolution in China, it was in essence an agrarian revolution.

When Roy returned to Moscow, he found himself in a strange situation. Although he had pursued in China a policy approved by Stalin, the latter did not even see him to hear his version of what

happened in China. Roy went from Moscow to Berlin in October 1927 and returned to Moscow again in February 1928 at the time of the Ninth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. Here again he was not allowed to appear before the Committee. While the Committee was still in session, Roy became bed-ridden on account of intense pain in the left ear which was diagnosed as mastoiditis. He was not even sent to the Kremlin hospital where members of the Comintern were usually treated, but was relegated to a small hospital outside Moscow. Knowing that he was in official disfavour, he wrote to a Swiss friend, who came to Moscow and with the assistance of Borodin and Bukharin managed to smuggle Roy out of Russia. Roy was taken to Berlin where he was operated upon for mastoiditis. While recuperating from the operation, he completed his major work called *Revolution and Counter Revolution in China.*

In the Sixth Congress of the Comintern held in May-June 1928, and in the Tenth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern held in July 1929, Stalin brought about some radical changes in the policies of the international communist movement. It was decided that in colonial countries, communists should have no truck with bourgeois nationalist parties. This meant that the communists in India should severe their connections with the Indian National Congress. It was also decided that Socialist parties in Europe should be condemned as counter-revolutionary and opposed by the communists. This implied that the united front between communists and socialists to oppose the rising forces of Fascism should be disrupted. Roy was against both these policies. He was of the view that in India, communists should work inside the nationalist movement in order to radicalise it on the basis of the economic demands of the peasants and workers. He was also in favour of the continuation of the united front in Europe between communists and socialists in order to oppose the rising Fascism. He wrote articles on these topics in the press of the Opposition Communist Party of Germany led by Heinrich Brandler and August Thalheimer, who had already incurred Stalin's displeasure. In September 1929, an announcement was made in the Inprecor on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Comintern that "Roy, by contributing to the Brandler Press and supporting the Brandler Organisations, has

placed himself outside the ranks of the Communist International, and is to be considered as expelled from the Communist International."

This was the time when Stalin was engaged in liquidating all those communist leaders who had any independent opinions of their own. Roy was right in asserting in connection with his expulsion from the Comintern that his main offence was his "claim to the right of independent thinking".

Roy was now determined to return to India, although there was no doubt that he would be arrested in India and tried for the charge of waging a war against His Majesty the King, the charge which was framed against him in the 1924 Kanpur Conspiracy Case. Brandler and other friends tried to persuade Roy to give up his decision to return to India, but their persuasion did not succeed. He induced a number of Indian friends in Berlin to join him for his intended work in India. He despatched four of them--Tayab Shaikh, Brajesh Singh, Sundar Kabadi and Dr. Anadi Bhaduri--to prepare the ground before his arrival in India. Travelling via Istanbul and Baghdad, he himself reached Karachi *incognito* on 11th December 1930.

Roy remained underground in India for about seven months before his arrest. During this period, he went about as "Dr. Mahmud." He contacted a number of young revolutionary workers and guided them in their activities. Even in that short period, the "Royists' as they were called made a considerable headway, particularly in the labour movement. Some of the young workers whom Roy contacted in that period, such as V.B. Karnik and Maniben Kara, became stalwart trade union leaders in the course of time. Roy also attended the Karachi session of the Congress, met Jawaharlal Nehru and helped in shaping the resolution on Fundamental Rights and the National Economic Programme, in which for the first time the Indian National Congress adopted a policy of socio-economic reform. Eventually Roy was arrested in Bombay on the 26th July, 1931.

Roy was in jail from 21st July 1931 to 20th November 1936. His trial took place not in open court but in jail. He conducted his own defence. He was not even allowed to make his defence statement in full. The statement prepared by him was smuggled out and

published under the title "My Defence". The main point in his defence was that the British Government in India was not a Government "established by law" and that "the only law for the oppressed and exploited people of India was the law of revolt, the majestic law of revolutionary struggle for freedom". He was tried not by jury but with the aid of assessors. Two of the four assessors found him not guilty. The Judge, however, convicted him and sentenced him to 12 years rigorous imprisonment. In an appeal to the Allahabad High Court, the sentence was reduced to six years. The conditions of his detention were far more rigorous than those of other political prisoners. He was given 'B' class and was not allowed to write more than one letter per month. No interview with friends was permitted.

Imprisonment, however, could not put a stop to his political work. His monthly letters to Ellen Gottschalk (who after Roy's release came to India and married him) show that he did voluminous reading in jail. For his writing, he was allowed at a time only one foolscap size volume of about 1000 pages. Nine such volumes were filled by his writings in jail. Parts of these writings were later published in the form of books including *Fascism, Historical Role of Islam, Materialism, Heresies of the Twentieth Century and Ideal of Indian Womanhood.* He was also able to smuggle out a lot of political literature. This was possible because the wardens and subordinate officers of every jail to which he was sent became his friends. While he was in jail several booklets were published by his followers consisting of the writings smuggled out by him. They included "Our Task in India", "China in Revolt", "Whither Congress" and "Letters to the Congress Socialist Party".

Roy's release from jail on 20th November 1936 gave him an opportunity for the first time to work out under his direct supervision the ideas which he had developed in regard to the national democratic revolution in India. Immediately after his release from jail, he issued a public appeal asking the people to join the Indian National Congress in millions. At the same time, he made it clear that the nationalist movement could be strengthened only by a process of radicalisation and democratisation. He urged that the Indian National Congress should be built up from below by organising village and taluka Congress Committees and vitalising them on the basis of the

socio-economic programme of democratic freedom and agrarian reform. His idea was to develop the Congress organisation, with its network of village and taluka Committees, as a State within the State. The plan was that, at an appropriate time, the Congress as the alternate State would give a call for convening a Constituent Assembly to frame the Constitution of free India and this call would be the signal for the launching of the revolution for India's democratic freedom.

On the basis of this programme, the colleagues and followers of Roy started work in a large number of rural and urban centres in the country. They made rapid progress and in the course of a couple of years, they became a force to be contended with. The programme based on the radical demands of the peasants and workers was not liked by a major section of Congress leadership. Roy was of the view that radicalisation of the Congress involved the development of an alternative revolutionary leadership in the organisation. For this purpose he organised his followers into a body called the League of Radical Congressmen. This highly successful programme was, however, brought to a halt by the declaration of the Second World War which led Roy and his friends to part company with the Indian National Congress.

The Second World War commenced on 1st September 1939. Soon thereafter Roy prepared a thesis called "India and War" which was adopted by the League of Radical Congressmen in the middle of October and published as a booklet. It was a brilliant document, in the course of which Roy pointed out that the war was not an imperialist war, that imperialism had tried its best to avoid it, and that it was an internecine conflict precipitated by an accident or a miscalculation. He also stated that if the war were to be fought out, it was "bound to weaken both the parties involved and thus open the flood-gates of revolution." It will be recalled that after Poland was overrun partly by Nazi Germany and partly by the Soviet Union, in pursuance of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, the War remained at a "phony" stage for several months. When, however, the Nazi armies attacked France in April 1940 and marched from triumph to triumph, Roy concluded that the war had become an anti-Fascist war and that it was necessary for the very survival of democracy throughout the world that the war efforts of the Allied

Powers should be supported at all cost. "If Fascism succeeds in establishing its domination over the whole of Europe", Roy declared, "then good-bye to revolution and good-bye to Indian freedom as well". He also confidently predicted that "the defeat of Fascism will weaken imperialism" and would bring India nearer to the goal of democratic freedom.

The Indian people were traditionally anti-British. They had, moreover, little appreciation of the dangers of international Fascism. It was not surprising, therefore, that the news of Nazi successes used to cause popular jubilation in Indian towns and villages. Roy knew that under these circumstances the programme of war support which he had to advocate was bound to be unpopular. It was characteristic of Roy that he decided to sacrifice his popularity for the sake of his principles and threw himself whole-heartedly in the anti-Fascist cause.

This brought him into conflict with the leadership of the Indian National Congress. The Congress leaders were of the view that they could not ask the Indian people to support the war effort unless the British Government agreed to set up a National Government in India with full autonomy over defence and foreign affairs. Roy disapproved this offer of conditional support, which meant opposition to the war effort if the condition was not accepted. Roy argued that if success in the anti-Fascist war was necessary for our democratic freedom, we cannot put conditions on our offer to help in achieving that success. This difference forced the parting of ways. Some anti-fascist meetings announced by the League of Radical Congressmen were banned by the Congress leadership, and thereupon Roy and his followers left the Congress and founded a separate party, called the Radical Democratic Party, in December 1940.

Having correctly characterised the war as an anti-Fascist war, Roy confidently anticipated and openly predicted that, despite the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, Russia would be involved in the war on the side of the Allied Powers. This was what happened when on 21st July 1941 Hitler launched a massive attack on the eastern front against Soviet Russia. Even this development, however, did not open the eyes of Indian nationalist leaders to the true character of the war. Japan joined the war on the side of the Axis

Powers in December 1941, and by August 1942 Japanese armies were on the eastern borders of India. Subhash Chandra Bose, who had gone over to Japan, was daily appealing to his followers through the Tokyo Radio to welcome the "rising sun" which was appearing on the Indian horizon. In that critical situation, the Indian National Congress launched the "Quit India" movement on 9th August 1942. If that movement had succeeded, it was likely to be the "Enter India" movement for the Fascist army of Japan.

It was fortunate that the Quit India movement subsided within about three months. By that time the Nazi forces on the Russian front were successfully halted at Stalingrad. At an All-India Conference of the Radical Democratic Party held in Lucknow in December 1942, Roy declared not only that the Fascist Powers were bound to be defeated in the war, but that India will get national freedom as a result of the socio-economic changes which were taking place in Great Britain and the allied countries during the course of the anti-Fascist struggle.

Both these anticipations proved correct. Many historians are agreed that India got national freedom largely as a result of the liberating forces generated by the defeat of international Fascism in the Second World War. That was the reason for the virtual disappearance of colonialism, not only in India, but throughout the world.

As soon it became clear to him that the Fascist powers were going to be defeated in the World War, Roy switched his attention to the post-war reconstruction of India. He got prepared two basic documents, one the "People's Plan for Economic Development of India" and the second a "Draft Constitution of Free India." The documents contained Roy's original contributions to the solution of the country's economic and political problems. Contrary to the economic thinking which was then current, Roy gave priority in the People's Plan to the development of agriculture and small scale industry. Production under the People's Plan was to be for use and not for profit and the objective of economic planning was to supply the primary needs of the people consisting of food, shelter, clothing, education and medicine. The Indian State according to the Draft Constitution of Free India was to be organised on the basis of a countrywide network of People's Committees having wide powers

such as initiating legislation, expressing opinion on pending bills, recall of representatives and referendum on important national issues. The idea of People's Committees, subsequently popularised by Jayaprakash Narayan, was mainly derived from Roy's Draft Constitution of Free India.

The Radical Humanistic phase of Roy's ideological development was heralded at an important study camp of active workers of the Radical Democratic Party which was held at Gadhi near Dehradun on May 8-18, 1946. The camp was attended by over 182 members. In his speeches at the camp, Roy pointed out that Communism was no longer an unrealised utopia, that its clay feet were visible in what was happening in Soviet Russia, that a liberating revolution can no longer take place under the discredited flag of Communism, and that we must work for a higher ideal, the ideal of achieving human freedom. He advocated the view that the degeneration of Communist theory and practice resulted from its failure to understand the supreme importance of ideas in human progress. He insisted that materialism was not inconsistent with the role of ideas in human history, for ideas have their origin in the physical existence of man. His speeches at the Gadhi camp were published in the book *New Orientation.*

An All India Conference of the Radical Democratic party was to be held in Bombay in December 1946. Prior to the Conference Roy prepared, in consultation with some of his colleagues, a number of theses summarising the philosophy he was propounding. These came to be known as the 22 Theses of Radical Humanism. They outline the principles of the personal and social aspects of that philosophy. They trace the basic values of freedom, rationalism and morality to man's biological evolution. They emphasize the inseverability of political and economic freedom and indicate how the comprehensive ideal of freedom may be achieved. The 22 Theses were adopted at the Bombay Conference of the Radical Democratic Party. Roy's speeches at the Conference and at a preceding study camp in connection with the 22 Theses were published under the title *Beyond Communism.*

After the Bombay Conference, some colleagues of Roy requested him to prepare a manifesto on the newly formulated philosophy. The document was prepared and was published in May 1947 under

the title *New Humanism-A Manifesto*. The Manifesto deals with the inadequacy of current ideologies and the degeneration of communist theory and practice, and presents an outline of the philosophy of new humanism, later designated as Radical Humanism.

By the time of the Gadhi camp of 1946, Roy had completely discarded Communism but he still regarded himself a heretical Marxist. Subsequent development of his ideas made it clear that his divergence from Marxism was so basic that he could not be regarded a Marxist any longer. He retained, however, a profound respect for Marx and his pioneering work.

Further consideration of the principles enunciated in the 22 Theses and the Manifesto led Roy to the conclusion that party politics was inconsistent with the ideal of radical democracy and that it was liable to degenerate into power politics. Roy was of the view that political power in a democracy should reside in primary organisations of the people such as People's Committees and should not be usurped by any political party. He was further of the view that in countries like India, where a major section of the electorate was illiterate, party politics was bound to become an unprincipled scramble for power. These ideas were discussed in several camps and meetings of members of the Radical Democratic Party, and they ultimately led to the dissolution of the Party in an All India Conference held in Calcutta in December 1948. Roy's speeches and writings on political parties and power politics were later published in the book *Politics, Power, and Parties*. On the dissolution of the Radical Democratic Party, the followers of Roy launched a movement called the Radical Humanist Movement, which later became the Indian Radical Humanist Association.

Several meetings and camps were held on behalf of the Radical Humanist Movement which led to further clarifications of the principles of Radical Humanism. One of the new ideas placed by Roy before these gatherings related to the concept of "cooperative economy." In a cooperative economy, the means of production do not belong either to the capitalist class or to the State. They belong to the workers themselves. Roy was of the view that cooperative economy was superior to both capitalism and State ownership.

In the closing years of his life, Roy wrote a book published in two volumes called *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution*. The first volume was published during his life time and the second after his death. The book examines the history of Western thought with a view to bring out the role of ideas in human progress. "Romanticism tempered with Reason", concluded Roy, "and rationalism enlivened by the romantic spirit of adventure, pave the road to successful revolutions."

During the same period, Roy started writing his memoirs from the time he went to Java in search of arms in 1915. He was, however, unable to complete them. By the time he had given an account of his political experiences upto about 1921, he passed away as a result of a heart attack on 25th January 1954.

Roy was an intellectual giant. He was a constant source of original ideas. Throughout his life, he applied his great intellectual powers in the service of his ideal of freedom. If he had completed his memoirs, he had decided to publish them under the title *In Search of Freedom*. Human freedom was the basic inspiration and consuming passion of his entire life.[1]

1. A major portion of the material in this chapter is collected from *The Restless Brahmin* by Samaren Roy, *Communism and Nationalism in India* by John Patrick Haithcox and *M.N. Roy–Political Biography* by V.B. Karnik.

SECTION TWO

THE BASIC APPROACH

FIVE

MATERIALISM OR MONISTIC NATURALISM:THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

Radical humanism is scientific humanism with a radical outlook. Its conclusions are derived by adopting the approach of science to the understanding of man, his relations with other human beings and his place in the world.

The postulates which constitute the approach of science are also the postulates of the philosophy which is known as materialism or monistic naturalism. Since matter has been found to be not indestructible, but is liable to be converted into energy, the expression *monistic naturalism* is perhaps a more appropriate description of the philosophy. Monistic naturalism is the philosophical base of radical humanism.

Three Postulates

Materialism or monistic naturalism is based on three postulates which are also the postulates of the approach of science. These postulates are naturalism, determinism and monism.

Naturalism asserts the existence of nature and claims that everything that exists is part of nature. If it is shown that the table before you is only a set of atoms in constant motion, the atoms are assumed to exist; if the atoms consist of finer particles rotating

around each other, these particles are assumed to exist; and if the particles consist of quanta of energy, these quanta are assumed to exist. What is implied by naturalism is the reality of existence, even if the nature of the substance of which the world is composed may not be fully known. Naturalism excludes the concept that the world of experience is merely an illusion or Maya.

Determinism implies that the universe is law-governed. Nature is an orderly process. Events do not take place without a cause. It does not happen that a stone which is hard today is found to be soft tomorrow, without there being any cause which explains the change. If any unusual event takes place, determinism assumes that there must be a cause for it, whether the cause is presently known or unknown.

Monism is the third postulate of the philosophy of materialism or naturalistic monism. It postulates that the whole of existence consists of only one basic substance, whatever the nature of that substance may be. It denies that the universe is composed of two or more substances. Monism repudiates the duality of matter and spirit. It does not admit of anything being super-natural. According to naturalism, whatever is experienced is necessarily a part of nature. If tomorrow the existence of Extra Sensory Perception, such as telepathy or clairvoyance, is established beyond doubt (there is no clear proof of these as yet[1]), monistic naturalism would accept is as a part of reality and therefore as a part of nature, so that the necessary enquiry may be undertaken for understanding the phenomenon.

Science and Philosophy

It is easy to see how the postulates of naturalism, determinism and monism are basic to the approach of science. If a scientist is faced with an unusual problem, he assumes in the first place that the elements which constitute the problem exist. He does not regard them as a mere illusion. He then proceeds to find out the causes of the problem. On the basis of the experience gained by

1 *EPS and Parapsychology* by E.C.M. Hansel, Prometheus Books, New York, 1980.

experimentation or otherwise, he forms a tentative hypothesis to explain the problem, and proceeds to test the hypothesis by further experimentation or collection of facts. Scientific knowledge is acquired by synthesising experience in the light of reason. Reason, being the faculty which connects causes and consequences, is an expression of determinism. The scientist assumes in the third place that the cause or causes of any phenomenon are mundane or this-worldly, and not super-natural. Any super-natural cause is necessarily inscrutable and beyond human understanding. If any phenomenon is assumed to have been caused by a super-natural force, science cannot proceed to enquire into that phenomenon. However unusual and apparently unnatural a phenomenon may be, the scientist assumes that its causes are natural and therefore capable of investigation and discovery. Monism is thus the third essential postulate of the approach of science.

Determinism and monism necessarily go together. If one thing affects another, there must be something common between the two. Two entirely different substances or entities cannot possibly have an impact on one another. If the universe consists of two entities such as matter (or energy) and spirit, there must be something common between the two in order that one may be able to influence the other. If they do have something in common, they are essentially one entity and the assumed duality is either chimerical or derivative. It follows that the world of reality must be monistic.

The entire history of human civilisation is witness to the fact that whenever human beings did not know the cause of any impressive or strange phenomenon, they tended to locate some super-natural power behind it. When they were ignorant of the causes of thunder and lightning, they attributed them to the power of the god Jupiter or Indra. They visualised various gods and goddesses as the agents of all natural phenomena such as wind, rain, sunshine, and the tides of the sea. With the growth of science, all these gods and goddesses have been dethroned one after another. The growth of scientific knowledge, however, always reveals a further area of the unknown. In popular imagination god or gods have always resided in the region of ignorance which lies beyond the periphery of the hitherto acquired positive scientific knowledge. The continuous

retreat of the super-natural with the advance of science is a positive proof that the postulate of monism, as well as the postulates of naturalism and determinism, have been borne out by human experience. While the assumptions of super-naturalism lack any positive support, the postulates of materialism or monistic naturalism stand corroborated by the entire history of science.

The dictionary meaning of philosophy is "search after wisdom or knowledge". That can also be a definition of science. While the various sciences deal with different aspects of reality, philosophy tries to understand reality as a whole. That is why philosophy is often described as the science of sciences. The statement, therefore, that materialism or monistic naturalism is the philosophy of science implies that it is the philosophy of knowledge. It would follow that if philosophy is not to consist of mere speculation unrelated to the realities of life, materialism or monistic naturalism is the only philosophy possible.

Determinism and Pre-destination

If the whole universe is an orderly process, if no development takes place without a cause, and if the human will is also subject to the law of determinism, it would apparently follow that the entire future development of the universe, including every event which may happen in the future, is not only determined but is wholly pre-determined and that human beings are mere pawns in the march of history. The question whether the human will is free, and if so in what sense, will be considered later. It is, however, necessary to deal at this stage with the notion that determinism implies pre-determination or pre-destination.

The fact is that determinism does not exclude contingency. Reality consists of both necessity and chance. This is so because, although every event is governed by a chain of cause and effect, there may be no cause for the juxtaposition of two series of events.

This can be illustrated by the instance which is often given to explain the co-existence of determinism and contingency. Suppose a person is going along a foot-path by the side of a hill, just when a stone dislodged from the hill-top is rolling down towards the foot-path. The passage of the person along the foot-path is a determined event. He may be going along the foot-path to meet a friend who is reported to be ill. The event of the stone rolling down the slope

of the hill is also determined. The erosion of the soil below the stone by wind and rain may have reached a stage when the specific gravity of the stone became greater than the strength of its attachment to its location on the hill-top. Although both the events--of the man going along the foot-path and the stone rolling down the hill--are determined by their respective causes, there is no causal connection between the precise time of the two events. The synchronisation of the two events is a matter of chance or contingency.

Such events occur every day in life. There is no pre-destination, although the universe is law-governed. Both necessity and chance play a part in the making of the future. Human will, as will be shown later, is a powerful factor in the making of history.

The Riddle of Existence

Human beings have a natural tendency to think in terms of cause and effect. This reasoning faculty leads them to believe that this vast universe consisting of innumerable galaxies, each galaxy being a conglomeration of millions of stars, with our planet earth as a tiny and apparently insignificant part of one of the galaxies, must have been brought into existence by a mighty creator. That is the main argument on which the existence of God if postulated.

The same reasoning faculty, however, must lead us to the further question: If God created this universe, who created God? The only possible answer is that God is self-existent. But if God can be self-existent, why not the universe?

Rationally, there must be a cause for everything. But non-existence can never be the cause for existence. To whatever period of the remote past we go in imagination, there must have been something in existence, though not necessarily in the same form as that of the present universe. We have, therefore, to assume that either the universe, or some spiritual power called God, or both of them, have been self-existent all along.

Main Systems of Philosophy

This line of thinking leads, broadly speaking, to three systems of philosophy. The first, which assumes the exclusive reality of the

physical universe, has been here designated as materialism or monistic naturalism. The second, which assumes the exclusive reality of an all-pervasive spiritual power may, for the sake of convenience, be described as monistic spiritualism or idealism. The third, which assumes the self-existence of both the physical universe and the spiritual power, constitutes the philosophy of dualism.

Dualistic philosophy is not consistent with reason, because it is not rationally possible to assume that two entirely separate entities like spirit and matter, having nothing whatever in common, can influence each other. If the spiritualistic component of reality does not affect the physical universe, it can be ignored altogether. If one of them affects the other, there must be something in common between them, in which case we have to revert to a monistic cosmology.

Monistic spiritualism has taken two forms. The best representative of the first of these is the Vedanta philosophy which was the last of the six or more schools of ancient Indian thought. The second form of monistic spiritualism is best represented by the pantheism of Spinoza.

Vedanta philosophy says that God alone exists and that the entire physical universe is an illusion or Maya created by God. The individual soul is, however, also real, but this is because the individual soul is nothing but God himself. Now, for some incomprehensible reason, the God of the individual soul is caught in the illusion or Maya created by God himself. The individual soul identifies itself with the body, assumes the world to be real, and gets attached to physical pleasures. The purpose of life is to overcome this illusion and attain oneness with God. Various ways such as devotion, renunciation and acquisition of esoteric knowledge have been advocated for the purpose of God-attainment. This philosophy does nothing to reduce the misery that we see in the life of human beings but indicates a way of escaping from that misery. There is no acceptable evidence that any individual has really attained oneness with God either during his life-time or after his death. Claims have been made from time to time that a particular individual has realised oneness with God. These claims may not all be consciously false. A person who strives to attain oneness with

God, whether by devotion or renunciation or acquisition of esoteric knowledge, *does not exactly know what he wants to attain*. God is said to be formless, colourless and devoid of any other attributes. It is, therefore, possible that a person who devotes several years of his life for the attainment of oneness with this indescribable entity may experience a psychological condition which he characterises as the realisation of God. The attainment of oneness with God can thus be a matter of auto-suggestion or self-hypnosis. In any case, those who have claimed to have attained oneness with God have done precious little to improve the world of human beings.

Spinoza did not distinguish between nature and God. For him, nature and God were the same. This pantheism is sometimes described as inverted materialism. Pantheism may appear to be indistinguishable from materialism if the postulates of monism and determinism (=rationalism) are attributed to a reality which is designated God instead of nature. There is, however, an essential difference between the two. Pantheism implies not only that God and nature are one, but also that this God-nature has a purpose of its own. The assumption of such a purpose is not consistent with monistic naturalism. With all the suffering and the cruelty that we see in the world, it is not possible to assume that existence has a divine purpose. The only purpose we find in the world is the sum total of the conflicting purposes of biological beings including the *homo sapiens*.

Monistic naturalism may not help us in unravelling the riddle of existence. But it enables us to delve deep into the past and to know the phases through which the universe has passed. It also enables us to deepen our understanding of the present so that we may strive for a better future.

SIX

MAN PART OF NATURE

Monistic naturalism implies that the animate world, including the *homo sapiens,* must have originated from inanimate matter. The inference has been amply supported by modern science.

Origin of Life

Scientists have estimated that our planet earth is about 5,000,000,000 years old. It has further been ascertained from the study of fossils that life has existed on the earth for at least 1,000,000,000 years. This would mean that it took about 4,000,000,000 years of the earth's separate existence before life originated.[1-2]

Scientists have developed an acceptable hypothesis about how life might have sprung up in the conditions which prevailed in the earlier period of the earth's history. In several respects, the earth of that time was very different from the earth of today. In the first place, the atmosphere around the earth was free from oxygen and consisted mostly of hydrogen, ammonia and methyl. At present,

1. These and subsequent facts regarding the origin of life have been taken from the article of Prof. Earl A. Evans Jr. entitled "How Life Began" in *Adventures of the Mind,* Second series, edited by Richard Thruelsen and John Kobler, a Vintage Book.
2. Recent fossil discoveries are pushing back the time when life originated on earth. It now appears that life evolved on earth over a much longer period. That does not affect the main argument. See The Economist, London, of 7-13 March 1981, p.94.

the large quantity of oxygen which permeates the earth's atmosphere produces a layer of ozone at a distance of about 20 miles from the earth's surface, and this layer of ozone protects the earth from the sun's deadly ultraviolet radiation. This ozone layer was absent in ancient days, so that the earth was exposed to the full impact of ultra-violet radiation. Moreover, the earth's temperature was then high and the water of the oceans warm. Scientists say that these conditions led to the creation of certain complex carbon molecules which were the precursors of life.

In recent years, several experiments have been carried out in laboratories by reproducing the conditions which prevailed during the earlier ages of the earth's history. These experiments have corroborated the above hypothesis. For instance, two chemists in the Chicago University, Stanley Miller and Harold Urey, exposed a mixture of hydrogen, methyl, ammonia and water to a continuous electrical charge. The result was the creation of precisely those complex carbon compounds which are known to be the forerunners of the molecules of living matter.

Another process seems to have converted these complex carbon compounds into living substances. The process is called autocatalysis. It consists of the production of self-reproducing molecules, i.e., molecules which act on the surrounding chemical compounds so as to create their prototypes. They act as catalytic agents for self-multiplication. These self-reproducing molecules verge on life itself.[3]

The conditions which facilitated the creation of animate from inanimate matter have ceased to exist for a long time. The main factor in this development was the gradual increase of oxygen in the earth's atmosphere. This was the result of the growth of chlorophyll in various forms of plant life. The green chlorophyll of plants utilises sunlight to separate oxygen from water molecules. The oxygen so released has accummulated in the earth's atmosphere and has to led to the formation of a layer of ozone high up in the sky so as to protect the earth from the sun's ultra-violet rays. Oxygen-breathing creatures grew up in this situation which at the

3. These self-producing molecules or replicators are called DNA. Each DNA can be regarded as a set of instructions of how to make a body. See The Selfish Gene, by Richard Dawkins, Oxford University Press, 1978, pp. 22-25.

same time eliminated the conditions in which life originated from non-life. Hereafter, apart from the possibilities of laboratory experiments, life, it appears, can now arise only from life.

Biological Evolution

After life originated from inanimate matter, its subsequent development into various genera and species has been adequately explained by the theory of biological evolution. The main components of the theory were brought out by Charles Darwin in *The Origin of Species* published in 1859. On the basis of abundant and unimpeachable evidence, Darwin showed that the different existing varieties of plants and animals were the product of natural selection. All forms of life were involved in a struggle for existence, and only those forms survived which were adapted to their environments.

Although Darwin showed how the various existing forms of life survived in the struggle for existence, he did not give an adequate explanation of how life proliferated into different forms, so that some of them could survive when the others perished. Darwin, it is said, explained the "survival" of the species, but not their "arrival." That explanation has been provided by the laws of heredity and variation which developed as a result of the experiments of Mendel in plant breeding carried out at about the same time when Darwin was engaged in writing *The Origin of Species.* Post-Mendelian investigations have shown that hereditary characteristics are carried by certain minute thread-like structures, called chromosomes, which are present in every cell of the body of every plant and animal. Each chromosome consists of a number of genes which are complex double-molecules. The gene is the primary carrier of one or more specific hereditary characteristics. Scientists have even succeeded in locating a particular gene in a particular chromosome which carries a specific characteristic. The body cells of all the higher plants and animals contain a definite number of pairs of chromosomes, the number varying from one or two to hundreds. The cells of the human body contain 23 pairs of chromosomes.

It is now established that life has branched off into various genera and species as a result mainly of changes in the genetic

the main urges of the animal world, are thus directly connected with the primary urge for survival.

Man a Product of Evolution

It can hardly be doubted that the human species is one of the animal species thrown up in the course of biological evolution. Human beings are distinguished from other animals by the fact that their brain is more weighty as compared to the total weight of the body and that their thinking faculty is more highly developed. They are nevertheless a part of the biological world.

Nearly 12 years after the publication of *The Origin of Species,* Charles Darwin published in 1871 his next major work *The Descent of Man.* While summarising his conclusion towards the end of the book, Darwin wrote: "The main conclusion here arrived at, and now held by many naturalists who are well competent to form a sound judgment, is that man is descended from some less highly organised form. The grounds upon which this conclusion rests will never be shaken, for the close similarity between man and the lower animals in embryonic development, as well as in innumerable points of structure and constitution, both of high and of the most trifling importance--the rudiments which he retains, and the abnormal reversions to which he is occasionally liable--are facts which cannot be disputed." Darwin referred to the close resemblance of the embryo of man to that, for instance, of a dog, the construction of his skull, limbs and whole frame on the same plan as that of other mammals, independently of the uses to which the parts may be put, the occasional reappearance of various structures (for instance of several muscles which man does not normally possess but which are common to the Quadrumana) and to a crowd of analogous facts, all of which point in the plainest manner to the conclusion that "man is the co-descendant with other mammals of a common progenitor".[4]

4. Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man,* in Britannica Great Books, Vol. 49, page 590.

An amazing similarity has moreover been found in the green chlorophyll of plants and the red haemoglobin of human blood. They are said to be "chemical cousins." This similarity brings out the common heritage of a human being and a green plant.[5]

The fact that man is a part of nature is of basic importance to the philosophy of Radical Humanism, for it enables us to adopt a scientific approach to the understanding of human nature. On the background of man's biological evolution, we can understand what is fundamental and what is superficial in the human psyche. We can thus discover the source, and analyse the nature, of man's urge for freedom, his search for truth, his rationality, his social and anti-social sentiments, his conscience and his moral sense. The history of biological evolution and man's place therein also enables us to have a viable concept of the direction of human progress.

It is necessary to notice that man's biological evolution has taken a different turn with the development of language, growth of knowledge and the increasing impact of society on the individual. Instead of adapting himself to the environment, man has been adapting the environment to his needs. His biological evolution is no longer dependent on the blind process of natural selection. It is society and its cultural heritage that influences man's development. His evolution is no longer genetic; it is "psychosocial" (Julian Huxley) or "sociogenetic" (C.H. Waddington).[6] This fact has considerable significance in understanding human nature.

Body and Soul

The supposed duality of body and soul corresponds to the supposed duality between matter and spirit. Science does not corroborate this supposition. The evidence of science is wholly against it.

Every attempt to separate the human psyche from the human body has failed. On the contrary, it has been found that if we modify the body, we also modify our psychic properties. The human

5. Prof. Earl A. Evans Jr. in "How Life Began" *op. cit.*
6. C.H. Waddington's article "The Human Animal" in *The Humanist Frame*, edited by Sir Julian Huxley.

mind is a product of the functioning of the brain, which is a part of the human body. That is why the mind affects the body and body the mind. Certain drugs are known to influence mental properties to a material extent.

The human body, like the body of any animal, is developed from a single fertilised cell. In the course of bodily growth, all the cells formed from time to time are replaced by other cells. The consciousness of individuality is retained despite these cellular changes, because mental functions and faculties are transferred by old cells to the new. There is no permanent cellular structure which can be regarded as the repository of the soul. Memory has been found to consist of innumerable electrical circuits in the brain cells. A study of brain anatomy has led to the discovery that different powers and functions of the mind are located in particular parts of the brain. There is no basis for supposing that the soul has existence apart from the mind. The mind dies with the body and no consciousness can be left behind.

Faith in the separate existence of the soul persists, despite the total absence of scientific evidence, because of the keenness of our desire for the survival of ourselves and of those who are dear to us. We adhere to the traditional belief in the immortality of the soul because we do not like to face the truth that our individuality disappears with the death of the body.

The assumption of the duality of body and soul would have been relatively harmless if it merely amounted to wishful thinking. It leads, however, to harmful consequences both to the individual and to society. For the good of his soul, the individual is encouraged to practise abstinence, celibacy and various forms of self-denial and even self-torture. Such practices are unscientific and unhealthy, being contrary to the natural biological urges of the individual. What the individual requires is a rationally balanced life, and not the punishment of the body for the salvation of the soul.

The social consequences of the assumed duality between body and soul are often much more harmful. The Hindu faith in Karma and in reincarnation is logically inter-woven with the supposed duality of body and soul and immortality of the latter. The theory of Karma says that an individual's suffering in the present life is the result of the sins he committed in previous lives. He is thus induced

to reconcile himself to social cruelty, exploitation and oppression. Karma gives powerful aid to the prevailing socio-economic injustice.

It would, by the way, be interesting to know what explanation the believers in reincarnation have to give in regard to the population explosion which is being currently witnessed in India and other countries of the third world. India's population has more than doubled in the last forty years or so. The mundane explanation of this increase in population is that due to the recent advances in medical science, the death rate in these countries has gone down, while the birth rate continues to be what it was. But a believer in the existence of the soul and in reincarnation will have to find some explanation to account for the additional souls which are coming into existence in order to inhabit the additional bodies. Is it that the members of some inferior species are dying in large numbers so that their souls may be available to the increasing number of human beings? And what have these animal souls done to deserve the promotion? Alternately, has God decided to create more souls for the punishment of the people of the third world who are already living in conditions of semi-starvation?

Faith in God and Religion

Human faith in God and in religion is sustained by psychological forces which are similar to those that sustain the faith in the existence of the soul.

Life for an individual is full of uncertainties, accidents, misfortunes and actual or potential hardships. An individual requires a psychological prop to support him through the vagaries of life. God and religion supply that psychological need. Man has faith in God because he lacks faith in himself. A person wanting in self-reliance will not be persuaded by mere rational arguments to give up the psychological support arising from his faith in God and religion.

Worshipping God with prayers and offerings is the essence of religion. Yet even for a person who believes in the existence of God, nothing can be more illogical than worshipping the deity. God, if he exists, must be the dispenser of justice in an evenhanded

way, without partiality or discrimination. Even an ordinary mortal judge is not expected to be so small-minded as to favour a person who flatters him or offers presents to him. He is expected to mete out justice strictly in accordance with merit. Is this ordinary standard of impartiality not expected from God? Is he not expected to bestow his grace to different persons according to their merit, without being influenced by prayers and gifts? Faith in a just God is thus inconsistent with faith in prayer and worship, which is the essence of religion.

SEVEN

INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY : MAN THE MEASURE

In his Introduction to the *History of Western Philosophy*, Bertrand Russell observed that throughout the long period from 600 B.C. to the present day, philosophers have been divided into two classes, the disciplinarians and the libertarians, those who emphasised the necessity of social cohesion and those who favoured individualism. Russell observed that liberalism was an attempt to escape from this endless oscillation, but he wisely added that only the future can determine whether the attempt can succeed.

Earlier (in chapter III), we have considered the reasons why liberalism, although it originated from the humanist inspiration of the European Renaissance, has proved to be an inadequate ideology. Radical Humanism seeks to escape from the "endless oscillation" referred to by Russell by showing that cooperative living is not only consistent with, but necessary for, individual freedom.

Primacy of the Individual

It must be emphasised, however, that as between the individual and society, primacy belongs to the individual. This is because, while an individual is a biological being, society is not. The individual is possessed of consciousness, and can experience pleasure or pain, progress or regress. He has, in his brain cells, an apparatus for thought and feeling, which society does not possess. Society as an

entity cannot experience happiness or progress. Social happiness or social progress can have no meaning except as the sum total of the happiness or progress of the individuals who compose the society.

This consideration justifies the basic humanist principle that man is the measure of everything. When a question arises about the merits of any social (including political and economic) institution, the standard of measurement must be the extent to which the institution promotes or fails to promote the good of the individual. This yardstick must apply whether the institution which is to be evaluated is a political institution such as a parliamentary democracy or a fascist regime, an economic institution such as a mixed economy or complete nationalisation of the means of production, or a social institution like legalised abortion or the caste system in India. The yardstick must be the good of the individual and not the good of any social entity such as the tribe, community, nation or class, independently of the good of the individuals who compose the social entity. What is meant by the good of the individual may be a controversial question. We will have to deal with that question while presenting the personal philosophy of Radical Humanism. But the measure of things must be the individual, who alone possesses the biological property of consciousness, and not any collectivity.

This is not to underrate the importance of society to the individual. Living in a society is essential for the very survival of the individual. Apart from survival, society gives to the individual the gift of language and enables him to be a co-participant in the social heritage of knowledge and culture. Society, however, is valuable to the extent to which it promotes the interests of the individual. The value of society is thus instrumental. Society is the means, while the individual is the end.

When it is said that society is for the individual, it is not implied that society is for one individual or only some individuals. Society is for all individuals who compose it. The concept of equality is an essential corollary of social existence. If one individual is an end in himself, and not the means to any higher end, every other individual must also be in an end in himself. Society, which implies cooperative living, involves duties as well as rights, but they must contribute equally to the good of all the individuals.

Social Norms and Individual Consciousness

A number of sociologists have expressed the view that individual consciousness is entirely a creation of society and that social norms govern the thought and action of individuals. This clearly is an exaggeration. If individual consciousness is entirely created by society and controlled by social norms, every society would be a closed system and there would be no scope for social reform.

Even in feudal and early capitalist societies, when social norms were extremely rigid and families were under paternal domination, several individuals revolted against the established traditions and became the pioneers of social reform. Although they were condemned and ostracised during their day, their ideas were taken up by others, and in the course of time the whole society was liberalised. A creative role in society is always played by non-conformist and free-thinking individuals.

The view that individual consciousness is the creation of society is quite untenable in most of the liberal societies of today. Indeed, these societies are being faced with a problem of the opposite kind. Due to the development of individualism and permissiveness, social norms have become slack, and parents and teachers are unable to play their traditional role of shaping the character of their children and pupils. The growing complexity of society due to technological development and the slackness of social norms as a result of the growth of individualism and permissiveness, are the two main causes of the moral crisis of our time. The remedy obviously does not lie in trying to reintroduce authoritarianism in the family, the school and the society generally, even if it were possible to do so. What is necessary is to find a way of reconciling individual freedom with moral integrity. Since morality can no longer be imposed by external authority, a way must be found to ensure that it is self-imposed and self-sustained. To ensure the co-existence of freedom and morality is the central problem of today. We will see later how radical humanism seeks to solve it.

Individualism and Collectivism

Although an individual is an end in himself, he often subordinates his individuality to a collectivity such as a nation, a community or a class. An ego is ascribed to the social entity and the individual is induced to sacrifice at the altar of that ego. Instead of being an end in himself, the individual becomes the means to an imaginary higher end. The sacrifice done by the people in a collectivist cause often benefits a privileged minority.

The rise of fascism in Europe was in recent years the most impressive manifestation of collectivism. We are here concerned not with the political theory of fascism or the nature of the fascist state, but the psychological factors which lead to its destructive strength[1].

The main psychological factor which aids the growth of collectivism is the inability of the individual to face the uncertainties of life by relying on himself. This lack of individual self-reliance may have different causes. In pre-Renaissance societies, in societies which did not experience a cultural movement like the European Renaissance or where the Renaissance movement did not succeed in establishing a strong tradition of rational individualism, the prevailing spirit of individual helplessness may be a continuation of the age-old religious orthodoxy and blind faith. In post-Renaissance capitalist societies, the very freedom of the people from the servitude of the feudal order increased the uncertainties of life. Freedom under capitalism implies not only the freedom to get a job but also the freedom to starve if you fail to get it. Particularly in a period of prolonged industrial depression, fear of continuous unemployment and consequent starvation may lead to a sense of individual helplessness. Some semi-industrialised societies of the Third World have incurred the disadvantages of both these types of societies.

Where a sense of individual helplessness prevails, the psychological atmosphere is favourable to the success of a collectivist appeal. Such an individual can be easily persuaded to get the necessary psychological support, a sense of security and strength,

1 These psychological factors were best explained by the late Dr. Erich Fromm in his book *Fear of Freedom*, later published as *Escape from Freedom*.

by merging himself into, and identifying himself with, a powerful entity like the nation State. He is weak by himself, but he feels strong because his nation is strong. And for his own psychological sustenance, he must see that the strength of his nation is sustained and enhanced. As Dr. Erich Fromm pointed out, the essence of collectivism is internal submission and external aggression, submissiveness inside the collectivity and aggressiveness outside. In the name of discipline ("one party, one leader, one nation"), an individual surrenders himself to the collectivity, and at the same time becomes a storm-trooper for the greater glory of that collectivity. That was how in Hitler's Germany the bulk of the people surrendered to the fascist State and sacrificed themselves in trying to make it the most powerful State in the world. In the process they caused death, destruction and untold suffering to millions of harmless people.

The psychology of religion is often similar to the psychology of collectivism. Religion demands the complete surrender of the individual to God. But the God of one religion must be more powerful than the God of another. It is collectivist rivalries which have led to religious wars in history. Sometimes the collectivist entity, instead of being the God of a particular religion, is a religious community or an institution like the Chruch. Conflicts between Catholics and Protestants in Europe, and those between Hindus and Muslims in India, are the result of collectivist identities.

Collectivism is not confined to nationalist and religious identities. Any social group such as a class, a community, a tribe, a political party, or even an ordinary association, may contain elements of collectivism in different degrees. Lack of self-reliance on the part of the members of the social group is the source of collectivist sentiment.

Collectivism and Cooperation

The alternative to collectivism is not individual isolation. In the complex society of today, an isolated individual can achieve very little. He has to associate with others for the satisfaction of his wants and the fulfillment of his aspirations. If, however, he is a

freedom-loving and free-thinking individual, his association with others takes a cooperative, and not a collectivist, form. Cooperation involves both individual freedom and self-imposed discipline.

The difference between collectivism and cooperation is basic to every form of social organisation. A social organisation is collectivist to the extent to which the constitutent individuals merge their individualities and seek to get psychological support by identifying themselves with the social entity. A social organisation is cooperative to the extent to which the constitutent individuals retain their spirit of self-reliance and purposefully associate with others for the fulfillment of common objectives. While cooperation is consistent with the freedom and dignity of the individual, collectivism implies servility and self-surrender.

Cosmopolitan Humanism

Believing in the maxim that man is the measure of everything, Radical Humanism believes in the supremacy of the individual. But individualism in Radical Humanist philosophy implies the supremacy of a rational and voluntarily moral individual. Such individualism is consistent with purposeful cooperation for common objectives.

There is a natural link between individualism of this type and the cosmopolitan spirit. Every person values others in the same way in which he values himself. A person who values himself as belonging to a particular nation or community, values others as belonging or not belonging to his nation or community. On the other hand, a person who has no collectivist proclivity, and who values himself as an individual, values others on their individual merit, irrespective of whether they belong to his nation, community, class or race. Rational individualism and cosmopolitan humanism go together, for they are parts of the humanist outlook.

SECTION THREE

PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY

EIGHT

FREEDOM--THE BASIC VALUE

Radical Humanism regards freedom as the basic value. All other values can be rationally derived from it. In that sense, freedom is the value of all values.

We have already said (in Chapter 5) that the principles of Radical Humanism are derived by adopting the approach of science to the understanding of man, his relations with other human beings and his place in the world. Our statement that freedom is the basic value, and that it is the value of all values, raises the much-debated question whether there can be a science of values, whether in other words a value can be derived by adopting the approach of science.

Science and Value

Those who maintain that science and values fall in two different non-intersecting spheres rely on a simple argument. They say that scientific judgments are judgments about things, about the existence or non-existence of things, whereas value judgments are judgments of what is good or bad, what ought to be or ought not to be. You can deduce one fact from another, which is what science does, but you can never deduce a value from a fact. A judgment about the existence or non-existence of a thing cannot, it is claimed, possibly

lead to an inference that a thing is good or bad. Science therefore cannot say anything about values.

On this assumed dichotomy between facts and values, it is maintained that science should be value-free. This value-free approach is recommended for all sciences, including social sciences such as sociology, economics and politics. The recommendation, if scrupulously implemented, would lead to strange results. It would imply that medical science may conclude that a balanced diet contributes to the health of an individual, but it should not proceed to say that human beings should adopt a balanced diet. Medical science may deal with human health as a fact but not as a value. Similarly, political science may define what democracy is and may analyse what factors are necessary for its success, but it should not proceed to deal with the relative merits of democracy as against other systems of political organisation.

The value-free approach to science is, however, based upon a misconception. A value consists of something which is "good" or "valuable". The question naturally arises, good to whom, valuable to whom? A value in the first place can be relevant only to biological beings. You can say that something is good to animals or even to plants, but not to mountains and rivers. Again, what is valuable to one biological species may not be valuable for another. It is valuable for a beast of prey that there should be animals which can be killed and consumed; it is clearly not valuable for the animals to have a hungry beast of prey in the vicinity.

When we speak of values, the reference generally is to human values, that is to say, to things which are good or valuable to human beings. We say that a climate which is free from disease-carrying germs is 'good'. It is obviously good for human beings, but not to the germs which cannot exist and multiply in that climate. Values consist of what is valuable for human beings.[1]

1. A clean and congenial environment is obviously good for human beings. Hence what is "good" for most plants and animals is also good for man. Man's love of nature is therefore at least as natural as his love for other humans. It does not, however, follow that the existence of mosquitos, bed-bugs and disease carrying germs are also good for man. Man's love of nature is necessarily selective.

Once it is realised that the values we speak of are human values, it is easy to see that there can be a science of values. There may be differences of opinion with regard to what is good for human beings; the question can nevertheless be scientifically investigated. A study of human anatomy, physiology, neurology, psychology and the social sciences should enable us to decide what is good for human beings.

There are obviously different kinds of human values. Some values like cleanliness and temperance are connected with the individual's physical well-being. Others such as discretion, courage, perseverance are related to an individual's success in life. A third category consists of values like kindness, honesty and truthfulness, which are necessary for an individual's cooperative social living. Values of this last category are moral values.

All these diverse values, it will be noticed, are values because the existence of a human individual is itself a value. Cleanliness and temperance, discretion and courage, kindness and honesty--all these are good for the existence of the human individual. None of them can be good, unless the existence of a human individual is assumed to be a "good". The very statement that a value consists of what is valuable to human beings implies that the existence of a human individual is the basic value.

The urge for existence is the basic urge of all biological entities. Human beings share that urge with the rest of the biological world. The human urge to exist, which is a scientifically ascertained biological fact, is also a value, because by definition a value is something which is valuable to the existence of human beings. The dichotomy between science and values ceases to exist when it is found that a human individual's urge for existence is both a fact as well as a value.

Human beings, however, have the urge to exist *as human beings*. They would rather die than live indefinitely on the sub-human level. The urge of human beings to live as human beings is, according to Radical Humanism, the essence of the urge for freedom. Freedom is the basic value because the existence of human beings, as human beings, is the basis of all values.

Concept of Freedom

Freedom means absence of restraint. Freedom can be defined as the progressive disappearance of all restrictions on the unfolding of the potentialities of individuals, as human beings.

In the political sphere, vis-a-vis the State, freedom means the enjoyment of certain fundamental rights, such as the freedom to secure information and express opinion, the freedom to form organisations such as trade unions or political parties, and the freedom to meet in assemblies and processions. It also means the freedom from the exercise of arbitrary power, which is the essence of the rule of law. Another fundamental right is the freedom of conscience, the freedom to profess and propagate any religion or to oppose religion as such.

In the social sphere, freedom means the absence of irrational restrictive customs and conventions. They may relate to marriage, divorce, parenthood, relations between husband and wife, relations between the young and the old, or relations between different castes and communities. Among some people, social restrictions may impede individual freedom to a much greater extent than political restrictions. As a general rule, however, political restrictions and social restrictions go together. An authoritarian society tends to establish an authoritarian political regime.

The concept of freedom, however, cannot be restricted to political and social spheres. An individual's need to economic freedom is at least equally primary. He requires freedom from want and from economic insecurity. He wants to be free from starvation and from the fear of starvation. If freedom consists, as defined earlier, of the progressive disappearance of all restrictions on the unfolding of the potentialities of individuals, absence of economic restrictions must necessarily be a part of the concept of freedom. Economic want and insecurity are at least as restrictive to the unfolding of human potentialities as political and social restrictions.

In this comprehensive sense, freedom ceases to be a negative concept. It means the absence of unreasonable restraint on the individual and includes the individual's ability to earn a living at a standard necessary for the unfolding of his potentialities. Freedom is the ability of an individual to live a full life as a human being.

Like other biological entities, man has been constantly engaged in the struggle for existence. In the initial stages, man had to fight against hostile nature to safeguard his life, to acquire food and continue to exist. He had to protect himself from excessive cold or heat, drought and floods, wild animals and beasts of prey, and collect the means for his physical existence. But all the while he was striving to live on a higher plane than other biological species, the plane of intelligence, emotion and self-awareness. He was engaged in fashioning instruments, in making pots and pans, preparing colours and painting the walls of the caves in which he lived. His struggle for existence was all along a struggle of freedom. In a different form, he is now engaged in the same struggle after the transition from savagery to civilisation. Man's struggle for freedom is a continuation, on the higher level of intelligence, emotion and self-awareness, of the biological struggle for existence. Struggle for existence being the basic urge of the entire biological world, struggle for freedom is the basic urge of human beings.

That is why freedom is the most emotive word in the dictionary. No concept evokes a more spontaneous affirmative response than the concept of freedom. All humans desire to live as humans, and the concept of freedom embodies that desire.

When we say that freedom means the progressive disappearance of all restrictions on the unfolding of individual potentialities, our standard of reference is a rational human individual who appreciates that he must develop his potentialities in harmony with similar efforts of other individuals. He would voluntarily accept reasonable restrictions imposed in the general public interest. Freedom can be enjoyed only by a rational individual. Since, however, freedom is the basic value, the freedom of one individual cannot be reasonably restricted except for safeguarding the freedom of others. Equality means equal freedom for all and that is why the freedom of an individual can be subjected to reasonable restrictions in the interests of equality.

Human Potentialities

We have spoken of the human level of existence as distinguished from the sub-human level. We have also spoken of the unfolding of the potentialities of an individual as a rational human being. How is the human level of existence different from the sub-human level? What are the potentialities of an individual as a rational human being?

Modern psychology says that the mental make-up of man differs from that of lower animals mainly in two respects.[2] In the first place, human behaviour is determined by instincts to a very limited extent. In fact, the evolution of animal life, while there is a gradual increase in the size and power of the brain, there is a gradual decrease in the role of instincts as determinants of behaviour. The second peculiarity of the mental make-up of human beings is that their brain is far more developed than that of any other animal. The neocortex of the human brain is three times as large as that of even the immediate hominid ancestors of man. What is more, man's brain has acquired an entirely new quality, than of self-awareness. Man not only thinks and feels, but is also aware of what his thoughts and feelings are. This faculty of self-awareness has added a new dimension to the potentialities as well as the felt responsibilities of human beings.

The statement made above that human behaviour is determined to a very small extent by human instincts, does not mean that human beings do not have instincts (or impulses or drives as modern psychologists would call them) as other animals. What is meant is that although instincts are a part of human nature, their role in determining human behaviour is limited. This appears to be the necessary consequence of the greater brain power and the self-awareness of human beings. When man is aware of being impelled by an instinctive impulse, he may or may not allow that impulse to find expression in his behaviour, depending upon whether he finds the impulse to be useful or harmful in a particular situation. The effectiveness of instincts is thus restricted by self-awareness.

With his higher brain power and the faculty of self-awareness, man has vast potentialities of development. These potentialities are of diverse kinds.

2. See Erich Fromm, *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness,* 1973. Penguin Book, pp. 300-302.

Even in the matter of mere physical existence, man lives a far better life than the rest of the animal world. He can construct comfortable houses, can manufacture suitable and attractive clothing, can procure tasty and healthy food, can discover medicines for fighting disease, and can devise novel means of communication and transport.

In the intellectual field, the potentialities of the human individual are virtually unlimited. The discoveries made by man in physics (including atomic physics), chemistry, biology, medicine and other sciences are amazing. Although every advance in knowledge also discloses a vast region of ignorance, there is no limit to further advance.

Man has also the potentiality of social refinement. Although the prevailing moral standards are not equal to the requirements of the increasingly complex modern society, an individual has the potentiality of developing moral sensitivity and devoting himself to the alleviation of human suffering and the elimination of injustice. The development of individual potentialities in the direction of ethical refinement is in fact the greatest need of today.[3]

Creative art is another field for the unfolding of individual potentiality. Literature, music, painting, sculpture, dance and drama are amongst the artistic achievements of human beings.

All these achievements enrich human life in two distinct ways. An individual gets satisfaction in the achievement itself as well as in the process of the achievement. This two-fold enrichment of human life requires a little explanation.

In human beings, as in the lower animals, a number of instincts or urges which serve the basic urge for existence have developed in the process of natural selection as described earlier. The different sense organs, such as the organs of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch, have also developed to serve the same end. Now, because of the self-awareness of human beings, all these organic impulses and sense organs have become independent sources of satisfaction and of life enrichment. A few examples will illustrate this statement.

The taste of food contributes to the intake of nourishment which is essential for the survival of all animals including human

3. The subject of secular morality is dealt with in Chapter 10.

beings. Human beings, however, not only experience the taste of food, but are also aware of the goodness of the taste at the time of eating. Taste, therefore, becomes for humans an independent source of satisfaction. They take food not only for physical sustenance, but also for the enjoyment of its taste. The result is that they try to improve the taste of food in various ways. Often they partake of food only for its taste, even when they are not hungry. Thus the taste of food, besides contributing to its primary biological function, becomes a separate source of satisfaction.

The same is true of all other sense organs. Man derives satisfaction from the fragrance of flowers and perfumes, from the beauty of nature and art, from the sonorous harmony of music, and from the play of heat and cold on the skin of the body.

Similarly the sex instinct, although its biological purpose is to aid survival through procreation, has become an independent source of satisfaction. People have sex, not only for progeny, but also for the satisfaction that it gives.

Some other instincts, however, have a far more important role in the enrichment of human life. The instinct for search is one of the natural impulses of human beings. The origin of this instinct was probably in the search for food which must have been the main preoccupation of all animals including the biological ancestors of human beings. As in the case of other instincts, satisfaction is derived when the search is successful and what is sought for is obtained. The human search for truth appears to be a continuation of the biological instinct for search. A human being gets a deep sense of satisfaction when he succeeds in knowing what he was trying to know. Every school student is aware of the deep satisfaction which he derives when he succeeds in solving a theorem in geometry or an equation in algebra. A similar deep satisfaction is derived when a scientist makes an invention or when fresh knowledge is acquired in any direction. "Knowledge has its own reward" is thus a maxim which is psychologically justified. A person may pursue knowledge for its own sake, apart from the usefulness of that knowledge to himself and to mankind.

Man is also possessed of another group of instincts or impulses, such as sympathy and kindness, which are generally known as social or moral instincts. How these instincts arise will be considered in a

later chapter (Chapter 10). What is relevant here is the fact that the fulfillment of a social instinct is also an independent source of satisfaction. When an individual helps the needy or alleviates the suffering of another, he has the satisfaction derived from the fulfilment of his social instinct, apart from the satisfaction of having achieved a desirable goal.

Turning to the artistic potentialities of man, there is ample psychological evidence to show that striving for creativeness and originality is a deeply rooted impulse in human nature. There is also some evidence to the effect that creativity is built-in on the system of the brain.4 How the impulse for creativeness is connected with the urge for existence is not yet clear. This is because both psychology and aesthetics are nascent sciences. There can, however, be no doubt about the existence of the impulse of creativity in human nature. It found expression in the activities of pre-historic man and it is also found in young children. As in the case of other impulses, the fulfilment of the impulse of creativity is an independent source of satisfaction. An artist can enjoy art for its own sake.

Life on the human level is thus very different from bare physical existence on the sub-human level. Because of the development of his brain, man can have a more comfortable physical life and can also engage himself in highly rewarding intellectual, ethical and artistic pursuits. Man's life can be enriched by a variety of physical and mental satisfactions and achievements. Freedom consists of the removal of all restrictions on the individual's attainment of a full life, a life of physical well-being as well as of the development of potentialities in various salutary directions. The struggle for freedom, although a continuation of the biological struggle for existence, has a far "richer" objective.

An individual is of course capable of other potentialities which are harmful either to himself or to others. These potentialities cannot fall in the definition of freedom. An individual can harm his health by over-indulgence. Such a development is anti-life and, therefore, anti-freedom. An individual may also become a sadist or a necrophile and cause a great deal of harm to others. Sadism and necrophilia are recognised to be irrational character traits.

4. Erich Fromm, *op. cit* . p. 66.

Potentialities of a rational individual contribute to the well-being and happiness of himself as well as the rest of the society. Freedom consists of absence of restraint on the unfolding of such potentialities.

Misdirection of the Urge for Freedom

The human urge for freedom often gets misdirected in different ways. Two instances of such misdirection are of current importance.

Economic well-being and security are a part of the concept of freedom. An individual often fails to realize that he must achieve economic well-being and security by his own efforts in purposeful cooperation with others. Instead of relying on himself, he often relies on some political saviour to ensure his economic well-being and security. In trying to get economic freedom in that easy way, he loses his political freedom and usually fails to get economic well-being as well. That is how authoritarian regimes have been established, particularly in the countries of the third world. It is by experience that man learns that by surrendering his political freedom, he not only limits his economic freedom but also restricts the scope of the development of his potentialities. The struggle for freedom cannot be compartmentalised. Self-reliance and purposeful cooperation are necessary for the simultaneous attainment of freedom in all directions.

Another misdirection of the urge for freedom consists of trying to achieve freedom, not in this "material" world, but in a mythical spiritual world. The Hindu ideal of Moksha (which literally means freedom) and the ideal of God-attainment of all religions are instances of such a misdirected struggle for freedom. Freedom can be obtained by trying to improve the conditions of life and not by running away from life's miseries. The ideal of Moksha or God-attainment defeats the object of freedom by assisting the continuation of the miseries and inequities of life.

NINE

ORIGIN AND VALUE OF HUMAN REASON

Reason and Human Progress

Rationalism (reliance on reason)[1] is as essential to the philosophy of Radical Humanism as the concept of freedom. It is the reasoning faculty which enables human beings to attain increasing success in the struggle for freedom.

We have referred earlier to the 22 Theses in which the principles of Radical Humanism were first formulated by M.N. Roy and his colleagues in 1946. Out of these Theses, Thesis 2 which is of pivotal importance runs as follows:

> "Quest for freedom and search for truth constitute the basic urge of human progress. The quest for freedom is the continuation, on a higher level of intelligence and emotion, of the biological struggle for existence. The search for truth is a corollary thereof. Increasing knowledge of nature enables man to be progressively free from the tyranny of natural phenomena,

1. The world rationalism is not here used in the sense of a system of philosophy which believes that knowledge can be acquired by pure reason without the aid of sense-perceptions. In modern usage, rationalism means belief in reason as the standard of judgment.

and physical and social environments. Truth is the content of knowledge."

Man's struggle for a better life, which is the essence of man's struggle for freedom, is aided by the knowledge which he has acquired through the ages. Acquisition of knowledge has enabled man to harness the forces of nature and to strive for the creation of a better society. Knowledge about agriculture and animal husbandry, construction of houses and buildings, manufacture of clothing and other useful articles, and provision of a host of other amenities, has improved the conditions of human life. This knowledge was acquired by synthesising sense-experience with the aid of reason. Reason, being the basis of knowledge, is the main instrument of human progress.

Apart from its value in the acquisition of scientific knowledge, reason helps human progress in other ways. The rationality of human beings is the basis of their gradual moral development. The relation between reason and morality will be explained in the next chapter. Here it is enough to refer to the historical fact that there is a positive relation between growth of rationality and improvement in the moral standards of individuals and societies. As observed by Morris Ginsberg, "the essential point in the theory of progress remains true, namely, that in the course of historical development, man is slowly rationalised and that man is moralised in proportion as he becomes more rational."[2]

There is yet another consideration why rationalism is of v al importance in the personal and social philosophy of Radic al Humanism. Only an individual who is mentally free can strive f r achieving political, economic and social freedom. Mental freedom is the precondition and starting point of an individual's conscious struggle for freedom. Mental freedom implies absence of blind faith on the one hand and self-reliance on the other. It is reason which frees man from blind faith and makes him self-reliant. Man

2. Morris Ginsberg's contribution "A Humanist View of History" in The Humanist Frame ed. Sir Julian Huxley.

is mentally free to the extent to which he can be his own guide, and the only faculty which can provide this self-guidance is the reasoning faculty. Reason makes an individual mentally free, enables him to develop his moral sense so as to live harmoniously in an organised society, and renders him a creative agent for a worthwhile social transformation.

Man is Inherently Rational

Radical Humanism is an optimistic philosophy. It asserts that reason, which is the main instrument of human progress, is an inherent part of human nature. It says that reason is a biological property. Of the 22 Theses of Radical Humanism, Thesis 4 says, "Rising out of the background of the law-governed physical nature, the human being is essentially rational. Reason being a biological property it is not the antithesis of will. Intelligence and emotion can be reduced to a common biological denominator." Since every human being is possessed of reason, he can always learn from experience. The human capacity for learning gives the hope that however gloomy the present may be, the lessons learnt from the mistakes of today will enable mankind to have a brighter future tomorrow.

The statement that man is essentially or inherently rational has been widely misunderstood. This is because the word "rational" is used in different senses. The expression "man is rational" has at least three meanings, according to the sense in which the word rational is used.

In the first place, the word rational may be used in an objective sense, as when we say that the world is a "rational" order. Rational in this sense means deterministic or law-governed. The statement "man is rational", when the word rational is used in the objective sense, means that man is subject to the laws of casuality like the rest of the world, that human nature and human conduct can be studied by adopting a scientific approach as in the case of other phenomena, and that there is nothing in man which is super-natural and, therefore, beyond the reach of rational understanding. The objective rationality of man follows from the fact that man is part of nature.

In the subjective sense, the statement "man is rational" has two distinct meanings, one of which is not true. When we speak of a person as being rational, we usually mean that he or she is guided more by reason than by emotions or preconceived notions, that in other words reason is the controlling element in his or her nature. In this sense, it cannot be truly stated, at least at the present stage of human development and in regard to a majority of human beings, that man is rational. The conduct of the majority of human beings is guided more by irrational impulses than by reasoned judgment. What we can properly say, when the word rational is used in this sense, is that man is potentially rational, that in the course of time reason is likely to become the predominating and controlling part of human nature.[3]

The other subjective meaning of the expression, "man is rational" is that reason is an inherent part of human nature. The statement refers to the existence of reason as an inherent biological attribute of human nature and not to the degree of influence which reason has on the beliefs and behaviour of human beings. The statement means that man has a natural propensity to think in terms of cause and effect, although under the stress of emotions or due to ignorance and preconceived notions, the conclusion "rationally" reached by him may in fact be incorrect. In other words, the fact that he comes to a wrong conclusion does not mean that he does not possess the reasoning faculty or that he does not use it. From his own point of view, his conclusion is right, although another person who is better informed and is not under the same emotional stress finds the conclusion to be wrong and calls it "irrational."

Thus the belief or behaviour of an individual may be rational and irrational at the same time, depending upon the sense in which the world "rational" is used. In an earlier stage of human civilisation, men believed that thunder and lightning were caused by some god who was designated among the Hindus as Indra and among the Greeks as Jupiter. This belief was the result of the inherent human rationality which induced men to believe that there must be a

3. The word "rational" was used in this sense in the last chapter where it was stated that the development of individual potentialities which went into the concept of freedom were the potentialities of a "rational" individual.

cause for every event. In the absence of any visible cause, they assumed that some powerful god must be the generator of thunder and lightning. With the discovery of how electricity is generated on the surface of clouds, the belief in Indra or Jupiter has been found to be irrational. The belief was rational because it was the result of man's propensity to think in terms of cause and effect, and also irrational because it was contrary to facts.

We will next consider the question whether reason in this second subjective sense, reason as the propensity to think in terms of cause and effect, is inherent in human nature. In dealing with this question, it is necessary to emphasise that the concept of cause is not derived by an individual from sense-perceptions. Cause is an assumption made by the human mind so as to connect one event with another. The human mind makes this assumption because of its inherent rationality. Take the simple instance of a man going in a certain direction and striking his head against a wall. His sense-perceptions consist of the sight of the wall, the feel of its hardness, and the pain experienced when his head struck against it. The conclusion that the pain experienced by the individual was *caused* by the impact of the head against the wall is not a matter of sense-perception, but is supplied by the human mind to explain the incident. In the absence of this inherent propensity to think in terms of cause and effect, the individual would go on dashing his head against the wall without learning to avoid the impact. Learning is thus made possible not by the mere receiving of sense-perceptions, but by the synthesis of the sense-perceptions by the reasoning faculty.

It was David Hume who first pointed out that causal connection or necessary sequence between two events was not a matter of sense-perceptions, but was an assumption of the human mind. This meant that, as far as human knowledge goes, there may be no necessary sequence of events in nature and that the necessity of the sequence was a creation of the mind. For instance, we observe that a lump of sugar dissolves when dropped in a glass of water. After making this observation several times, we conclude that sugar will *always* dissolve in water. This element of necessity is not given to us by our sense-perceptions, but is supplied by our mind. Yet this sense of necessity is the basis of our knowledge that water has the capacity of dissolving sugar. All our learning is based on the

assumption of necessity or determinism in nature. Our conduct is guided by this learning, although there is apparently no justification for it. Hume merely expressed this riddle but did not proceed to resolve it. Following him, Kant propounded a theory that cause was one of the 12 categories of the human mind. According to Kant, human knowledge consisted of a combination of sense-perceptions received from outside and categories such as cause, time and space supplied by the human mind.

These views of Hume and Kant raised the vital question whether human knowledge, which is acquired as a result of a combination of sense-perceptions with certain attributes of the human mind, has any correspondence with external reality. This has been the main problem of modern epistemology. Although the validity of human knowledge was thus doubted in theory, in practice the same knowledge was found to be valid. With the aid of that knowledge, man has been able not only to understand nature but also to transform it. There is, therefore, a correspondence between human knowledge and external reality. The reason for this correspondence is that even the mental attributes which go into the making of human knowledge have been derived from nature itself. The human brain, like the brain of other animals, developed in the course of biological evolution by way of adaptation to nature. The reasoning faculty of man is a biological property and not an independent creation. The categories of the human mind enumerated by Kant, to the extent to which they correctly describe the human mind, are biological adaptations to the external world. That is why human knowledge, in so far as it is verified by experience, corresponds with reality. Truth is thus the content of knowledge. This answers the epistemological problem mentioned above.

Biological Origin of Reason

In an earlier chapter (Chapter 4), we have described how, in the millions of years of biological evolution, a vast number of species were generated as a result of genetic mutations and how only those species survived in the struggle for existence which were best adapted to nature. This process of mutation-generated

proliferation of life and the survival of the fittest was, we pointed out, the source of marvellous adaptations to nature, including the development of our sense organs such as eyes and ears and the corresponding brain power which was necessary for understanding the data collected by the sense-organs. Now, in a deterministic world, the sense-organs and the corresponding brain power could have been of no assistance to any species unless it had the capacity of drawing inferences from the sense data. A newly born mutation-generated species had no chance of survival if it was not able to connect, in some subconscious rudimentary form, cause with effect and learn from the experience so obtained. If an animal is hungry but does not apprehend in some sub-conscious way that its hunger would be assuaged by food, it would starve to death. If it approaches a forest fire and does not apprehend that the heat experienced by the skin came from the fire, it would be burnt to death. Once consciousness was generated in the course of biological evolution, only those forms of consciousness could have survived which were in harmony with the deterministic nature of the world. A vast number of mutation-generated species may have perished before one species whose consciousness had the rudimentary capacity of reason was born and could survive. Reason is thus a biological adaptation to determinism in nature.

There is a vast amount of literature relating to the study of animal life which shows that reason in some rudimentary form exists in all animals. It is this rudimentary reason which enables different animals to learn from experience. In fact, the relative reasoning faculty of different animal species can be tabulated on the basis of the average number of mistakes they commit in a given situation before they reach correct conclusions. In the absence of self-awareness in the case of animals, their rudimentary reasoning faculty must be a sub-conscious instinct. The self-awareness of man brings the faculty of reason in the region of conscious introspection and helps its further growth.

Thus there is nothing mystic in the origin of reason. It is not a Kantian category. It is a biological attribute of the animal world and is not confined to man. Man's obvious superiority to the rest of the animal world arises solely from the fact that the instinctive

thinking faculty which is common to the animal world is far more developed in the human species. Knowledge which is acquired by synthesising experience by reason is the source of power, and power guided by reason makes freedom possible.

Is Reason Purely Instrumental?

Reason helps an individual to achieve different objectives, whether good or bad. It helps a saint to do his saintly work effectively and it also helps a thief to become an efficient thief. On the basis of such reasoning, it is often said that reason has only an instrumental value, that it helps in devising proper means to achieve an end but does not help in making a choice between two ends.

A little reflection will show that this is a shortsighted view. Reason can help an individual to choose between different styles of life. To take a simple instance, suppose a person has to choose between a life of over-indulgence, which may give him temporary pleasure but cause permanent damage to his health, and a life in which physical satisfaction and considerations of health are properly balanced. Reason can help the individual to choose the second alternative, the alternative of prudence.

But this, it will be said, is not a complete answer. Can reason help an individual to make a choice between a selfish life of immorality and a "selfless" life of virtue? Can reason tell a black-marketeer why he should voluntarily desist from his highly profitable black-marketing practice (even when there is no fear of detection) and take to the less remunerative ways of honest trade? And supposing that reason can tell an individual to adopt an honest or a prudent way of life, can reason give him the strength of character to carry out his rational decisions? Do not people abandon reason and yield to temptation time and again?

These questions assume that moral conduct conflicts with self-interest and that there cannot be any "reason" why a human being, who is assumed to be naturally selfish, should act as a voluntary moral entity. The questions also underrate the role of reason in character building. They can best be considered while dealing with secular morality in the next chapter.

TEN

SECULAR MORALITY

Morality and Freedom

One of the central problems of philosophy is whether man can be free and moral at the same time. Can an individual act morally, when he is entirely free and subject to no form of compulsion? If an individual cannot act morally without compromising his freedom, then freedom and morality are mutually inconsistent. Moral conduct in that case can be induced only by coercion. One form of coercion is exercised by the machinery of law-enforcement which punishes a person who acts contrary to the prevailing moral code in so far as it is embodied in law. Another form of coercion is exercised by religion which teaches that a person who acts contrary to moral norms will be punished after his death. The question is whether a person can be moral of his own volition, without the fear of either temporal or spiritual punishment.

This question can be answered by raising a counter-question. Can a person who acts in accordance with moral norms, not voluntarily but because of some form of compulsion, be regarded as a moral individual at all? Can conduct which is not impelled by moral sense, but which accords with the prevailing moral code, be described as moral conduct? Does, for instance, a person act morally when

he desists from committing a theft because of the fear of detection and legal punishment or the fear of punishment in hell after death?

The answer must be in the negative. The conduct of a person cannot be regarded as moral unless he acts of his own volition and without any temporal or spiritual coercion. This is because morality has two essential components, intention and conduct. It consists of a moral impulse (or moral value) and action actuated thereby. Intention without conduct, or conduct without intention, does not constitute morality. No charity is involved, for instance, when a person intends to give a coin to a beggar but does not actually give it, or when he drops a coin accidentally and the beggar picks it up. Since conduct which is impelled by moral sense can alone be regarded as moral conduct, it follows that a person who acts under coercion does not act morally. Moral sense cannot be generated by force or pressure. Only a free individual is capable of moral conduct.

The question to answer, therefore, is not whether morality and freedom are mutually compatible, but whether morality is possible at all. Now we do find in daily life that many men and women have a moral impulse which finds expression in their conduct. They are voluntarily moral. What is the source of their moral sense? Do they have it as divine grace? Is our conscience the voice of God? Or does our moral sence, or conscience, have a mundane wordly origin?

Source of Morality

Homo sapiens is a gregarious species. There is abundant evidence that the biological ancestors of *homo sapiens* also lived in communities.[1] Living together in cooperative communities was obviously helpful to the human individual's primary urge for survival. Social cooperation protected the individual from the more powerful predatory animals and from natural calamities. It helped the individual to hunt for food for himself and his family. Language could have developed only in social living. Language enabled exchange of

1. Margaret Knight in her article "Morality–Supernatural or Social" in *The Humanist Outlook* ed. Prof. A.J. Ayer, Pemberton, 1968.

information and the transference of accumulated knowledge from one generation to the next.

Cooperative social living being thus of immense value to an individual in his primary urge for existence, it was but natural that, during the aeons of biological evolution, the human mind should have developed attributes which were complimentary to social cooperation. We have earlier seen how the sense organs and the human brain itself are products of biological evolution and how the instinct of reason developed as an adaptation to determinism in nature. Cooperative social living being necessary for human survival, instincts or impulses such as sympathy, compassion and sociability have become natural attributes of the mind. These are the source of the moral sense of human beings.

That moral sense is a natural biological attribute can hardly be doubted. However tough and coarse an individual may be, he is bound to be deeply affected, for instance, by the sight of a child being run over by a truck. His feeling of sympathy on such an occasion is wholly impulsive and not deliberate. Sociability in man is also proved by the fact that solitary confinement is known to be one of the severest forms of punishment.

Moral behaviour of a rudimentary type is found in higher animals, including those which are not gregarious. Protective instinct of the mother for her child is a common feature of the animal world. It is known that a female cat teaches her kittens to equally share the food procured by her and brought to them. In gregarious species, the social instincts are naturally more in evidence. Recent studies in animal psychology, it is said, have brought about a minor revolution. It is found that gregarious animals exhibit cooperative, altrusitic conduct, not only towards sexual partners and off-springs, but towards other members of the animal community.[2] Moreover, elaborate forms of division of labour are found in certain gregarious species such as ants and bees. That is a rudimentary form of instinctive cooperative behaviour which, on the plane of consciousness, could be described as moral. It is, therefore, clear that the source of morality is biological and not theological.

2. Margaret Knight, *op. cit.*

In his last major work *The Descent of Man,* Charles Darwin observed:

> "The following proposition seems to me in a high degree probable--namely that any animal whatever, endowed with well-marked social instincts, the parental and filial affections being here included, would invariably acquire a moral sense or conscience, as soon as its intellectual powers had become as well, or nearly as well, developed as in man."[3]

Moral values are derived from natural moral impulses. We have earlier seen that self-awareness, awareness of one's own feelings and thoughts, is a distinguishing attribute of the human mind. When an individual experiences within himself an impulse of kindness or compassion, and says to himself that it is a good impulse, a moral value is born. Kindness, honesty, truthfulness, and on a higher level of sophistication, justice and equality, are moral values. They are moral because they promote cooperative social existence. Morality can be described as conduct impelled by these moral impulses and values.

In the course of biological evolution, human beings have developed other impulses, such as anger and self-assertiveness, which also were contributory to individual survival, but which are often in conflict with the social impulses mentioned above. Human beings are possessed of competitive or egoistic, as well as cooperative or altruistic, impulses. Moral development consists of the subordination of competitive or egoistic impulses to the cooperative or altruistic ones.

Moral Development of the Individual: Role of Reason

In early life, the moral development of the individual is brought about almost entirely by his elders in the family and by the rest of the society. The conduct of a child is guided by the approval or

3. *Darwin, Great Books of the Western World* Book *49*, Encyclopaedia Britanica Inc., p. 304.

disapproval of its elders. By this process, the child internalises the prevailing social norms and is afraid to transgress them. Even in later life, the internalised social norms continue to govern the conduct of the majority of individuals. Some of the norms are socially inequitable or individually restrictive. Racial prejudices in different societies and caste consciousness in India are instances of socially inequitable moral norms. Domination of age over youth, and of the male over the female, are instances of individually restrictive moral norms. The influence of society on individual moral development, though generally beneficial, is often harmful and oppressive.

A number of individuals, however, develop sufficient intellectual independence to examine the authenticity of the prevailing moral norms and to develop their own scale of values. Their morality becomes progressively self-actuated. It consists, not of external authority internalised, but of internal authority externalised. Their conduct is guided by self-approval more than by social approval. It is reason which helps them to bring about their own moral refinement.

It is often believed that reason cannot help an individual to develop into a moral being. This is because morality is generally looked upon as a matter of self-sacrifice. Reason can help an individual to make a choice between two alternatives, by deciding which of them would be more beneficial to him. Reason cannot help him, it is claimed, to abandon self-interest and choose in favour of self-sacrifice. That is why some external authority like God or society is thought to be necessary in order that an individual may behave in accordance with moral norms.

The mistake here is to suppose that moral conduct consists of self-denial or self-sacrifice. When a person does something to bring relief to the suffering or the needy, an observer looking at his conduct says that he has done an act of self-sacrifice. But what he had done is to fulfill his natural impulse of compassion. The fulfilment of that impulse gives him a sense of deep satisfaction. On the other hand, if he fails or avoids to extend help when help was needed, the frustration of his natural impulse of compassion causes him pain and uneasiness. While an observer regards his conduct as amounting to self-sacrifice, he himself knows, if he is a person accustomed to self-introspection, that his conduct was actuated

by enlightened self-interest. Thus altruism is a form of self-gratification. Morality is enlightened self-interest.

We have seen earlier how human life is enriched when some of the human impulses, which developed as accessary to the primary biological urge of survival, become independent sources of satisfaction. The instinct for search, we have seen, can develop into a search for truth, so that the fulfilment of that instinct enables an individual to pursue knowledge for its own sake, i.e., for the sake of the satisfaction derived from the acquisition of knowledge, independently of the use of that knowledge to the individual. So also, the impulse of creativity enables an artist to follow art for its own sake. In a similar way, a morally developed individual can live a life of altruism and derive a sense of fulfilment from the style of life chosen by him. The self-satisfaction arising from moral conduct was never better described than by Epicurus. He is reported to have said "I want to be moral, not to please the gods, but to please myself."

Once it is realised that morality is enlightened self-interest, it is easy to see how reason can help in the moral refinement of an individual. Besides the satisfaction derived from the fulfilment of his own moral impulse, moral conduct brings to the individual the gratitude of the persons whom he helps, the approval of his society and above all his self-approval. "Selfless" moral behaviour can give an individual greater satisfaction than selfish immoral behaviour.

The moral development of an individual is essentially a function of the individual's rational faculty. The choice between rival impulses in a given situation is a rational choice. The individual remembers the mistakes committed by him in the past and the consequences thereof and learns to avoid similar mistakes in the future. This process starts at an early age and goes on throughout one's life. You remember a harsh word which you uttered or an unkind act which you did, you also remember the remorse which you felt thereafter, and you learn to avoid such conduct. That is how conscience is strengthened and character developed.

Morality is thus rational both objectively and subjectively. The moral sense, we have seen, developed because it contributed to cooperative social existence which was necessary for the survival of the individual. The biological development of the moral impulse,

even at the sub-conscious level, was objectively rational as it was rationally connected with the primary biological urge for existence. Subjectively, on the conscious level, morality is rational as it helps the individual to make a proper choice between conflicting impulses, to develop his conscience and live a more enlightened life.

Since the quest for freedom is a continuation of the biological struggle for existence, it should be obvious that both reason and morality contribute to the ideal of freedom, reason because it enables an individual to learn and acquire knowledge, and morality because it facilitates cooperative social existence. For a rational individual, there cannot be any incompatibility between freedom and morality. On the contrary, it is only a rational and moral individual who can live freely in an organised society.

Moral Development of Society: Reason Vs. Religion

The part which reason plays in the moral development of a society is not confined to its role in the moral development of the individual. Reason has also a social role. It exposes the irrationality and injustice of established traditions and institutions, social, economic and political, and thereby improves the moral standards prevailing in a society. It spreads enlightenment, creates a liberal climate and encourages the deprived sections of society to raise themselves in human dignity and fight for justice and equality.

Religion which is supposed to be the sustainer of individual and social morality plays on the whole the opposite role. It is true that in the earlier stages of civilization, when society was liable to be dominated by turbulent and unruly individuals, religion might have played a positive role in maintaining the minimum moral standards required for social continuity. The moral code prescribed by religion did have some sobering effect on the behaviour of individuals. In more recent times, however, although religious preaching still influences the morality of a number of individuals, the role of religion has on the whole been negative. Religion has been the main sustainer of immorality which is found in the prevailing establishment. Religion has helped in consolidating harmful social traditions, exploitative economic structures and oppressive political

regimes. Besides sustaining these social evils, religion has caused harm to individual morals as well. It promoted false ideals of austerity, self-denial and even self-torture, which were contrary to man's biological impulses and necessities and which led to self-deception and social deception on a large scale.

The negative role of religion, and the positive role of reason, in the moral development of societies can be illustrated by the recent history of any country. In mediaeval Europe, in the period which is rightly known as the Dark Age, religious faith was at the zenith. Monasteries were then established in Europe for the intensive practice of religion. History tells us that these monasteries became cess-pools of immorality and corruption. Religious fanaticism led to inhuman persecution. Heretics were burnt at the stake. A fossilised moral code took the place of natural moral sensitivity. There was in consequence little regard for the life and the suffering of the poor and the unprivileged. Women, supposed to have been witches, were burnt alive. Punishment for criminal offences was so inhuman that a person could be sentenced to death for committing a petty theft. The mode of carrying out the death sentence was also inhuman. In England, a person sentenced to death was to be dragged along a road, then quartered, then disembowelled and threafter beheaded. The standard of judicial rectitude was so poor that even Sir Francis Bacon, who occupied the highest judicial office of Lord Chancellor, was convicted for taking bribes from the litigants whose cases were to be decided by him. And in his defence he was able to say, quite truthfully, that in accepting bribes, he had merely followed the prevailing practice. In family life, women were treated as chattel and the eldest male expected unquestioning obedience from all the other family members. Religion supported the arbitrary power of princes and feudal lords. All these evils have been either removed or minimised as a result of the spread of enlightenment brought about by reason.

The role of religion in Indian history has not been different. Religious faith sustained casteism and untouchability. A more immoral practice than untouchability can hardly be imagined. Religion also helped the exploitation of the people by princes, landlords and the priestly class. It compelled women to throw themselves on the funeral pyre of their deceased husbands so that they were burnt

alive. Even Thuggeri, which consisted of the killing of the innocent, was a form of religious practice. In more recent times, religious faith encouraged child marriage, prevented widow re-marriage, and was opposed to the education of girls. Here also, enlightenment brought about by reason has caused some improvement in the prevailing moral standards. The hold of religion, however, is greater in India than in the Western world and the moral standards are correspondingly lower.

At present, all over the world, moral standards appear to have fallen. Religionists attribute this to loss of religious faith. The fact, however, is that moral standards have not fallen but have become increasingly inadequate. Modern society is getting more complex with the rapid development of technology, and this requires a corresponding upgrading in moral standards which is not taking place. The remedy is not the recall of religion, but greater recourse to reason.

Free Will, Determinism and Moral Responsibility

In a deterministic world, can the human will be free? Can an individual determine the direction and force of his will, or is the direction and force of his will determined by factors over which he has no control?

This problem is vitally connected with the concepts of both freedom and secular morality. If a person has no power whatever to influence his will, the ideal of freedom loses most of its value. A person who cannot control his will cannot be the maker of his future. Similarly, a person cannot be held responsible for his moral lapses if he is not free to make a choice between moral and immoral alternatives. In the absence of the freedom of the will, a human being cannot be regarded as a responsible moral entity.

We must at this stage distinguish the above problem from a very different problem arising from another meaning of the expression "freedom of the will". The other meaning of freedom of the will is the ability of the human will to shape the future. In that context the question which arises is whether the human will is a mere "epi-phenomenon" having no potency of its own or whether it is one of

the forces which plays a part in shaping the future. It seems clear that this question has to be answered in the affirmative. History shows that with the growth of knowledge, the human will has become increasingly more powerful and has played an increasing role in the shaping of events.

The question before us, however, is different. We have seen that the world is deterministic or law-governed. Is not the human will subject to the same law of determinism? If there is an interplay of several physical forces, operating in different directions and with different magnitudes, science enables us to assess the energy and direction of the resultant force. How can the human will, being a part of nature, be not subject to the same law? Suppose you want to find out how a particular person will behave in a certain situation. If you had the requisite knowledge of all the factors involved, including the nature and force of the person's will, can you not anticipate how the person will behave? If the behaviour of the person is so determined, can it be said that he has any freedom in deciding what he should do?

Despite this theoretical problem, freedom of the will is a matter of every day experience. We do feel that we have the freedom at a particular time of choosing, say, between reading a book or watching a T.V. show. Is that sense of freedom quite illusory?

The question is sought to be answered in various ways. Some people have tried to deduce freedom of the will from the supposed "indeterminacy" in nature. The principle of indeterminacy arose from the fact that scientists are not able to ascertain the movement of sub-atomic particles because the instruments which they use for that purpose themselves affect the movement of the particles. Now it is difficult to see how the inability of scientists to ascertain the movement of sub-atomic particles can justify the conclusion that the movement of those particles is not subject to any law. Indeterminacy in nature cannot be derived from the inadequacy of scientific instruments. It is, moreover, not possible to see how freedom of the will can be derived from the doctrine of indeterminacy. Human will can be free if it is self-determined, not if it is subject to uncontrolled waywardness.

Others have attempted to attribute freedom of the will to the existence of chance in nature. As we have seen (in Chapter 5), the course of events in this world is shaped by chance as well as necessity. This is so because, although every event is subject to cause and effect, there may be no cause for the juxtaposition of two events. Freedom of the will, however, cannot be deduced from the element of chance in nature. Human will may be able to take advantage of chance occurrences, but it cannot be free if it operates merely as a blind force. Without an element of self-determination, human will cannot be regarded as free.

The source of freedom of the will is to be found in the fact that human beings have the capacity of moulding their will. The development of the character of an individual, which as we have seen is a rational function, is in effect a process of moulding the individual's will. This process is most rapid in childhood but usually goes on throughout the individual's life. The will of a young man is very different than the will he had as a child. In early age, the process of character-building is guided by parents and other elders in society, but in later life, the process is usually guided by the individual himself. It consists of learning from past experience. A person commits mistakes, suffers the consequences and learns to behave better. Since learning is made possible by the reasoning faculty, reason plays the main part in the moulding of the will. Character building, it may be noted, does not merely consist of moral development. There are other character traits, such as courage and perseverance, which help an individual in his struggle for a better life, and these traits also are gradually ingrained in the individual's will by the process of character building. Human will is free because it can be determined to a considerable extent by the individual himself.

The above statement does not conflict with the principle of determinism. Supposing the element of chance is excluded and all the factors in a situation are known, including the nature and direction of an individual's will, it is theoretically possible to deduce how he will behave in the situation. His will is nevertheless free because, having learnt from experience, he would behave differently if an identical situation occurs in the future. What has happened in the meantime is that the nature of his will has undergone a change.

That answers the question whether a person is responsible for his immoral acts. Suppose a person yields to temptation and commits a theft. Given the nature of his will at the time of the incident, he could not have acted otherwise. He is nevertheless responsible for his act because it was possible for him to so mould his character as to avoid stealing and this he failed to do. He was a free moral agent and was responsible for the theft he committed.

It is true of course that social environment influences the development of character, but the individual also plays an important part in shaping it. An individual is an autonomous moral agent and is the maker of his future because, apart from his ability to acquire knowledge and the resulting power, he has the capacity to mould his character and become a better individual.

Are Moral Values Absolute or Relative

One of the interesting but complicated questions in the domain of morality is whether moral values are absolute in the sense that they are universally applicable or whether they are relative to the situation in which one finds oneself. Do moral principles differ from situation to situation or do they remain unaffected by the situation in which they are to be acted upon?

This question loses much of its complexity if it is appreciated that, for a morally sensitive individual, moral values are not merely a matter of convenience. Moral values have become a part of his nature. Since he regards these values as really valuable, he cannot switch them on and switch them off as the situation may warrant. To regard moral values as relative is to deny them as values. That is why relativist morality amounts to moral nihilism.

This does not mean that a morally sensitive person is not required to make a choice between two moral values, preferring one and sacrificing another, as the situation may demand. But, subject to an exception to be noticed later, his choice is between two moral values and not a choice between moral and immoral behaviour. When, moreover, he sacrifices a moral value because of the necessity of the situation, he does so with regret, as a matter

of necessity and without losing his appreciation of the value which for the time being he is required to act against.

A simple instance will illustrate such a situation of moral conflict. Take the case of a doctor who is treating a cancer patient. Suppose the patient does not know that he is suffering from cancer and he asks the doctor when he would get well. The doctor knows that the patient will die in a few days. Here the doctor has to decide between telling the truth and being kind to the patient. Unless the patient is known to be a strong minded person, the doctor would prefer to tell a lie in order to save the patient from mental pain. He has not acted immorally but made a choice between two moral values, kindness and truthfulness, as the situation warranted. And if the doctor was a person of moral sensitivity, it was for him a hard choice to make. Even while telling a lie, he continued to cherish the value of truthfulness, so that if another occasion arises when truthfulness is required to be observed even at the cost of self-interest, he would tell the truth. For a person of moral sensitivity, all moral values are absolute, in spite of the frequent occasions when he has to prefer one of them and violate another.

Communists say that the moral value system in a society is merely a product of the prevailing property relations in the main means of production. The implication is that the current moral values result from capitalism and that a different morality will emerge in a classless society. A different system of moral values, however, has not emerged in Soviet Russia even after seventy odd years of so-called proletarian rule. Different types of social organisations may alter the relative importance of different moral values, but their content remains the same. Theft, for instance, may be a more reprehensible moral offence in a capitalist society than in a socialist society, but it remains a moral offence even under socialism. The fact is that since the biological origin and rational purpose of moral values is to enable an individual to have a beneficial cooperative social existence, moral values are as permanent as human society itself. Compassion, kindness, truthfulness, fellow feeling and other moral values will exist as long as human beings continue to live in social groups.

Ends and Means

Another puzzling question connected with morality is whether bad means are justified if they are employed to attain a good end.

The question assumes that a good end can be achieved by adopting bad means. That assumption is usually wrong. Either the bad means are incapable of leading you to a good end, or else they so alter the goodness of the end that it ceases to be worth achieving. This is particularly true of political and social objectives, but is also true to a large extent in regard to personal goals as well.

Economic betterment of the poorer sections of society is the most worthy of all political objectives. Those who are accustomed to adopt an elitist approach to this problem are often willing to support the establishment of an authoritarian regime if its object is to remove the poverty of the poor. They are willing to sacrifice the democrate rights and liberties of the people for securing their economic betterment. The result is that the people lose their political freedom and also the right to strive for economic betterment. If some degree of economic betterment is achieved, the accompanying circumstances render it largely chimerical.

Another instance of bad means compromising a good end is seen in the pursuit of power politics, particularly in a culturally backward country. A political party is formed to secure State power, the ultimate object being to promote the good of the people. For the sake of power the party resorts to all the tactics necessary for the purpose, such as flattering the prejudices of the people, supporting their sectional interests and adopting deceptive populist slogans. In the course of time, the party attracts unprincipled power-hungry politicians, the ultimate object of popular good goes to the background and the acquisition of power for its own sake becomes the real aim of the party.

These and other instances show that, generally speaking, a good end cannot be attained by adopting bad means. There are, however, exceptions to the rule. One glaring instance occurred during the Second World War. When Nazi armies were marching from triumph to triumph, Gandhiji made a public appeal to the Government and people of Great Britain to lay down their arms

and allow the Fascist Powers to win the war rather than continue the human carnage which was taking place. The advice was of course not heeded. The war was forced upon the world by fascist aggression and the human carnage which took place was necessary for preventing the success of international fascism. Here a good result was brought about by "bad" means.

We have earlier given the instance of a doctor who told a lie to his patient in order to save the latter from mental pain. The doctor achieved a good end, that of saving his patient from mental pain, by adopting bad means, that of telling a lie. Such cases of moral conflict occur frequently in life. It is, however, not quite correct to say in such cases that bad means were employed to attain a good end. The act of untruthfulness of the doctor in the above instance was also an act of kindness. It would be more correct to say that the doctor on the whole adopted good means, because he was actuated by a moral value which was more appropriate to the occasion.

Now we must notice an important exception to the general rule that a morally sensitive person, faced with a situation of conflict, makes a choice between two moral values, and not between moral and immoral behaviour. The exception arises when a person, despite his moral sensitivity, is compelled by circumstances to act immorally for the sake of self-preservation.

Self-preservation is a primary purpose of life but it is not by itself a moral objective. Moral behaviour, although a source of self-satisfaction, is directed towards the preservation of a cooperative society.

Situations in which even a morally developed individual is required to act immorally for the sake of self-preservation are not infrequent. They occur more often in the case of the poor and the needy. Suppose a clerk is asked by his employer to keep false accounts for the purpose of tax evasion. The clerk knows that if he refuses to comply, he will lose his job and would not get another for months, if not for years. The clerk complies with reluctance if he is a moral person, with nonchalance otherwise.

Although instances of the above type are not infrequent, we find that moral misbehaviour is more often resorted to by the rich

and the powerful, out of sheer selfishness and lack of any consideration for the social good. Their conduct is clearly more reprehensible.

The above discussion shows that one cannot be a perfectionist in matters of morality. It is enough if one realises that moral behaviour is a source of self-satisfaction, that moral life is a happy and enlightened life, that one should never abandon moral values, and that one should not act contrary to them unless compelled by dire necessity.

ELEVEN

THE QUALITY OF LIFE

We have seen in previous chapters that freedom (in the sense of the removal of all restrictions on the potentiality of an individual to live a life befitting a human being) is the basic urge of human existence and also the basic human value, and that freedom can be attained in increasing measure by the acquisition of knowledge with the aid of reason and by the development of moral sensitivity which enables an individual to live in fruitful cooperation with his fellow beings. We have also seen that the urge for freedom, the reasoning faculty and the moral sense are a part of our biological heritage. A number of harmful impulses and tendencies are also a part of our biological heritage, but we have the capacity to so mould our will and build up our character as to promote what is useful in our mental make-up and to check what is harmful.

The present state of psychology does not ènable us to assess the full scope of human potentialities. But we know that besides physical pleasures (pleasures derived from sense organs), human beings can derive deep and abiding satisfaction in the mental realm- in the intellectual field by the pursuit of knowledge in various physical and social sciences; in the ethical field by involvement in different forms of social work; and in the aesthetic field by engaging in the production or enjoyment of various forms of literature and art.

The quality of life depends on the richness of its content. A life given to physical pleasures, and lacking in intellectual, ethical or aesthetic pursuits, is essentially a poor life. It is poor not merely because the exclusive pursuit of physical pleasures may lead to satiety or to ill-health. It is poor because it is poor in quality--poor in both the variety and the depth of satisfaction it provides. A person who, in addition to physical satisfaction, derives the deeper and more abiding satisfaction from intellectual, aesthetic or/and ethical pursuits, obviously leads a life far better in quality.

The quality of life is not properly defined by the dictum "simple living and high thinking". The life of a starving intellectual, artist or social worker, can hardly be regarded as an ideal life. In fact, 'simple living' normally goes with simple thinking, not with high thinking. One is not required to starve the body in order to feed the mind. A healthy mind goes with a healthy body. What is required for a high quality of life is a judicious blend of physical pleasures with satisfactions from what we have called mental pursuits.

This is similar to the Greek ideal of a 'balanced life'. With this difference, however, that the scope of adventures of the human mind is now known to be much greater than in the golden period of Greek civilization.

It is perhaps necessary to add that while the scope of physical satisfactions is limited, there are no limits to the increase in intellectual, aesthetic and ethical satisfactions. It follows that when a certain level of physical well-being is reached in the life of an individual, further enrichment in the quality of his life can come only through the growth in the extent and variety of his mental pursuits.

From the humanist point of view, the ideal life would be the life of a free, rational and moral individual who combines a reasonable level of physical well-being and pleasure with an ever-expanding area of satisfaction and achievement from intellectual, ethical and aesthetic activities.

It is probably not a mere coincidence that this description of an ideal life is in conformity with the main cultural values of ancient Greek as well as ancient Indian thought. The Greek trinity of "truth, goodness and beauty" is a description of the values which underlie human pursuits in the intellectual (truth), ethical (goodness)

and aesthetic (beauty) spheres. Hindu philosophy also emphasises the same trinity of values--Satyam (truth), Shivam (goodness) and Sundaram (beauty). The tragedy of Hindu philosophy is that this inspiring ideal of life lies buried under the debris of the unrealistic other-worldly Vedanta system of thought which preaches that the human body is the prison-house of the soul and the ideal of human beings is to attain freedom of the soul so as to end its involvement in the cycle of births and deaths.

Consumerism and the Quality of Life

For obvious reasons the quality of life described above is beyond the reach of most of the people of the under-developed world who live below, or just above, the starvation level. What is, however, remarkable is that a culturally rich life is not being enjoyed by most of the people in affluent societies who are economically well off. A combination of rapid economic growth and relative cultural poverty has bred in these societies a lop-sided cosumerism, characterised by an ever-increasing production of consumer goods which have to be discarded before their utility is exhausted, in order to make room for other consumer goods for being similarly under-utilised and thrown away. The poverty in the quality of life in affluent societies resulting from this senseless accumulation of material goods appears to be one of the reasons for a growing sense of frustration which finds expression in drug addiction, the Hippi cult and recourse to oriental obscurantism that are increasingly evident in the West.

It is to be hoped that under-developed countries will not try to develop the same lop-sided consumerist culture. It is perhaps fortunate that they will not be able to go long in that direction. The U.S.A., with less than a third of India's population and less than a fourth of the population of China, is already consuming a wholly disproportionate share of the world's non-renewable natural resources. If India, China and other developing countries seek to travel the same way, the world's non-renewable resources will be wholly exhausted before these countries have completed half the journey. That countries of the Third World will not be able to travel long on the path of consumerism will not be a calamity. A

high quality of life, in both the developed and developing countries, does not require that type of economic super-abundance. Economic growth is certainly necessary for under-developed countries, but it should be accompanied by an adequate growth in cultural pursuits. A humanist revival is necessary for both the developing and developed parts of the world.

Individual Freedom in a Free Society

As a rule, an individual striving for his own freedom--for a life free from economic, political and social restrictions on the growth of his potentialities--is required to strive for the creation of a free society, a society of free and moral men and women. It is generally not possible for an individual, working in isolation from the rest of his fellow beings, to attain a quality of life which can satisfy his urge for freedom. This is particularly true of the societies in developing countries.

A person belonging to one of the deprived sections of an under-developed society, which together constitute the over whelming majority of the population, finds it extremely difficult to secure gainful employment in the prevailing economic order. He also occupies a lowly position in the social hierarchy. He is further faced by an authoritarian, and often a despotic, regime which supports the economic and social *status quo*. His path to economic betterment and cultural progress lies through a determined and cooperative endevour to alter and improve the prevailing socio-economic conditions. Among the fortunate few in developing countries who are relatively better off, those possessing a minimum of moral sensitivity share, in different degrees, the unhappiness of the poverty-striken and culturally backward majority. Their moral sense requires them to join in the endeavour to transform the prevailing *status quo*.

In affluent societies also there are reasons for widespread dissatisfaction, although the conditions of life are materially different. Besides extensive pockets of poverty and cultural degradation, large-scale unemployment and glaring inequalities of income are endemic in the prevailing economic order. Moreover, excessive consumerism

and corresponding cultural poverty lead to frustration and create a number of social problems to which a reference has already been made. In affluent societies, as in societies in the third world, an individual's effort to secure a good life for himself, which is an expression of his urge for freedom, has a pronounced social dimension.

The personal philosophy of Radical Humanism is integrally connected with its social counterpart.

Section Four

SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

TWELVE

ESSENTIALS OF AN IDEAL SOCIETY

In this section on social philosophy, the first four chapters (Chapters 12 to 15) will describe the social goals of Radical Humanism. The last two chapters (Chapters 16 and 17) will deal with the principles which should govern the striving for the realisation of those goals. The latter will be of greater practical importance, but obviously they should come after a clarification of the social objectives. The objectives must be specified before the way to attain them is determined.

Basic Values of Social Living

Radical humanists are of the view that every social ideal should be defined in terms of the cherished values which are sought to be realised in social living and not in terms of the institutions which may be suitable for the realisation of those values.

A political institution like parliamentary democracy, and an economic institution like a nationally owned economy ("scientific" socialism), are expected to represent and promote certain values of social living. They may, however, be found in practice to be unsuitable as vehicles of the cherished values. In defining a social ideal, primacy must be given to values rather than to social institutions.

We will examine towards the end of this chapter the correlation between values and social institutions. Let us, to start with, identify the values the attainment of which would, according to Radical Humanism, constitute an ideal society.

A society is obviously not a biological entity. It does not have an independent consciousness of its own. It is not by itself capable of cherishing any value. All values are necessarily experienced and cherished by individuals. The values which constitute an ideal society must be those values cherished by individuals which promote their cooperative well-being.

We will show that freedom, equality and fellowship are the basic values which are implicit in the very logic of social living. The social ideal of Radical Humanism must be a society in which these values are fully realised in practice.

Freedom, we have seen, is the basic human value. On the human plane, the biological struggle for existence takes the form of a struggle for freedom. Freedom includes the ability of an individual to satisfy his physical wants and his mental aspirations. It consists of the progressive disappearance of all restrictions on the unfolding of the potentialities of individuals as human beings. Individuals live in societies so that their aspirations for freedom may be achieved with the cooperation of their fellow beings. No animal would have developed a gregarious instinct unless living in communities promoted the survival of individual members of the species. Survival of the individual being the rational basis of gregariousness, it would follow that freedom of the individual human beings is the main purpose of human societies. The primacy of freedom as the main social value arises from the fact that freedom is the basic objective of the individual and that the purpose of social existence is to aid the individual in achieving that objective.

Secondly, freedom, since it represents a basic biological urge, is the primary objective of all the individuals who constitute a society. It cannot be that the purpose of social existence is to promote the freedom of some individuals and not of others. Equality, in the sense of equal opportunity to all the constituents of a society to attain freedom, is therefore implicit in the logic of social living. Society must provide an equal opportunity to all individuals to

satisfy their physical wants and their metal aspirations. Equality in this sense is the second value arising from the logic of social existence.

Thirdly, an individual cannot live in freedom in a society unless he voluntarily adheres to some moral norms. Freedom and morality necessarily go together. Since morality promotes cooperative social existence, its function is to aid and not to restrict the freedom of a rational individual. We have already noticed that during the aeons of biological evolution, certain "social" instincts, which are the basis of moral values, have developed in human beings and have become their biological heritage. When a person acts in accordance with his social instincts, he derives a sense of satisfaction for himself, although his action is also altruistic. Morality thus amounts to enlightened self-interest. No society can promote the freedom of individuals on the basis of equality unless it develops an adequate tradition of moral behaviour. Such moral behaviour may be described as fraternity or fellowship. Fellowship is the third basic value of social living.

Freedom, equality and fellowship are thus the basic values implicit in the very logic of social living. It is not an accident that these are precisely the values of democracy. Since the time of the French Revolution, liberty (freedom), equality and fraternity (fellowship) have been declared as constituting the basic inspiration of democracy.[1]

What is more, these are also the basic values of socialism, if socialism is defined as a value system and not as a form of economic organisation. There is an emerging modern trend which defines socialism as the realisation of these values in economic life. Democracy and socialism have the same basic values, in the political and economic spheres respectively, because these are the basic values of social existence itself.

Since these values are implicit in the logic of social living, they should be the basic inspiration of all social institutions. The mutual relations of members of a family, for instance, should be guided by

1. Rationalism, being the basis of self-reliance, is an essential ingredient of freedom. It also aids the development of individual and social morality. It may well be regarded as the fourth value of democracy.

the values of freedom, equality and fellowship. They should also govern any other social organisation such as a cooperative society or a cultural institute.

Multi-dimensional Democracy

Democracy, we have observed, can be regarded as a way of life and not merely a form of political organisation. In this broad sense, a society in which the values of freedom, equality and fellowship are realised can be described as a democratic society. The ideal of Radical Humanism is to promote the creation of a democratic society in this broad sense.

Such a society will be a multi-dimensional democracy. It will be a political, economic and social democracy because the values of freedom, equality and fellowship will be realised by the people in their political, economic and social life. Socialism as a value-system will be the economic aspect of such a multi-dimensional democracy. Socialism is democracy in economic life.

We have discussed some of these values while dealing with the personal philosophy of Radical Humanism. In dealing with social philosophy, it is necessary to examine the social implications of these values.

Freedom : Social Implications

The basic aspiration of every individual, we have noticed, is to attain freedom, in the sense of a progressive disappearance of all restrictions on the unfolding of his potentialities as a human being. The primary objective of every society must be to promote the freedom of the individuals who compose it. This has different imperatives in the political, economic and social spheres of life.

In the political sphere, individual freedom requires, in the first place, that the State and its functionaries are not able to wield any arbitrary power over the individual. Society, in other words, should be under the rule of law and no person or group of persons should be above the law. The rule of law moreover means, not only that

all persons should be subject to law, but also that the laws of the land should be reasonable and just. Another requirement of individual freedom is that civil liberties such as freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of assembly and equality before the law, should be guaranteed by the State. In addition, political freedom postulates that each adult individual should have a right to participate in the governance of the country, to shape the policies to be adopted by the State and to ensure their implementation.

One essential aspect of individual freedom is freedom of conscience. This freedom can be guaranteed only in a secular State. Freedom of conscience implies, not only that every person should be free to profess, practice and propagate his religion, but also that every person who does not believe in any religion should be equally free to act according to his conscience and to propagate his views. A secular State is sometimes wrongly defined as a State which treats all religions with equal respect. A State which contributes with equal liberality to the construction of Hindu temples, Muslim mosques, Christian churches and Sikh gurudwaras, is clearly not a secular State. The principle of secularism requires that the State should not interfere with religion and that religion should not be allowed to interfere with the affairs of the State. In such a truly secular State, the freedom of conscience, of believers as well as non-believers, is equally protected.

In the economic sphere, freedom means the ability of an individual to secure a decent life for himself and for those who are dependent upon him. This involves in the first place, freedom from exploitation, which can be secured in various ways such as nationalisation of key industries, development of a cooperative economy and social control where the means of production continue to be privately owned. Economic freedom also requires that the economic affairs of a society should be so arranged as to help every willing person to have gainful employment appropriate to his ability and aptitude. This involves economic planning undertaken with the objective of promoting the freedom of the individual.

Individual freedom is often restricted by irrational social customs and traditions. These evils can hardly be cured by legislation. A movement for the spread of rationalism and secular morality is required for the liberalisation of society and for the elimination of

harmful customs and traditions. Freedom of an individual should not be restricted except to the extent necessary for securing the freedom of the other members of the society. This implies a permissive society in which the freedom of the individual is not restricted except to the extent necessary in the public interest.

Concept of Equality

The logic of social existence requires, as stated above, that every society should make available to all the individuals who compose it an equal opportunity to strive for the attainment of freedom. Individuals, however, differ in intelligence, ability, aptitude, diligence and industry. It is desirable that a society should be able to honour intellectual, ethical and artistic achievements and to reward industry and diligence. The principle of equality will not, therefore, imply mathematical equality in either economic well-being, political importance or social distinction.

Equality in the economic sphere means that every individual will have an equal opportunity of making a decent living. For this purpose, an individual's right to education in a school, college or technical institution should not depend on the family's wealth or political power, or on such extraneous considerations as religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. For securing economic equality, it is also necessary that opportunities of gainful employment should be available equally to all individuals according to their deserts and should not be affected by either the wealth or political influence of their families or other irrelevant considerations mentioned above. In practice, however, unless the disparities in wealth and political power are severely restricted, equality in educational facilities and in gainful employment is bound to be adversely affected. Hence it is necessary that although ability and diligence should receive an economic reward, there should be a limit on the inequality of incomes derived from different types of work. It is also necessary that political power should not be allowed to be concentrated in the hands of a few persons.

Political equality implies the widest diffusion of political power. This can be brought about by decentralisation of political functions

and by devising a method by which the discharge of those functions will take place under the control of the people. Persons who have political aptitude and are possessed of qualities of leadership are bound to occupy important political posts, but ways must be found to avoid concentration of power in their hands.

Equality in the social sphere depends upon the social recognition of the dignity of the individual. The development of a social tradition based on the recognition of the dignity of the individual will be the solvent of discrimination based on religion, race, caste, sex, age and place of birth.

Fellowship : The Moral Problem

The contemporary world is going through a moral crisis. The crisis has arisen because of the growing disparity between the prevailing low standards of morality and the much higher moral level which is required in a technologically advanced society.

We have earlier referred to the facile view[2] that moral standards are on the decline in the present age and that this decline is due to loss of religious faith on the part of a growing number of people throughout the world. It is, however, not true that moral standards are lower today than what they were in the past. It is also not true that religion has always been the sustainer of moral standards. The fact is that at least from the Middle Ages, the relation between the religious faith of a people and their moral standards has been inverse. Greater religious orthodoxy in a society has generally meant greater immorality. Besides setting up false ideals of austerity and self-denial, religion has aided the prevailing system of exploitation and oppression by inducing the peopoe to be reconciled to their lot. Loss of religious faith is not the cause of the present moral inadequacy.

Moral standards appear to be low today because a technologically advanced society requires a much higher level of morality than a feudal or semi-feudal society reared on a rural economy. It is easier to be moral towards the members of your tribe or the residents of your village than towards persons residing in distant lands and belonging to different countries. A modern industrialist who

2. See Chapter 10.

manufactures goods and sends them to distant lands requires a much higher morality for maintaining the quality of his produce than a rural craftsman who produces goods for the consumption of his friends and acquaintances in the village. Moral values which are required today must no longer be localised and must become universal and impersonal. Moreover, the increasing complexity of social life requires adherence to moral principles on more occasions and in a greater variety of contexts than in the past. Temptations and opportunities for antisocial behaviour are far greater today than before and they are increasing with the advance of technology.

There is another factor which augments the moral inadequacies of today. With the growth of individualism and free thinking in post-feudal societies, the ties between parents and children and between teachers and pupils have become much looser than in the past. Parents and teachers are not able to mould the character and influence the moral level of children and pupils to the same extent as before.

Moral standards cannot be improved by restoration of religious faith. The moral authority of parents over their children and of teachers over their pupils cannot also be restored unless the moral standards of the parents and the teachers themselves are raised. It is also not possible to reverse the process of technological advance and go back to the simplicity of ancient life. The moral problem is thus apparently insoluble. It is submitted that secular humanism can indicate the way out.

We have seen[3] that there is a close relation between reason and morality. Reason enables an individual to improve his morals and to build up his character. Similarly the spread of rationalism in a society exposes the prevailing cant and hypocracy, leads to the removal of social evils, and raises the prevailing moral standards. The immorality of medieval Europe was dissipated by the growth of reason. Reason has always been the cause of enlightenment. It was not an accident that the 18th Century was known in Europe as The Age of Reason as well as The Age of Enlightenment.

What the contemporary world requires for the solution of the apparently insoluble moral problem is the revival of rationalism. The rationalism of the Enlightenment and of the subsequent Liberal

3. See Chapter 10.

epoch lost its force and vitality because it was unable to withstand the challenge of scepticism. With the available scientific knowledge of that time, the origin of reason could not be explained. Hume doubted whether causality was not merely an attribute of the human mind and whether there was any basis for the assumption that there was "reason in nature". The assumption of reason in nature was the central pillar of liberalism. There was, however, no answer to Hume's scepticism till Darwin's theory of biological evolution showed that human reason was a biological adaptation to determinism in nature. Armed with the science of biological evolution, reason can again be placed on its pedestal as the instrument of human knowledge and the source of human progress. What is more, the theory of biological evolution shows that not only reason but the moral sense also is a part of the biological heritage of man. For improving the prevailing moral standards, we are not required to take recourse to religious faith. The biological heritage of moral sensitivity, sustained and strengthened by the aid of reason, can meet the challenge created by the growth of modern technology.

Growth of reason in society improves the moral level, not only by exposing cant and hypocracy and spreading enlightement, but also by enabling the deprived multitude to stand on their legs, hold up their heads in human dignity, and challenge the forces which exploit and oppress them. A world-wide moral movement based on rationalism is the need of today.

The movement for rationalism and morality should be supplemented by an adequate system of moral education in schools and other educational institutions. Moral education should not consist of indoctrination, either religious or secular. It should be directed towards sharpening the moral sense of the pupils. This matter will be further discussed in a later chapter (Chapter, 15).

Moral inadequacy affects all aspects of social life. In politics, it takes the form of corruption and the pursuit of unprincipled power politics. No country is free from corruption[4], although is probably more rampant in the countries of the third world than

4. Communist countries are by no means free from corruption. See *Polish Impressions* by Nikhil Chakravarty in the Mainstream of June 27, 1981, where he refers to the large-scale corruption prevailing in Communist Poland.

elsewhere. In the economic sphere, moral inadequacy expresses itself in exploitation of workers in private enterprise, in careless management of public undertakings, and in evasion of work by the employees in public as well as private sectors. Moral inadequacy also affects social life and inter-personal relations. No political, economic or social problem can be solved unless the prevailing moral standards are raised.

Twentieth Century Renaissance

We have said above that an ideal society should be a multidimensional democracy in which the values of freedom, equality and fellowship are realised in everyday life. These values ("liberty, equality and fraternity") had become popular from before the French Revolution. They arose in the background of the cultural movements of Renaissance, Reformation and Enlightenment in Europe. These values, however, were not founded on science. Hence they became weak and ineffective in the course of time. Individual freedom was overwhelmed by the sense of individual helplessness. Rationalism gave way to various irrational cults. No basis was found for morality except in religious faith. In the result, large parts of the world are now covered by dictatorial regimes and democracy, where it exists, is either weak or only partly realised.

In this situation, a multi-dimensional democracy cannot be created in any part of the world unless the basic values of freedom and morality are strengthened by giving them the sanction of science. The sanction of science is the sanction of truth, and truth must prevail in the end.

Modern science shows that man's urge for freedom, his rationality and his moral sense are all rooted in his biological evolution.[5] It is natural for him to strive for freedom and he can succeed in that struggle by having recourse to his reasoning faculty and his inborn moral sense. Reason can enable him to be both free and moral. The contemporary situation requires a world-wide movement based on scientific humanism.

Values and Social Institutions

5. This has been dealt with in Chapters 8, 9 and 10.

We have said above that, in defining a social ideal, primacy should be given to values and not to social institutions. This requires some explanation. The primacy given to values will be appreciated if one is clear about their relation with institutions. Values constitute the underlying human ideals, while institutions are the organisational forms through which those ideals are expected to be actualised. Political democracy, for instance, is an institution through which the ideals of political freedom and equality are sought to be expressed. Similarly, socialism in different forms is an institution through which economic freedom and equality are sought to be attained. Values are the basic inspiration, while institutions are their formal expression.

Now there are two reasons why the ideal of any social movement should be defined primarily in terms of values rather than institutions.

In the first place, the utility of any institution depends upon the people who work that institution and the people among whom the institution is worked. If the concerned people do not cherish the values which the institution is to express, the institution would be utterly worthless. If the values are cherished by the concerned people to a limited extent, the utility of the institution would also be limited. The fact is that an institution cannot create values; it is the cherished values which lead to the creation of an institution for their realisation. If an appropriate institution is set up among a people who cherish the underlying values, the working of the institution may help in the further consolidation and development of those values. The creative role, however, is of the persons who cherish the values and set up a suitable institution, and not of the institution itself.

This can be illustrated by the different ways in which parliamentary democracy operates in different countries. In some countries, democracy is the facade which covers the reality of a dictatorship. In other countries, democratic rights are enjoyed by the people in different degrees, depending upon the extent to which democratic values are cherished by them. In form, India has a far more 'democratic' constitution than Great Britain, which does not even have a written constitution. Yet in practice, British, democracy is much more genuine and stable than Indian democracy. This is

evident from the fact that the Indian Prime Minister has far more arbitrary power concentrated in his or her hands than a British Prime Minister can ever hope to have. The reason is that the values of democracy are far more firmly rooted in Great Britain.

The same correlation between values and institutions is borne out by the manner in which the soviets function in Russia. Soviets were originally conceived as local democracies in towns and villages. Given the necessary values, soviets could function as organs of people's power and as the apparatus of a participatory democracy. Under a dictatorship, however, soviets discharged a diametrically opposite function. Instead of being organs of people's power, they became organs of State power.

It is similarly obvious that in the absence of socialist values, a socialist economy will not serve any useful purpose. It may merely lead to one set of vested interests being replaced by another.

Thus the first reason for conceiving a social ideal in terms of values is that institutions are merely the instruments through which values are expected to be realised and that, in the absence of the values actually cherished by the people, the institutions have no utility.

The second reason for value preference is that an institution set up for the realisation of certain values may be found in practice to be unsuitable for the purpose. Whether a particular institution serves the purpose for which it was intended is, after all, a question to be decided by experience. Unless confirmed by experience, an institution can only be a tentative and experimetal device.

Parliamentary democracy, for instance, was expected to establish rule of the people, by the people and for the people. It is, however, found in practice that, at its best, parliamentary democracy establishes rule for the people, and not rule of the people and by the people. Instead of self-rule, parliamentary democracy provides the rule of successful politicians over the people. That is why it has become necessary to devise some other form of democracy so that people may in practice be the masters of themselves.

Similarly, socialism of the "scientific" variety, defined as nationalisation of all the means of production, is found in practice to be unsuitable for the purpose which it was intended to serve.

The generally accepted objective of socialism is to put an end to economic exploitation and to bring about freedom and equality in economic life. It is found in practice that nationalisation of all the means of production has the consequence of concentrating economic as well as political power in the hands of a dictatorial State, thereby negating the ideals of freedom and equality. Experience may show that socialist values are better realised if only the key industries are nationalised and other industries are subjected to some social control. It may in the alternative be found that the objectives of socialism are best promoted by ensuring that the means of production are not owned either by individual entrepreneurs or a national State, but are cooperatively owned by the workmen in different enterprises. The choice is to be made by practical experience and not by mere theoretical speculation.

Equating socialism with nationalisation of all the means of production is thus doubly defective. It is defective in the first place because, in a society where democratic values of freedom, equality and fellowship are not adequately cherished by the people, nationalisation of industry will not bring about either economic freedom or economic equality. Equating socialism with nationalisation is also wrong for the second reason that, in practice, nationalisation is not a suitable instrument for achieving the objective of economic freedom and equality, even if these values are cherished by the people.

Fortunately the terms democracy and socialism are used, not only to denote certain political and economic institutions, but also to designate a value system. We speak, for instance, of a person as being "democratic." What we mean is that he acts in accordance with democratic values. In the same sense, we speak of a "democratic way of life," that is, a way of life where democratic values prevail.

In the case of socialism also, there is a tendency of defining it in terms of values. Many socialist parties in Europe have come to the conclusion that their objective is not the nationalisation of all the means of production. They would prefer some industries to be nationalised and others to be subjected to social control. In a treatise published by the Socialist Union of Great Britain under the title *Twentieth Century Socialism,* the authors have defined socialism in terms of the basic values of equality, freedom and

fellowship in economic affairs. A similar stress on values as the essence of socialism is found in C.A.R. Crossland's *The Future of Socialism*. It may be noticed that the values of equality, freedom and fellowship, found by these writers as the basic values of socialism, are also the basic values (liberty, equality and fraternity) of political democracy. This is so because, as shown earlier, these values are implicit in the very logic of social living.

Political, economic and social institutions which appear to be the appropriate vehicles of radical humanist values are presented in the three succeeding chapters.

THIRTEEN

POLITICAL ORGANISATION: ORGANISED DEMOCRACY

The Problem

The State is the political organisation of society. The legitimate functions of the State include, not only the maintenance of internal peace and defence against external aggression, but also the administration of justice and the provision, whenever necessary, of various essential services and amenities for the people. The function of the State being of an enduring nature, it is unrealistic to suppose that the State will wither away either now or at any time in the future.

In fact, the main political problem of today arises from the fact that the functions and power of the State have been multiplying in modern times. The liberal concept of the State as an organisation whose functions are confined to internal peace and defence from external aggression is no longer tenable. A modern State has necessarily to look after the people's requirement with regard to education, health and housing. It has also to provide for economic justice and promote healthy economic development. It must regulate currency, banking and international trade. The old maxim that that government is the best which governs the least has still an element of truth, because the modern State has a tendency to expand beyond what is necessary in the public interest. It cannot, however,

be denied that the State of today is required to discharge a larger number of functions than those which were formerly regarded as its legitimate domain.

Responsibility and power tend to go together. With the growth of the State's responsibilities, there has been corresponding growth in its power. The modern State is fast becoming a Leviathan.

The concentration of enormous powers in the modern State has increased the glamour of politics as a career. A successful politician today has greater power and social prestige than a successful industrialist. As a result of the lure of political power, political practice is fast degenerating into an unprincipled scramble for power.

The most important political problem of today is how to bring the Leviathan of the State under the effective control of the people. Formerly, till about the end of the First World War, economic power dominated over the power of politicians. Capitalism was then rightly regarded as the main impediment to the attainment of both political and economic freedom. The power equation has thereafter gradually shifted in favour of successful politicians. While economic vested interests are still a factor to be contended with, a much more serious threat to political and economic democracy arises from the authoritarian proclivities of political vested interests. Authoritarianism is today a greater danger to freedom, political as well as economic, than capitalism.

Inadequacy of Parlimentary Democracy

Parliamentary democracy is not capable of meeting this growing threat of authoritarianism. This is because parliamentary democracy does not ensure rule of the people and by the people. It provides for periodic elections in which the people delegate to their representatives the power which is supposed to belong to them. In a parliamentary democracy, the people are sovereign for only one day in four or five years, i.e., the day on which they cast their votes and elect their representatives.

Between two elections, they are helpless spectators. They have little control over the government which is set up by a majority of their representatives. Their only political function is to elect their rulers. This can be described as a system of elected kingship.

Democracy is realised to the extent to which power is diffused among the people. Concentration of power is the negation of democracy. Power in a parliamentary democracy remains concentrated in the hands of the ruling coterie.

A truly democratic State should be coterminous with society. It should not be a State confined to a minority of the people. In a parliamentary democracy, however, the State consists of the persons involved in the discharge of the executive, legislative and judicial function of the State. The remaining people are not part of the machinery of the State. They are subjects of the State, except of course on the day of polling.

It is true that parliamentary democracy is not to be equated with a downright dictatorship. The fact that the rulers have to seek re-election in four or five years is to some extent a check on the exercise of arbitrary power. The enjoyment of civil liberties by the people during the period between two elections is also a factor of considerable importance. It enables the people to express their reactions through the press and platform in regard to policies and performance of the government. An independent judiciary and a free press act as protectors of the people's civil liberties. Another factor which limits the exercise of arbitrary power in a parliamentary democracy is the existence of opposition parties. It would, therefore, not be right to regard parliamentary democracy as being indistinguishable from an authoritarian State.

Inspite of these differences, which prevent parliamentary democracy from being equated with a dictatorship, it has to be acknowledged that its democratic content and its durability are severely limited. Except where the love of freedom is strongly rooted in the consciousness of the people, it is possible for the ruling coterie in a parliamentary democracy to dispense with periodic elections, to abolish civil liberties, to destroy judicial indepdendence and to ban opposition parties. Under the system of representative government, democracy remains partial, weak and unstable. A genuine democracy requires that the people should be

able to exercise a standing control over the functions of the state. In such a State, there would be the widest diffusion of power, and the State would be coterminous with society.

Organised Democracy

The defects of parliamentary democracy cannot be removed by reverting to the type of direct democracy which prevailed in the city States of ancient Greece. Unlike the Greek City States, the modern States have huge populations. The people of the modern States cannot come together at one place for the exercise of their sovereign right. Moreover, the direct democracy of the City States was itself defective because the dwellers of the city were an unorganised mass. Rule by such a mass of people would be mobocracy and not democracy. Atomised individuals cannot exercise effective political power. In a modern State, the principle of direct democracy cannot take the same form as it had in the City States of Greece.

In order to exercise the sovereign power vested in them, the people in a State should be organised in small local republics or People's Committees. These People's Committees should be the foundation of the State. The State should be a pyramidal structure reared on a net-work of such local republics or People's Committees. Each People's Committee should be elected annually in villages and city wards, each member representing about 50 to 100 adults. There should be larger People's Committees at different levels, elected by members of the primary People's Committees. Political functions should be decentralised and should be brought down as far as possible to the lower tiers of the pyramid. The People's Committees, besides functioning as organs of local self-government, should also be able to exercise a standing control on the affairs of the State. Their functions, as organs of local self-government, should include sanitation and public health; primary and secondary education; buildings and maintanance of roads and public parks; promotion of producers' and consumers' cooperative societies; local police administration; and administration of law in petty cases. Besides looking after these local affairs, the People's

Committees should have the power to recommend candidates for legislative elections, to examine the merits of proposed laws, to initiate new legislation, to recall their representatives from the legislature, to demand a referendum on vital issues, and to express the will of the people on all important matters. They should have also the power of preparing a local economic plan within the general framework of the national plan and to supervise its implementation.[1]

It may be emphasised that such People's Committees would function, not only as organs of people's power, but also as schools for the political education of the people. The devolution of power to the People's Committees implies the devolution of responsibility as well. Learning from experience, the People's Committees will be able to discharge their manifold responsibilities.

There are two main principles involved in the concept of organised democracy. One is that if the people are to exercise the sovereign right vested in them, there ought to be a radical decentralisation of political and economic power. For this purpose, as many functions as possible should be transferred from the Centre to the federating States, from the States to District Committees, from District Committees to Mandal Committees, and from the latter to People's Committees in villages and city wards. The Constitution of the country should provide for such a pyramidal structure and define the powers and functions of the different rungs of the pyramid.

The second principle relates to the people's representatives who would constitute Mandal Committees, District Committees, legislatures of the federating States and the Central Parliament. These representatives should always be answerable to, and liable to be recalled by, the voters. This may be achieved in the following manner. We have observed earlier that the People's Committees should have the right to recommend candidates for legislative elections. Suppose the constituency of a State legislature comprises 150 People's Committees. One member from each People's Committee can be invited to form a People's Committee of the constituency. This committee of the constituency will nominate, by

1. A concrete picture of such an organised democracy was presented by M.N. Roy in his Draft Constitution of Free India, published in 1944.

consensus or majority vote, a people's candidate for the legislative election. The candidate will openly commit himself to be answerable to, and be liable to be recalled by, the Constituency Committee. The Committee will undertake the election work of its candidate and try to secure his success. The Committee will meet from time to time thereafte. and discuss with the elected candidate the problems and requirements of the people. If a majority of such people's candidates are successful in a general election, they will form a genuinely democratic government in the State. A similar method may be followed in electing the members of Parliament. So far as members of the District and Mandal Committees are concerned, they can be conveniently elected by the indirect method, so that members of the District Committees will be elected by the Mandal Committees and members of the Mandal Committees will be elected by the primary People's Committees.

It is often said that decentralisation of power implies a weak State. A strong State, it is claimed, requires centralised power. That is a total misconception. A decentralised state is actually stronger because it enjoys the active support of entire population. A centralised State has to depand on its armed forces for its defence. A decentralised State is stronger because, in addition to armed forces, it has the strength derived from the support of the entire people.

The Cultural Pre-Condition

We must hasten to add that before an organised democracy of the type mentioned above can be brought into existence, the democratic values of freedom, equality and fellowship should have permeated among the people to a substantial extent. A social institution, we have noticed, serves its purpose only when the underlying values are cherished by the people among whom the institution is set up. This applies to the institution of organised democracy as much as to any other institution. In the absence of democratic values, organised democracy will not come into existence, and if it is somehow foisted on the people, it will not serve any useful purpose. People's Committees will not function as organs of People's power in the absence of the requisite cultural pre-condition.

The creation of an organised democracy must, therefore, be preceded by a movement which can be called Twentieth Century Renaissance. It must be a humanist movement for freedom, rationalism and secular morality. As we have seen earlier, humanism provides the philosophical basis for the democratic values of freedom, equality and fellowship.

The general run of the people, including those who are the victims of the prevailing exploitative economic system, are inclined at present to leave politics to a handful of politicians. So long as this apathy of the public continues, all democratically conceived institutions will in reality be undemocratic, for they will be dominated, directly or indirectly, by political and economic vested interests. Institutions will be genuinely democratic only when the people, most of whom today constitute the deprived and exploited majority, begin to realise that they must take the future in their own hands and exercise their sovereign right in the State.

What is said above is borne out by Indian experience. Gram Panchayats (village self-government institutions) have been set up in several parts of India. They are elected on adult suffrage but most of them function as agencies of the local vested interests, political as well as economic. The common run of the people are usually not in the picture in the functioning of the Gram Panchayats. If the values of freedom, equality and fellowship are propagated among the villagers, and if as a result they realise that they alone can make or mar their future, the same Gram Panchayats will be in a position to function as People's Committees. With this perspective, a demand should be made for increasing the functions and responsibilities of Gram Panchayats, so that they may constitute the foundation of an organised democracy.

Another precaution should be taken in appreciating the merits of the picture of organised democracy presented above. It should be regarded as a well-considered experimental device, and not a final blue-print. To what extent it will serve the purpose of establishing a "rule of the people and by the people" is to be decided by experience. What is essential is that some method should be devised to enable the people to exercise their sovereign right from day to day and not only once in four or five years. If the proposed

form of organised democracy does not fully serve that purpose, it will have to be modified as experience may require.

Future of the Party System

We now enter a very controversial field in the political philosophy of Radical Humanism. It relates to the role of political parties in a parliamentary democracy and the relevance of the party system during the transition from a parliamentary to an organised democracy and thereafter.

What radical humanists have to say on these questions can be summarised in three broad propositions:

(1) Parliamentary democracy consists of a system under which a representative government comes to power from time to time through periodic elections. In such a system, political parties perform the useful function of representing the conflicting interests of the voters, of organising the electorate into political communities and of providing a more or less stable basis for government. The legitimacy of the party system is, however, getting eroded. With the extension of the franchise to the entire adult population and with the growth of maturity and discrimination among the electorate, the programmatic differences between political parties are getting blurred and the party system is losing its significance and utility.

(2) The party system, although it is necessary in the present phase of parliamentary democracy, is positively harmful to a genuine democracy in which power would remain vested in the people. The party system is harmful to a genuine democracy in two ways. In the first place, while democracy requires the widest diffusion of power among the people, the party system performs the undemocratic task of concentrating power in a few hands. Under this system, the power delegated by the voters at a general election goes, not to representatives directly answerable to the voters, but to candidates nominated by one political party or another. The power so delegated gets concentrated in the leadership of the successful political party. In the result the executive becomes more powerful than the legislature and the ordinary people are nowhere

in the picture. The second defect of the party system is that, in the scramble for power by political parties, populist opportunism replaces democratic principles and morality gets divorced from political practice. This happens in all countries but is more pronounced where the bulk of the electorate is relatively uneducated and steeped in superstition.

(3) In an organised democracy where political power is decentralised and is exercised by a self-reliant and discriminating electorate through a network of People's Committees, political parties will not have any useful role to play. The function of organising the voters into political communities, which is being inefficiently performed by political parties at present, will, in an organised democracy, be more adequately discharged by People's Committees. People's Committees will not only function as political organisations of the electorate , but will also set up candidates in elections and will have the powers of recall as well as of referendum. Political parties will not be abolished by law, because an organised democracy will defend the civil liberties of the people including their freedom to form any organisation of their choice. Political parties, however, will have no useful role to perform in an organised democracy and will become redundant and obsolete.

Decreasing Legitamacy of Political Parties

We have noticed above that, in a parliamentary democracy, political parties play a useful role in representing conflicting interests of the electorate. It is obvious, however, that political parties are not formed in order to represent the conflicting views on every issue on which differences of opinion exist in an open society. This is so because persons who take the same view on one issue may disagree on other issues. Those for instance who agree that women should have the right to abortion may not agree on the circumstances in which divorces should be allowed. If two persons agree on issue A, it cannot be assumed that they will also agree on issue B and C, so that they may form a stable political party. Opinions held on specific issues may lead to political lobbies, but not to political parties. In order that conflicting interests in a

society may be represented by political parties, it is essential that a large number of persons should have the same attitude on a large number of political, economic and social issues.

That is why political parties are generally formed in order to represent the common economic interest of large sections of the people. Such economic interests are generally the interests of economic classes, as when parties are formed to represent either labour or capital. Parties are occasionally formed to represent other economic interests, as those of the peasantry and the rural poor. Political parties may also be formed to represent the interests of the people belonging to the same religious denomination or to the same region. Economic, religious and regional interests are thus the basis on which political parties are usually formed.

It can hardly be argued that political parties based on religion are necessary for the proper functioning of a democracy. Secularism, which is one of the accepted principles of democracy, requires that the State should not interfere with any religion and that no religion should be allowed to interfere with the State. It may be that in a particular democracy the rights of a religious minority may be required to be protected. To protect such rights, however, is the duty not only of the minority community but of all the progressive sections of society. With the growth of enlightenment, political parties based on religion are bound to disappear.

Political parties based on regional interests have also a limited future. Where a region has a distinctive culture, it is subnationality and should have a large degree of autonomy in a democratic State. When regional autonomy is granted, regional parties will have little reason for continued existence.

A more stable basis for the party system is provided by the conflicting economic interests of large sections of the people. Conflicting economic interests have been the traditional basis of the Conservative and Labour parties of Great Britain, and the rightist, leftist and centrist parties in other democracies in the West. The economic base of the party system is, however, being increasingly eroded in recent times. There is a growing tendency on the part of different political parties, on the left and the right, to have more or less the same programmes, transcending their class and sectional interests. One reason for this development is the extension of the

franchise to the entire adult population. Adult franchise has made it necessary for every political party to so mould its programme as to appeal to the majority of the electorate, which does not belong to the class which the party was originally intended to represent. The other reason is the growth of education and enlightenment among the people, which makes it increasingly inconvenient for any political party to pursue narrow sectional interests at the cost of society as a whole.

In industrially developed countries, the middle class has increased in number and strategic importance. The Conservative Party in Great Britain cannot hope to succeed if its appeal is confined to the capitalist class, nor the Labour Party if it seeks the support of only the working class. Hence the election manifestos of these parties tend to have the same programmes. Various features of the welfare State in Great Britain were conceived by the Labour Party but were implemented by the succeeding Conservative Party. The programmes of these parties are often so similar that one party is known to have complained that an item on its programme was filched by the other. This tendency towards a convergence of the election platforms of the leftist and rightist parties is found in all the western countries.

This is even more evident in those countries of the third world where some form of democracy based on adult franchise continues to exist. The overwhelming majority of the voters in these countries are either below, or just above, the poverty line. Their economic interests are, on the whole, uniform. All political parties have to present an election platform which will appeal to this deprived majority. They have, therefore, either the same or very similar programmes.

Thus there is a gradual and progressive erosion in the legitimacy of political parties as organisations for the representation of the conflicting interests of voters.

An attempt is sometimes made to justify the existence of rightist and leftist parties on psychological rather than economic grounds. It is said that each country has two types of people-those who have a conservative bent of mind and who, therefore, want to preserve the status quo and those who have a radical bent of mind and who, therefore, want to alter the *status quo*. It will be found, however,

that such psychological differences arise largely from economic interests. If the economic basis of political parties is getting eroded, the party system cannot be expected to continue on merely psychological grounds.

Harmfulness of the Party System

While the useful role of political parties in representing the conflicting interests of the electorate is thus decreasing, the harmfulness of the party system to a genuine democracy is gradually getting more evident.

The birth of the party system can be traced to the doctrine of representative government. A representative government means a government for the people and not a government by the people. The very purpose of forming a political party is that is should come to power by winning a majority of votes and then rule over the people in order to promote the people's interests. The party system is thus a negation of the basic principle of democracy that the people should be their own rulers. Once the people cast their votes in a general election, they delegate their sovereign right to the successful political party and remain virtually powerless till the next general election. The difference between rulers and the ruled is maintained except on the polling day. A parliamentary democracy characterised by a representative government established through the party system is thus a severely truncated form of democracy.

The power delegated by the people in a general election goes to the successful political party which may have won only 51% of the seats in the legislature. It is this 51% of the legislators who get all the power which should have remained vested in the people. They monopolise the power of passing laws and of setting up the executive government. This is the first step in the process of concentration of power. Further concentration of power takes place because these legislators are themselves controlled by the party leadership which may consist of a small coterie of persons and sometimes of a single individual. In this way all the legislative and executive power is concentrated in a few hands and parliamentary democracy takes the form of an elected dictatorship.

The second reason why the party system is harmful to democracy arises from the fact that the struggle for power between rival political parties is increasingly assuming the character of an unprincipled scramble for power. Several factors have brought this about. In the first place, the functions of the State have been constantly increasing and hence the power concentrated in the State is far greater today than in the past. Consequently, political success has far more attractive rewards now than before. Politics has become a very profitable profession for those who hanker after power and pelf. Secondly, with the progressive disappearance of programmatic differences between political parties, the element of scrupulousness in political practice has diminished. Political parties today are more power-oriented and less principle-oriented. An unprincipled scramble for power has, therefore, become the characteristic of political practice, of both the right and the left.

While this tendency towards a vulgarisation of political practice is apparent in all countries where the party system prevails, it is naturally more in evidence in the countries of the third world. Here a largely illiterate and credulous electorate plunged in perennial poverty offers an ideal field of operation for unscrupulous power hunters. The political scene in India offers an instructive illustration. Morality has been almost completely divorced from politics here, at least in so far as the successful politicians are concerned. Black money is collected in exchange for official favours, the election process is denuded of its democratic content by the misuse of money and governmental machinery, and the election propaganda consists mostly of mudslinging and never-to-be implemented promises. Apart from misleading the electorate in this way, the election process in India strengthens and consolidates the evils of casteism and communalism.

The scramble for power in which political parties are engaged, and the resulting low standards of political practice, have the effect of repelling persons of moral sensitivity from party politics. Moral scruples being a handicap in politics of this kind, those who are possessed of that handicap do not join any political party or do not remain there for long. In the result, society is deprived of the services of persons of moral excellence, persons who are likely to be most devoted to public service, in the conduct of its vital political affairs.

Organised Democracy and the Party System

The establishment of an organised democracy pre-supposes that society has undergone a renaissance based on the humanist values of freedom, equality and fellowship, reared on rationalism, self-reliance and secular morality, and that the electorate is able to exercise its sovereign political power through a net-work of People's Committees. In such a democracy, delegation of power by the people to the higher organs of the State will be greatly reduced. Not only will there be a substantial decentralisation of power to the lower organs of the State, but the electorate organised in People's Committees will be able to exercise a standing control over those executive and legislative functions which are to be performed at the higher tiers of the State.

Political parties will hardly have any useful function to perform in such a State. People's Committees will take the place of political parties. There will certainly be many differences among the people on individual issues, but those differences will be resolved by discussion and consensus. Being represented in People's Committees, and through People's Committees in higher organs of the State, the voters will not require another political organisation to represent them.

We have observed that the only abiding basis of political parties in a parliamentary democracy has been the conflict of class interests among the electorate. The formation of political parties on a class basis, however, assumes that the economic interests of persons belonging to a particular class can be protected and promoted by only the members of that class. That assumption, we have seen, is not justified. All interests which deserve to be protected and promoted have a moral sanction, and morality is not a class function. Taking into consideration the background of a humanist renaissance on the basis of which People's Committees will be formed, there is no reason to assume that the just claims of any economic class will not receive the support of a People's Committee on the basis of a consensus reached after a free discussion.

It is, however, argued that political parties will be necessary even in an organised democracy in order that the governments

formed at the Centre and in the States should be able to adopt and implement unified policies. The argument in other words is that only a party government can be a stable government having a coherent policy. The argument is not well founded. Even today, differences of opinion exist inside every political party which functions in a democratic way. When a political party is in power, the differences amongst its members are resolved by mutual discussion and the consensus so reached becomes the policy of the government. If a unified policy can be adopted and implemented by a government formed by ministers belonging to a democratic party who have differences among themselves, there is no reason why such a unified policy cannot be adopted and implemented by a government consisting of ministers who do not belong to any political party. In fact, non-commitment to any political party should make it easier for such ministers to reach a consensus on all controversial issues.

This conclusion is strengthened by the experience of coalition governments which have functioned successfully in several European countries, particularly after the Second World War. It is also borne out by the example of Switzerland, which is a highly developed country having one of the most affluent economies in the world, but where the executive council consists of members of all the principal political parties in the different cantons. It is significant that one does not hear of any disruptive difference within the Swiss cabinet. There is, therefore, no reason why a unified policy cannot be adopted and implemented by a government formed in an organised democracy where the party system has ceased to exist.

In the Meantime

The belief entertained by Radical Humanists that the party system is not a permanent feature of democracy and that the system would become obsolete by the time a higher form of democracy is established, does not make them hostile or indifferent to the existing party system and to the manner in which it functions. A long period of indefinite duration will have to pass before the

prevailing parliamentary democracy is replaced by an organised form of democracy. In the meantime, political parties will dominate the scene. Some of them will form governments and others will be in the opposition. In order of that Radical Humanists may be able to carry out their primary task of educating the people in humanist values and of promoting grass root organisations on the basis of those values, they will require a government which honours democratic norms and an opposition which does not allow civil liberties and democratic rights to be encroached upon. It is also necessary for Radical Humanists to ensure that parliamentary democracy, defective as it is, not replaced by a naked dictatorship in which the educative and organisational work of Radical Humanists and their associates may become far more difficult. Radical Humanists are, therefore, keenly interested in having a government and an opposition which would help, and at least not hinder, their primary work.

The question then is, should Radical Humanists have a political party of their own? Alternately, should they work in other political parties in order to ensure a government or an opposition which would be helpful to their educative and organisational activities?

It may be recalled that an outline of the philosophy of Radical Humanism was prepared in 1946 in the form of 22 Theses and that those theses were adopted by an All India Conference of the Radical Democratic Party (in which radical humanists were then working) held in Bombay towards the end of December 1946. The Radical Democratic Party continued for two years thereafter and was dissolved by a resolution passed by a majority in an all India Conference convened in Calcutta towards the end of December 1948. The majority view was that the educative and organisational activities which radical humanists had to undertake could not be properly carried out by working in a political party. The Radical Democratic Party was, therefore, dissolved and the Radical Humanist Movement was inaugurated.

The majority was right in the conclusion it reached. There are mainly two reasons why Radical Humanists should not function as a political party. The first reason is that those who desire to bring

about a humanist renaissance in the country by educating the people in the values of freedom, equality and fellowship, cannot at the same time seek to represent them in the legislature. Educators of the people cannot simultaneously be their representatives. A humanist renaissance involves a revaluation of values. It requires that the people should be called upon to discard some of the traditional values and accept a value system based on freedom, rationalism and secular morality. A political party which seeks the votes of a majority of the adult population cannot be the proper instrument to bring about such a cultural renaissance. Secondly, and this is even more important, Radical Humanists do not believe that worthwhile socio-economic changes can be initiated from above. A humanist revolution must be initiated and developed from below, on the basis of an enlightened and insistent public opinion, although at a later stage it may be assisted by a helpful government. A socio-economic transformation initiated from above, with the aid of State power, leads to dictatorship, while a similar transformation brought about from below, with the initiative of the people, extends the bounds of democracy. Radical Humanists do not require political power to bring about a revolutionary transformation, but desire on the contrary that the people themselves should acquire and exercise political power as a result of a cultural renaissance. Being not interested in acquiring political power even for achieving their objectives, Radical Humanists ought not to form a political party of their own.

After the dissolution of the Radical Democratic Party in December 1948, some Radical Humanists tried to promote their humanist ideals by joining other political parties. The experiment did not succeed, if success is measured by the spread of humanist values in the constituencies in which these humanists worked. Some of them got involved in the game of power politics and in the process diluted their humanist convictions. Others became disillusioned, left their political parties and rejoined the Radical Humanist Movement.

The crucial fact is that although it is quite essential that the functioning of political parties should be improved so that they would act according to democratic principles and would not indulge in unprincipled power politics, the necessary improvement

cannot be brought about by persons of good will and moral sensitivity joining political parties and working from within as party members. The functioning of the party system will improve in proportion to which the electorate becomes more discriminating, more rational and less liable to be swayed by sentimental appeals based on religion, caste, community or narrow nationalism. So long as the electorate remains politically immature, advantage of that immaturity is bound to be taken by power-hungry politicians of all political parties. It is such politicians of flexible conscience who tend to come to the forefront of all political parties and persons of good will and moral sensitivity who join the parties are marginalised and become ineffective. That is why it is truly said that in a democracy the people get the government they deserve. This implies that a more enlightened electorate will improve the functioning of the party system and thereby set up a better government.

The democratic maturity of the people is developed as a result of their experience of successive elections and of the performance of political parties during the period between two elections. This process of increasing political maturity can be aided and accelerated by social activists of democratic and humanist conviction working among the people at the grass-root level, helping the people to solve their manifold problems and disseminating the democratic-humanist values among them during this work. Even if this does not eventually result in the setting up an organised democracy based on a network of People's Committees, it will immensely improve the functioning of parliamentary democracy and eliminate the possibility of the emergence of any dictatorship.

FOURTEEN

COOPERATIVE ECONOMY AND DECENTRALISED PLANNING

Both the economic systems now prevailing in different parts of the world, the capitalist system based on private ownership and free enterprise and the communist system characterised by the nationalisation of the entire economy, are found in practice to be disappointing. The communist economy[1] is almost broken down and is sought to be restructured by a process which Mikhail Gorbachev has described as perestroika. Which shape the communist economy will eventually take is still very uncertain, but it is clear that some attempt will be made to introduce therein a certain degree of competitiveness and a relatively free market. This has given a boost to the supporters of the capitalist economy, despite the known defects of that system, because of the general assumption that it is that only alternative to the communist economy.

Radical Humanists say that our choice need not be confined to these two unsatisfactory alternatives. There is a third alternative, which may be called the "cooperative economy". This economy, Radical Humanists claim, would be more in consonance with the

1. The expression "communist economy" is used here to denote a wholly nationalised economy under what is called "scientific" socialism. The term "socialist economy" is avoided because it is often applied to a mixed economy.

values of freedom, equality and fellowhip than either the capitalist or the communist economies.

Failure of Capitalist Economy

Marx predicted the failure and eventual overthrow of capitalism because of what he regarded as its inherent contradiction. He visualised that capitalism would maintain the wages of labour at a low subsistence level, while progressively increasing its productivity by the employment of technologically advanced means of production. This prediction has not been borne out by history. During the hundred and odd years which have passed since the writing of Das Capital, the real wages of workers in advanced capitalist countries have gradually and progressively increased. Nevertheless, capitalism has turned out to be a highly unsatisfactory and frustrating economic system. This is so for several reasons.

The capitalist economy, in the first place, is highly inequitous. Wide-ranging economic disparities are endemic to capitalism. Even while increasing the real wages of workers, it widens the gulf between the rich and the non-rich.

Secondly, the production of goods and services in a capitalist economy is highly lopsided. This is because a minority of affluent people have disproportionate purchasing power. There is consequently a growing flow of unessential luxury goods and services, while the supply of essential goods and services remains restricted.

Thirdly, the spirit of competition which is the lever of progress in a capitalist economy leads to excessive economism. A continuous rise in productivity is essential to the maintenance of the capitalist system. This has several evil consequences. The economy creates a "consumerist society" in which demand is artificially stimulated by high-level advertising. The quality of life suffers as a result of excessive economism. There is atmospheric and ecological pollution on a large scale. There is also growing wastage of natural resources. If the vast populations of all the developing countries were to attain the economic level which now prevails in the United States, the natural resources of the world would be exhausted within a few years. Nothing but wide-ranging dissatis-

faction would be the result of this enormous misdirection of the people's productive capacities. While a certain degree of competition is necessary for maintaining efficiency in the production and distribution of goods and services, it requires to be mellowed by the spirit of cooperation so that the people may develop a satisfactory quality of life.

Fourthly, the capitalist mode of production, as Marx pointed out, alienates workers from their work. They have no interest either in the process of production or in the goods produced. The entire economic activity of workers becomes a drab and dull routine.

Lastly, capitalism is unable to maintain an economy of self-adjusting equilibrium which was visualised by Adam Smith and the classical economists and which was the basis of the doctrine of laissez faire. Prices are not fixed by a free competition between producers, nor wages by a free competition between workers. Multinational monopolies dominate the field of production and powerful labour unions dominate the supply of labour. An automatic adjustment of prices and wages by the laws of supply and demand, as claimed by classical economists, does not take place. Consequently, the economy is beset by stagnation, inflation and large scale unemployment. Constant State interference is required to remedy the situation. State interference on such a scale implies that capitalism cannot survive except by losing its essence.

Failure of Communist Economy

Compared to the capitalist system, the communist economy breeds less inequality and provides a relatively greater security of employment. These advantages, however, are purchased at the cost of freedom and democracy. The cost is wholly disproportionate to the advantages gained. There are several reasons why wholesale nationalisation of the economy is inconsistent with the maintenance of a free democratic society.

First, wholesale nationalisation is bound to concentrate all economic power in the same hands in which political power is already concentrated. The modern State, as we have seen, is becoming a

Leviathan on account of an enormous increase in its functions and powers. The centralisation of economic power in a politically centralised State is bound to make democracy virtually impossible.

Second, nationalisation of all the means of production includes within its ambit the nationalisation of all the means of mass communication such as the radio, the television, the news agencies, the daily press, the periodical press and the production of books and other literature. A State monopoly on all these means of mass communication is bound to destroy freedom of expression which is the life-breath of democracy.

Third, wholesale nationalisation includes the nationalisation of education also. State control of schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions is bound to destroy all vestiges of academic freedom.

Fourth, nationalisation of the economy necessarily includes the nationalisation of the services rendered by judges and advocates. Independence of the judiciary and of the legal profession is totally destroyed in a nationalised economy.

Fifth, nationalisation of agriculture has proved a failure in all communist countries. In the Soviet Union, the rate of agricultural output in privately owned small plots of land is far greater than the rate of agricultural output from State farms. In communist Poland, nationalised land was denationalised and returned to private ownership for stimulating agricultural production. State ownership is clearly unsuitable for the agricultural sector.

Sixth, nationalisation is also inappropriate in another large sector of the economy, the small scale sector. Nothing is gained by killing private initiative in small enterprises and preventing them from supplying the needs of the people.

Seventh, experience shows that State-owned industries and enterprises are liable to be conducted in a callous and inefficient manner. The profit-motive being absent in State undertakings, their efficiency can be maintained only if the management is inspired by a high sense of social responsibility. This can hardly be achieved in a centralised bureaucracy-dominated economy.[2]

2. This, according to Mikhail Gorbachev, was the main cause of the economic stagnation in Soviet Russia. The purpose of Perestroika is to dismantle the "command economy".

Last, and this is probably the most vital consideration, the problem of alienation of workers, which Marx regarded as the main defect of capitalism, remains entirely unresolved under a nationalised economy. Labour is alienated from the process of capitalist production because it has no interest either in the goods produced or the process by which they are produced. In a nationalised economy also, the alienation of labour is equally complete. To the workers engaged in an undertaking, its nationalisation means only a change of masters. The workers are merely transferred from private employment to State employment. They still remain alienated from the process of production as well as the ownership of the goods produced.

Cooperative Economy

In a cooperative economy[3] the main means of production, distribution and exchange will belong, neither to individual capitalists nor to the State, but to the workers of each particular undertaking. The conflict of interest between employers and employees will thus be eliminated. Instead of a wage earning society, we will have a self-employed society. There will be no exploitation of labour either by the private capitalist or by the State. Being owners of the means of production as well as of the goods produced, workers will have an active interest in the economic process. Workers' alienation from their work will cease altogether. The values of freedom, equality and fellowship are best expressed in a cooperative economy. A healthy competition between several cooperatives producing the same or similar goods will help in maintaining efficiency and promoting inventiveness.

It cannot be over emphasised that a certain cultural background is the precondition for the success of a cooperative economy. The members of a cooperative enterprise must be animated by the spirit of self help and individual initiative, the confidence

3. The outline of a cooperative economy described here is mostly taken from the pamphlet " Humanist Approach to Economic Development" prepared by the present author and published by The Indian Renaissance Institute as a summary of conclusions reached by a Radical Humanist seminar held in May 1956.

that they can better their lot by their personal endeavour and a rational appreciation of the necessity of honest and conscientious work and of harmonious mutual relations for the benefit of all. Cooperation requires a higher democratic culture than either capitalism or communism. The values of freedom, equality and fellowship, along with rationalism and self-reliance, must be cherished by the members of a successful cooperative. Only genuine cooperators can successfully run a cooperative enterprise.

In view of the fact that cooperative societies exist and function in the capitalist and communist countries of today, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by a 'cooperative economy' when that term is used to denote an alternative to both the capitalist and communist economies. What characterises the economy of a given society is the mode in which the bulk of production is carried on. Modes of distribution and exchange of the goods produced are ancillary to, and largely determined by, the mode of production. The mode of production, on its part, depends principally on how the main means of production are owned. In a capitalist economy, the main means of production belong to a relatively few individuals; consequently, production is carried on for private profit, and the relations between the employer and the employed are determined by that motive. Under Communism, land and industry are owned by the State; production is carried on for the purposes of the State which do not correspond to the sum total of the individual purposes of the people; and the relations between the employers and the employed are determined by the fact that the latter have usually no alternative but to accept employment on terms determined by the employer. The cooperative economy visualises that land and industry will, for the most part, belong to groups of people working therein; that the motive of production will be the harmonious economic betterment of all the cooperators and that the distinction between the employer and the employed will cease to exist. When the bulk of the population is thus engaged in cooperative production, the cooperative economy can be said to have been established.

It follows that cooperative production will be the characteristic feature of the cooperative economy. It will be aided by cooperative finance and cooperative marketing. On the consumers' side,

purchase of goods will be made by a network of consumers' cooperatives. It may, however, be noticed that it is neither necessary nor possible that cooperatives should cover the whole economic sphere. In all systems of economy, various avocations are, and will continue to be, carried out individually, as in the fields of art, medicine, law, etc. As stated above, cooperatives do play a minor role even in capitalist and communist States. Similarly, State enterprise is not altogether absent in capitalist economies; nor, it appears, is every form of capitalist production totally prohibited under communism. When cooperation covers the major field of production in agriculture and industry, the cooperative spirit is bound to permeate the economy as a whole.

A producers' cooperative will consist primarily of persons who contribute their labour to the union, and such of them as can do so will also contribute their land or capital, as the case may be. Those who contribute only land or capital, without intending to work in the cooperative, will not normally be members thereof, but will receive rent or interest for their contribution. As between members of a producers' cooperative, the relative share to be attributed to the land or capital brought in by members will be a matter of mutual adjustment. As the cooperative unit progresses, it will be able to acquire out of its yearly income such investment-resources as it needs. It will thus be progressively free from dependence on external resources.

In order that it may be democratically managed and that its members may not lose their individual significanee, a cooperative unit should be relatively small. It is, however, impossible to set any *a priori* limit to its size[4]. The necessity of retaining a manageable unit on the one hand, and on the other the advantage of applying scientific techniques for increased production, will normally determine the optimum size of a producers' cooperative. In those industries, however, where technology as it is developed today rquires the association of a very large labour force or involves an amount of capital investment which is beyond the capacity of a small cooperative to collect or borrow, efficiency may be sacrificed a for the

4. It is said that a cooperative farm should be confined to 5 or 6 families. W.A. Lewis, *Theory of Economic Growth*, 1955, p.135.

sake of freedom, and cooperative production may be started on a lower technological level. This deliberate choice in favour of less productive techniques will, however, be called for in a fewer branches of production than would appear on a superficial view of the matter; and the choice, where necessary, will be for a short period. Already, modern technology has made it possible to distribute power, in the shape of electrical energy, over long distances at low cost; with the aid of such power, it will be possible to start efficient production in small units in modernised rural townships or 'agro-towns' in various branches of industry, such as spinning, weaving, match-making, machine-tool manufacture etc. It must further be remembered that modern technology has grown as an adjunct to the growth of capitalist production. Reoriented to the needs of a decentralised economy, it is capable of devising new techniques of highly efficient production by small units. Indeed, the obvious advantages of decentralisation-greater individual initiative, better health and hygiene, better service to the consumer-imply that production by such units may in the long run be more efficient than by large impersonalised aggregations.

It is easy to see that, given the necessary cultural background and the time required for technological reorientation, producers' cooperatives can extend to virtually the whole field of agriculture and consumers' goods. They can also cover a number of basic industries, such as machine tools and chemicals. It is only in those cases where conditions exist for more or less monopolistic production, either because of the extent of capital-investment unavoidably involved, or because of local concentration of rare natural resources, that producers' cooperatives, as such, may not provide the best form of productive organisation. Railways, airways and some of the power projects are instances where the amount of capital required and/or the occurrence of certain natural conditions lead to monopolistic production of goods and services. In such cases, the principle of cooperation will express itself in a different institutional form. Organised cooperation of producers and consumers is necessary in such industries to obviate any conflict of interests between the two, and to run them to the best advantage of both. Autonomous bodies, incorporated by statute, and so constituted as to represent in equal number the producers of the goods or serv-

ices in question and consumers thereof, should own and run such industries. In no case should the industry be either owned or run or controlled by the State. The capital which the State may have initially invested in the project should be regarded as a loan, or as partly a grant and partly a loan, to the autonomous body.

Thus the field of production can for the most part be covered by a large number of producers' cooperatives and a few autonomous producers-consumers' cooperatives. The distribution of goods can be suitably managed by retail and wholesale consumers' cooperatives. Financing of the cooperative economy can be arranged through a network of cooperative credit societies and cooperative banks, affiliated to a Central Cooperative Bank. Deposits in the cooperative banks will be made by producers' and consumers' cooperatives and by individuals interested in the cooperative movement. Taxation and State loans should not normally be ragarded as a proper method of financing a developed cooperative economy, althoguh they may have some legitimate role in the initial stages of its development. In a developed economy, taxation should normally be restricted to the need of raising the comparatively limited finances required to run a decentralised political State, and should in its incidence be so directed as to reduce economic inequality, and State financing should normally be confined to the objective of reducing local economic disparities arising out of mal-distribution of natural resources, unequal cultural development, and other contingencies.

In a cooperative economy, coordination between supply and demand (i.e., between producers' decisions and consumers' choices) will be brought about by the usual price mechanism in a free market. After all, the purpose of production is to satisfy the needs of consumers, and there is no better or more sensitive apparatus for ascertaining consumer's needs than the relative price level of various goods and services. It is true that in a capitalist economy, the price mechanism works in a very unsatisfactory manner. But that is largely because of the development of monopolistic multinationals, and in some countries in recent years, of monopolistic labour unions. Such monopolies are not likely to emerge in a cooperative economy. A decentralised cooperative economy, consisting of a large number of small producers' cooperatives, and a

few autonomous producers-consumer's cooperative associations, will make the consumers' supremacy a reality. Competition for the consumers' preference will promote efficiency and inventiveness.

The cooperative economy outlined above is not a system to be initiated and established from above by State action, but is conceived primarily as a creation of the people, an expression of local initiative of individuals determined to win their economic freedom by their own efforts. No attempt has, therefore, been made to lay down a detailed blue-print of the cooperative economy, for it would be unrealistic to suppose that the people's urge for freedom will necessarily find expression in one given institutional form. What is attempted above is to ascertain which economic system is most congenial for the preservation and growth of individual freedom, and to show that even in the complex society of today that system can function with success.

Although cooperative economy has to be developed by the people from below, the process will require the assistance of a friendly State. The same popular urge, however, which is required for the creation of a cooperative economy will also lead to the setting up of a genuine democracy of the type indicated in the last chapter. The values created by humanist renaissance will bring about a simultaneous democratic transformation in the political, economic and social life of the community. Those engaged in building up a cooperative economy will, therefore, receive requisite assistance from a friendly democratic State.

If socialism is defined, not as the nationalisation of all the means of production, distribution and exchange, but as the realisation in economic life of the values of freedom, equality and fellowship, the cooperative economy described above will be a genuinely socialist economy. It will represent the maximum democratisation of the country's economic apparatus.

A cooperative economy will not require the destruction of the existing State-owned or privately owned industries. They will continue to exist during the process of building up a cooperative economy from below. They will, however, undergo suitable changes. As far as State owned industries are concerned, they can either be

split up into manageable cooperative units, or where that is not possible, they can be transformed into autonomous bodies, incorporated by statute, representing the producers and the consumers in equal number. Privately owned industries should be free to exist and to compete with the new system. They will, however, be subject to democratic labour laws. The purpose of such laws will be not only to secure economic justice but to gradually increase the workers' participation in management and their right to a share in the industry's profits. Workers' participation in the management of an industry should increase in proportion to the increase in their ability to discharge that responsibility. Workers' right to a share in the profits of an industry can be assured by providing that a part of wages should be paid in the form of shares of the company which owns the undertaking.

In a developing country, the existing economy is limited in size and productive capacity. Democratisation of the existing restricted economy is not, therefore, the main problem. The main problem is to devise a method of economic planning which would lead to the development of an egalitarian economy.

Decentralised Economic Planning

Under communism, the necessity of economic planning by the State arises from the fact that it owns all the means of production, distribution and exchange. Since Communism has succeeded in coming to power only in underdeveloped countries, the primary purpose of Communist planning has been to bring about the economic development of the country.

In industrially developed countries also, a degree of State planning had to be introduced in order to reduce the rigour of cyclical industrial depressions and to provide a greater degree of stability to the economy. Money regulation, credit control, selective State investments, price support, State purchases, import-export regulation, taxation and subsidies, are some of the devices used in trying to achieve economic stability in advanced capitalist countries.

State planning involves a good deal of centralisation and bureaucratisation. Particularly in communist countries, economic planning by the state involves a substantial curtailment of individual

freedom. What is more, neither the total investment visualised in the economic plan, nor the priorities and targets fixed upon, result from popular decisions. A view has, therefore, been expressed that economic planning is inconsistent with individual freedom.

That view is not correct. Planning is involved in every rational activity designed to achieve a preconceived goal. It follows that popular efforts directed at economic betterment should also be planned. But they should be so planned as to promote the primary purpose of individual freedom and well being. If economic planning is radically decentralised, and if it is carried out for the purpose of promoting individual freedom and welfare, the defects and dangers associated with economic planning would be eliminated.

Some of the conclusions reached by adopting this approach to economic planning are summarised below[5]. They have particular relevance to the experience of economic planning in India.

(i) In order to achieve the necessary decentralisation, the primary unit of planning should be a small locality. In rural India, a cluster of villages which surround the village or town where the weekly bazaar is held will form a natural planning unit. Village Panchayats of such a locality should set up a planning committee. The committee would, in frequent consultations with the people, assess the human needs as well as the human and material resources of the locality and fix the targets of production. Such financial and technical assistance as may be required for the local plan should be made available by higher planning centres. Similar local planning bodies should also be formed in towns and groups of mohallas in big cities. A local plan prepared by the planning committee may be revised on the advice of higher planning centres but should be implemented under the supervision of the

5. This subject has been dealt with on the basis of three documents:
   (i) *People's Plan of Economic Development of India,* prepared under the guidance of M.N. Roy in 1943.
   (ii) *Humanist Approach to Economic Development,* referred to in note (3) earlier.
   (iii) *People's Plan-II,* published by the Indian Renaissance Institute in 1977.
   For further details, please refer to *People's Plan-II.*

local planning committee.

(ii) Planning on a local scale will necessarily be realistic. Its main object will be to satisfy the primary needs of the people, consisting of food, drinking water, clothing, shelter, education and medicine. This does not mean that all the goods and services needed by the people will be locally produced, but it does mean that the purpose of the planning will be to secure the satisfaction of the people's primary needs.

(iii) Besides the satisfaction of these primary needs, the purpose of the local plan will also be to bring about rapid expansion of employment opportunties through labour intensive projects. This will require a comprehensive reconstruction of the rural economy through the development of agriculture, agro-based industries, house construction, provision of roads and other means of communication, and provision of social services such as education and health. It will be the duty of the higher planning centres to provide the finance and technical assistance required for the implementation of the planned projects.

(iv) One of the central aims of the local planning committee should be to develop suitable cooperative undertakings in the locality. A start should be made with the formation of simple bodies like cooperative credit societies, cooperative marketing societies and cooperative multipurpose societies. With the development of popular initiative, cooperation can be extended to other branches of production and distribution.

(v) Popular enthusiasm associated with local planning will help to a large extent in solving the problem of capital formation which has been a bugbear of planners in under-developed countries. Capital formation depends on the availability and employment of labour which is not required for the production of consumer goods. Such surplus labour is available in abundance in India. Given popular initiative and enthusiasm, local planners will be able to utilise the surplus labour for a variety of small projects such as construction of roads, houses, school build-

ings, granaries, small irrigation dams, etc. The problem of unemployment can also be thus tackled at the local level.

(iv) Agricultural prosperity will stimulate the demand for a variety of consumer goods in rural areas. Peasants will require more and better clothing, more and better housing and a variety of goods which are now purchased by a numerically small urban middle class. A considerable part of this increased demand can be satisfied by starting small-scale industries in rural areas and in agro-towns. The aim of the local planners will be to develop and also to diversify the local economy.

(vii) It is obvious that some projects, such as setting up a hospital or a college or launching a comparatively larger enterprise, will have to be undertaken at the district level. For that purpose, a district planning committee should be set up by the Zilla Parishad, i.e. the local self-government organisation at the district level. The district planning committee should have a plan of its own to handle projects which cannot be undertaken by the lower planning bodies. It should also provide technical and financial assistance to local planners. One of its objectives should be to set up suitable cooperative enterprises at the district level and to help in developing a network of cooperatives in the district.

(viii) For projects of larger size and for the purposes of supervision and coordination, there should be planning committees at the State level and a Central Economic Council for the country as a whole. These planning bodies will prepare economic plans comprising of projects which have to be undertaken at their respective levels. These bodies should furnish technical and financial assistance to the lower planning committees and should also set up suitable instituions for agricultural and industrial research, for national and local surveys, and for training in industrial techniques.

(ix) While discharging its functions of tendering advice and furnishing financial and technical assistance to lower plan-

ning bodies, the Central Economic Council will have to define the basic objectives of economic planning in the country as a whole. The basic objectives should be:

(a) satisfaction of the primary needs of the people;

(b) generation of adequate employment opportunities;

(c) elimination of poverty; and

(d) reduction of economic inequalities.

(x) The Central Economic Council will also prepare investment priorities for itself as well as for the guidance of the lower planning bodies. In view of the fact that about 70% of the Indian population is engaged in agriculture, the first priority should be given to agricultural development and rural reconstruction. The second priority should be given to the development of consumer goods industries, and the third to the development of basic industries. Such a scale of priorities is essential for solving the problem of unemployment. It should be understood that these are *investment* priorities and not priorities in *time*. All the branches of production have to be simultaneously developed, but the distribution of resources year by year will be in accordance with these priorities.

(xi) Economic development should be inflation-free. For that purpose, planning must always be realistic. Every plan should be strictly adusted to available resources. For the same purpose, small projects which fructify in a short time should be given preference over large projects which have a long period of gestation. Attention should be paid to the production of wage-goods in adquate quantities so as to avoid a rise in the consumers' cost of living index. The priorities mentioned above are necessary not only for reducing unemployment but also for maintaining the price level. Inflation has been the main cause of the increasing economic inequalities in India. Inflation helps the employer as against the worker, the farmer as against the agricultural labourer, and the bigger peasant as against the smaller peasant. Inflation is also the worst form of regressive taxation.

(xii) The prevailing pattern of land distribution and land cultivation requires to be radically transformed. The cultivating tenant must be the owner of the land tilled by him. Greater equality of land ownership has to be brought about by effective implementation of ceiling laws passed for the purpose.

(xiii) Family planning is the counterpart of economic planning. In its absence, the results of planned economic development are neutralised to a large extent by the growth of population. Family planning should be brought about, not by compulsion, but by proper motivation and by a set of incentives and disincentives. Experience shows that even ignorant and illiterate people can realise the advantages of a limited family. Promotion of girls' education and provision of health-care and child welfare are also of great assistance in family planning.

FIFTEEN

HUMANIST APPROACH TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS

It has been observed earlier (Chapter 3) that while Radical Humanism rejects some of the traditional doctrines of liberalism, it claims to be an inheriter of the liberal spirit. Radical Humanism differs from liberalism in political theory (organised democracy instead of parliamentary democracy), in economic theory (cooperative economy instead of capitalism) and in moral theory (naturalist basis of morality instead of utilitarianism). On general social issues, however, Radical Humanism does not differ from liberalism, except that it is more definitely egalitarian. Radical Humanism shares the liberal values of individual freedom and recognition of individual dignity. One's attitude to social problems is largely determined by the appreciation of these values.

Since the Radical Humanist approach to social problems is essentially the same as the approach of liberalism, with added emphasis on the value of equality, and since the liberal approach is well-known, it is not necessary to deal separately with each of the social problems. Two of them, however, require particular notice. They are, the content of education and the status of women in society. In the Indian context, the problems of casteism, communalism and untouchability also require separate consideration.

Content of Education

Education should not, and cannot, be value-free. Insistence on value-free education amounts to an indirect support to the prevailing value system, even if it is unjust and inequitable. It also implies an uncritical acceptance of the current prejudices, superstitions and pre-conceived notions.

Apart from imparting knowledge about nature and society, education should seek to free and elevate the human spirit. This means that besides imparting knowledge, education should have two other objectives-to promote the pupil's mental freedom and to develop the pupil's moral sensitivity.

Both these objectives can be attained without any attempt at regimentation. In fact, promotion of the pupil's mental freedom would increase the pupil's resistance to any form of regimentation.

In order to promote a pupil's mental freedom, the teacher should encourage the pupil to ask "why" and the teacher's primary task is to strengthen that tendency. The object must be to develop the pupil's reasoning faculty, to increase the pupil's critical intelligence. That must be the first object of education.

The second object of education should be to help the pupil to increase his moral sensitivity and to build up his character. This should not be sought to be achieved by religious tuition. Blind faith should not be the basis of moral education. Any such attempt would go counter to the primary object of education which is to develop the pupil's critical intelligence. Religious faith, moreover, promotes intolerance and strife between members belonging to different religious denominations. Some of the religious teachings are also contrary to moral standards, such as casteism and untouchability in the Hindu religion and the inferior status given to women by all religions.

Moral education should also not consist of teaching a particular moral code to the pupils. In the first place, such an effort is usually fruitless. Moral codes do not help the pupils to build up their character. Secondly, teaching of a moral code smacks of regimentation. Like every other branch of education, moral teaching should also have a rational basis.

Moral education should aim at enabling and encouraging pupils to increase their moral sensitivity and to develop their own moral standards. Several experiments in this direction have been made by educators in the United States and in Western Europe. Most of the experiments consist of placing before small groups of pupils an imaginary situation which requires a moral decision to be taken. Pupils are encouraged to offer their own solutions to the moral problem and subject each others' solutions to a critical examination. The teacher joins in this exercise, without trying to give a solution of his own. The purpose is to enable the pupils themselves to appreciate what is good and what is not good. The results so far have been encouraging. It is desirable that moral education along these lines should be imparted, particularly at the secondary school level.

Teachers who do not themselves cherish the values of critical intelligence and moral sensitivity cannot possibly impart education along these lines. A programme of teaching the teachers has to be undertaken in order that education may have the necessary value content. Conferences and seminars of teachers on the content of education may serve this purpose.

Several other suggestions can be made for the improvement of the prevailing educational system. Many of them will be found in a booklet *Education for our People* published by the Citizens for Democracy in India.[1]

Social Status of Women

Within a family, women are usually treated with affection. Occasionally, a woman is the dominating personality in the house. Nevertheless, women have a definitely inferior status everywhere. This is because society has different expectations from men and women. Men are expected to be the bread-earners. Their working hours are spent outside the house. Women on the other hand are mostly confined to the house. They are expected to breed children,

1. *Education of our People* prepared by Dr. J.P. Naik, and published by the Citizens for Democracy, 1978.

to look after them, to cook meals and to attend to the household chores. The different roles which men and women are expected to fulfill have far-reaching consequences.

In most families, boys receive a better education than girls. This is particularly so when the available financial resources are limited. The boy is trained as a potential bread-earner and the girl as a potential wife and mother.

In later life, the superior earning capacity of men, their higher education and their wider experience give them a much higher status than women. A man is honoured for his earning capacity and for his educational and other attainments. A woman is honoured if she is a devoted wife and a loving mother.

With such a social division of labour, women do not get adequate opportunities for the development of their abilities and talents. Even when women secure employment, they usually get inferior jobs and lower emoluments. They have to work in the home as well as outside. A woman who happens to achieve an eminent position in science or art, in commerce or industry, is regarded as a freak. As a rule, a woman's mental growth remains stunted, and the society is also deprived of the potential contribution of half the population.

There is another far-reaching consequence of the inferior status of women in society. A considerable part of the child's education takes place at a very early age in life, practically on the mother's knee. If the mother is ignorant and superstitious, the child grows in orthodoxy and conformism.

This is particularly the case in developing societies. In India, while the general literacy of the whole population is a little over 30 per cent, female literacy is only 18 per cent. The task of bringing up the next generation is cast upon women who are kept in ignorance and superstition. The social harm is incalculable.

It is often claimed that women in India are highly respected. What is true, however, is that respect is given to Indian women when they are devoted wives and loving mothers. Their status in the family is inferior to the status of men. An independent woman earning her own livelihood and that of her family does not get even a fraction of the respect which a women gets for her womanly qualities.

Humanism insists that equal recognition should be accorded to the dignity of every individual, male or female. Women must have the same opportunities as men in education, employment and general cultural development. For this reason, feminist movements get enthusiastic support from humanists.

We insist, in the first place, that in every family, the boy and the girl should always get the same education. They should have in later life the same opportunities of gainful occupation. Employers should not give preferential treatment to males either in the matter of employment or in respect of emoluments. Men and women should get equal pay for the same work. Equality must also be observed in legal provisions in regard to inheritance, marriage, adoption and divorce. Unequal social conventions, such as the dowry system in India, must be condemned by public opinion and prohibited by law. No women should be compelled to have unwanted children. Her right to abortion must be recognised by society.

What is more necessary, however, is that the society's attitude towards women and its expectation from them must undergo a change. This is a long-range objective. For achieving it, there should be a strong women's movement in each country. Women should form associations in urban and rural areas for securing social equality.

Communalism, Casteism and Untouchability

Communalism, casteism and untouchability are the most intractable social problems of India. Of these, casteism and untouchability have a much longer history. Attempts to eliminate these evils have been made from Buddha's time 2500 years ago. Communalism--tension between Hindus and Muslims-has a history of nine centuries. Muslim invasions in India commenced in the 11th century.

Since the attainment of independence in 1947, India has undergone a good deal of industrialisation. Education also has been expanded a great deal, in quantity, if not in quality. It was expected that with the development of industries and the growth of education, the social evils of communalism, casteism and untouchability would disappear. That expectation has been largely

belied. Untouchability is somewhat less in evidence in towns and cities. Communalism and casteism remain virtually as strong as before. Indeed, these evils appear to have received a fresh lease of life.

There are several reasons why these evils have proved to be so intractable.

In the first place, unscrupulous power politics, which has been gaining ground since independence and which has now attained alarming proportions, contributes materially to all the three evils. Political parties approach the people, not so much on the basis of ideologies and programmes, as by exploiting their communal and caste feelings. Selection of candidates for local, State and Central elections is also made on communal and caste considerations. Leaders of communities and castes (including the scheduled castes or Harijans) are the vote banks whose support is solicited by rival political parties. Political practice tends to sharpen communal and caste differences.

Secondly, the policy of "reservation" which consists of earmarking a certain percentage of seats in government service and in institutions of higher education to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and backward classes, has proved a mixed blessing. Benefits of the reservation policy have gone to only a thin layer consisting of the relatively advanced families among scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and backward classes. The poorer and the more backward sections of scheduled castes and tribes and backward classes, which constitute the vast majority among them, have received no benefit from the reservation policy. The comparatively advanced families in scheduled castes and tribes and backward classes have by now a vested interest in the continuation of the present reservation policy. They support those political parties which are committed to the continuation of that policy. The same policy, however, has evoked antipathy and resentment in caste Hindus.

Thirdly, the economic development of India, neutralised to a large extent by the growth of population, is proceeding at a very slow rate. The scope of employment in industry and commerce, as well as the scope of self-employment in small units of production and distribution, is consequently very limited. This has the effect of sharpening of existing economic disparities along communal and

caste lines. Economic competition for the available opportunities of employment and self-employment has increased the tension between the poor sections in different communities and castes. That is why Hindu Muslim clashes have been recently taking place in industrially and commercially growing towns like Moradabad, Meerut, Ahmedabad and Hyderabad.

There is another cause, a psychological one, which strengthens the prevailing communal and caste feelings. Indian society is being transformed from the semi-feudalism of the past to the slowly developing capitalism of today. People are required to abandon the social security of village life and to face the economic uncertainty and individual isolation of urban life. There is a natural tendency in such a situation to find psychological refuge in collectivities based on caste and religion. Hindus going to cities from different villages tend to form caste associations of their own. Muslims from different villages live in exclusively Muslim pockets in cities. Economic uncertainty and urban isolation strengthens the social bonds based on caste and community.[2]

The various factors mentioned above explain why the problems of communalism, casteism and untouchability have become so intractable. A variety of measures have to be undertaken to meet these problems.

There must, in the first place, be a movement for the spread of humanism and secularism among the people. The people must come to think of themselves as human beings rather than as persons belonging to a community or a class. A humanist renaissance must be the cultural background of other measures which may be taken for dealing with these social evils.

Secondly, education can be a potent instrument in bringing about the desired change. Education must be expanded in extent and improved in quality. It is noticed that Muslims in northern India do not go in for education in adequate numbers. That is probably one of the reasons why Hindu Muslim clashes are more frequent in northern India than elsewhere. Spread of education among Muslims in north India will have a salutary effect on the

2. Readers will notice that this is very similar to the analysis of collectivism made by the late Dr. Erich Fromm in *Fear of Freedon*..

communal situation. What is more important, however, is to improve the content of education. Education should be so restructured as to promote secular attitudes and values. Text books should be prepared from the secular point of view. History books, in particular, should deal with people rather than with princes and kings.

The policy of reservation requires to be modified. Reservation of posts in government services and of seats in colleges should be confined to those sections within the scheduled castes and tribes and backward classes which are economically weak and educationally retarded. Even such reservations should be limited for a fixed period of years. Positive action (that is, action undertaken by the State in favour of backward communities in order to counter-balance the discrimination practised against them in the past) should consist mainly of educational scholarships and grants, on a much larger scale than at present, given to promising boys and girls from scheduled castes and tribes and backward communities. Such assistance should continue after reservations are brought to an end.

The present economic uncertainty and urban isolation, as seen above, induce people to form caste and communal associations. To counteract this tendency, alternate associations based on economic, social and political needs should be formed. Welfare societies, people's committees, voters' councils and trade unions are instances of such alternative associations.

Power politics on the one hand and a slow rate of economic growth on the other are the main factors, as observed above, which sustain the evils of communalism, casteism and untouchability. We have pointed out in earlier chapters that a humanist movement developed from below and aimed at propagating democratic values and developing grass-root organizations is the best remedy against power politics. We have also indicated how we can have a type of economic planning which would provide adequate employment opportunities for India's growing population. The evils of communalism, casteism and untouchability will not disappear so long as our politics consists of an unprincipled scramble for power and our economy fails to deal with the problem of growing unemployment.

SIXTEEN

REVOLUTIONARY ROLE OF IDEAS

Soon after his release from jail in November 1936, M.N. Roy made a very significant statement which contained the seeds of his increasing differences with communism and his eventual rejection of Marxism itself. his statement was that every worthwhile social revolution must be preceded by a philosophical revolution. From the study of history which he had made during the years in jail, he concluded that movements of thought always preceded epoch-making social and political events. Since thought precedes action, a revolution in ideas must, he insisted, be the driving force of a socio-economic revolution.

The creative role which Roy attributed to ideas was essentially in conflict with the Marxian theory of revolution, at least as that theory has been understood by the various communist parties. According to this Marxian theory, ideas (in the sense of ideologies) are virtually a super-structure erected on the basic social reality. The basic social reality consists of the economic system characterised by the ownership of the main means of production and the class relations arising therefrom. Thus in a capitalist society the basic reality is private ownership of capital and the antagonistic class relations between employers and workmen. The culture in a capitalist society, being a mere superstructure on this basic reality, has little independent force of its own.

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Power politics on the one hand and a slow rate of economic growth on the other are the main factors, as observed above, which sustain the evils of communalism, casteism and untouchability. We have pointed out in earlier chapters that a humanist movement developed from below and aimed at propagating democratic values and developing grass-root organizations is the best remedy against power politics. We have also indicated how we can have a type of economic planning which would provide adequate employment opportunities for India's growing population. The evils of communalism, casteism and untouchability will not disappear so long as our politics consists of an unprincipled scramble for power and our economy fails to deal with the problem of growing unemployment.

This correlation between socio-economic organisation and cultural values rules out the possibility of new ideas having any effective role in revolutionary transformation of society. Socialist values, being a super-structure based on a socialist economy, cannot emerge before a socialist revolution takes place and a socialist economy is created. A super-structure cannot emerge before the basic structure is established. According to Marxian theory, cultural values appropriate to a post-revolutionary society will succeed and cannot precede the socio-economic revolution. The driving force of a revolution will not be the cultural values of the future society.

What then is the driving force of a revolution according to Marxism? The driving force is the development of the means of production. Capitalist accumulation leads to more and better capital goods (plant and machinery) and this development of the means of production increases the productivity of labour. The purchasing power in society, however, remains restricted on account of workers' wages being kept at the subsistence level. A contradiction thus arises between the forces of production and capitalist property relations. This contradiction leads to a series of industrial crises, each crisis being more severe than the previous one. The contradiction also leads to rivalry between capitalist countries resulting in imperialist wars. The continuous increase in the forces of production, the Marxian theory goes on to say, not only brings capitalism into one crisis after another, but also creates the human machinery which will disrupt the capitalist order. It continuously reduces the numerical strength of the capitalist class and increases that of the proletariat. A stage comes when the increasing forces of production disrupt the capitalist order and bring about a proletarian revolution.

Marxism does recognise a subjective element as one of the factors in a successful socialist revolution. The subjective element is provided by a militant working class which takes advantage of the objectively revolutionary situation created by the development of the means of production and brings about a successful proletarian revolution. This subjective element, however, consists merely of the revulsion and resentment of the working class against capitalist exploitation. Marxism does not visualise that any values suitable to the success of a socialist economy are created prior to the proletarian revolution. Indeed Marxism does not deal with socialist values at

all. We have seen earlier that freedom, equality and fellowship are the values of socialism and they are also the values of democracy in the political sphere. According to the Marxian theory of super structure, such values will emerge after and not before a successful socialist revolution. We will presently consider whether a socialist society can ever be established unless, as a pre-condition, a substantial section of the people have come to cherish the values which are necessary for the successful functioning of a socialist economy.

Place of Ideas in Materialist Philosophy

Materialism or monistic naturalism postulates that life has evolved from lifeless matter. As between matter and mind, materialism gives primacy to matter. Matter existed before consciousness emerged. Idealism on the other hand gives primacy to mind or ideas. In its monistic form, idealism denies the separate existence of matter.

It may be that the primacy given to matter over mind in materialist philosophy led Marx to the conclusion that ideologies prevailing in a society are the super-structure of the basic economic system. Materialist philosophy, however, does not necessarily lead to that conclusion.

The primacy given by materialism to matter over mind is only a primacy in time. It is not primacy in terms of relative importance. Like lifeless matter, the human mind and the ideas which it conceives are also a part of the total reality. There is nothing in materialist philosophy which justifies the conclusion that one part of reality is more important than the other.

Indeed the entire history of humanity bears witness to the decisive importance of the role of ideas. Human beings have understood many of the secrets of nature and changed the face of the earth. None of the other animal species have achieved anything which is even remotely comparable to the achievements of human beings. The sole cause of this difference is the superior thinking power of human beings. Human history is primarily the history of ideas and their influence in shaping the life of man and of his environment.

The human mind does not merely reflect the external physical reality. If the role of the mind was merely to act as a mirror of the rest of nature, there would be no qualitative difference between the mental capacity of human beings and other animals. Because the human mind has superior thinking power, it plays a creative role. It not only observes but formulates hypotheses and tries them out. It is man's creative reason, his ideas, which have led to the accumulation of knowledge and the power which goes with it.

Apart from the unjustified assumption that ideas have less capacity to influence the course of history than the changes which take place in the economic system, the super-structure theory is also based on another fallacy. The theory assumes that the system of ideas current in any society at a given time is the reflection of only the economic system prevailing at *that time*. This assumption is equally unjustified. Ideas are influenced not only by the current situation but also by previous ideas. There is a logical connection between ideas of the past and those of the present. We can trace the entire history of philosophy and of the natural and social sciences by showing how former philosophers and scientists have influenced the ideas of their successors. Of course, ideas are constantly referred back to the contemporary social and natural surroundings and are modified when any modification is required, but they are not wholly derived from or influenced by those surroundings. Even the ideas of Marx disprove the super-structure theory. They in the first place were not a mere super-structure because they were in conflict with the prevailing capitalist system. Secondly, they were derived to a considerable extent from the ideas of previous thinkers.

The super-structure theory suffers from a third fallacy. It assumes that while the super-structure is ideological or mental, the basic economic system is physical. That, however, is not the case. The economic system, even according to Marxism, does not merely consist of the means of production, such as land or plant and machinery. It consists of the *ownership* of these means. Now ownership is a social convention based on ideas which are translated into laws. The concept of ownership and the laws on which it is based are also ideological. There is no reason why the ideas which result in the ownership of the means of production should have a

greater primacy over value systems which call for a change in the pattern of ownership.

To give primacy to the means of production over ideas created by the human mind is clearly unhistorical. Who after all created the means of production? As Roy used to say, the human brain is the main means of production because it produces ideas which enable man to satisfy his needs and to achieve success in life.

In regard to the origin of the first means of production, Roy observed, "The doctrine that social evolution is determined by the development of the means of production begs the question: who created the first means of production and how?"[1] In answering the question, he wrote: "One can imagine an exceptionally clever anthropoid ape hitting upon the idea of breaking a branch and using it for beating down fruits, instead of taking the trouble of climbing to the top of the tree. The first non-biological, extra-organic tool was created. The ability to prolong his arms with the help of some external means freed the descendant of the ancestors of man from the biological necessity of adaptation by growing limbs. The production of the original means of production was not economically determined; nor was it to be referred to some supernatural creator. As a mutation in the process of biological evolution it was determined, but physically, not economically. The production of the first tool was a deed done by an animal possessed of a highly developed brain capable of rudimentary thought. An idea in the brain of the first ancestor of man--perhaps it could not as yet be distinguished from biological impulse--preceded the act of producing the original means of production. The first non-biological, extra-organic tool (limbs are also tools) was created by the ancestor of man in course of the struggle for existence, which provides the basic impulse of pre-human biological evolution."[2]

Radical Humanism asserts that recognition of the decisive role of ideas in the shaping of history is wholly consistent with the philosophy of Materialism or Monistic Naturalism. Radical Humanism thus incorporates in materialist philosophy all that is

1 *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution,* Vol.II, p.285.

2 *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution,* Vol.II, p.286.

positive in Idealist philosophy. Radical Humanism does not accept either the ontology or the epistemology of Idealism. It does not believe in any super-sensual category like the universal spirit, nor does it agree that the human mind is incapable of acquiring knowledge of the external reality. It asserts that ideas, being products of the human brain, have physical existence and that they alone enable man to be the maker of his future.

Value-Base of Social Revolutions

We do not have sufficient historical evidence to enable us to assess the nature of revolutionary changes which may have taken place in ancient human communities. There is, however, abundant material about the two types of revolutions which have taken place in recent times--the democratic revolutions in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries and the communist revolutions in Russia, China and some other countries during the current century.

Roy's statement that every *worthwhile* social revolution must be preceded by a philosophical (cultural) revolution is borne out by the history of both democratic and communist revolutions, positively in the first case and negatively in the second.

The democratic revolutions which took place in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries destroyed feudalism and replaced it by capitalism. That is why they are referred to in communist literature as bourgeois democratic revolutions. But the significant fact is that they were not merely economic revolutions. They gave birth to modern democracy and laid the basis of a more libertarian social order. They brought about a comprehensive political, economic and social transformation. This was because they were based on a cultural-philosophical revolution.

The transformation started with the Renaissance movement which took place in Europe for a period of about 200 years, from the middle of the 14th to the middle of the 16th century. It was a movement of reason against faith. It led later to Reformation of the Church and later still to the glorious period of Enlightenment in Europe in the 18th century. It destroyed the belief in the divine right of kings and demolished the cultural base of feudalism. By

liberating the human spirit from the bondage of blind faith, it led to an unprecedented growth in science and brought about the industrial revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries. The bourgeois democratic revolutions in England, France and other European countries were only a part of this total transformation.

The Renaissance movement which thus transformed the face of the earth cannot be adequately explained by the theory of economic determinism. The small mercantile class which was developing in feudal societies of that time cannot possibly be regarded as the creator and inspirer of the Renaissance movement. The movement originated in the ideas of thinkers and philosophers most of whom came from the churches and monastaries of that time and who were inspired by the humanist and rationalist ideas of the ancient Greek civilization. The emerging mercantile class took advantage of the movement but did not create it.

In tracing the history of the European Renaissance, Roy said, "From the fact that the Renaissance approximately synchronised with the rise of the trading class it is deduced that individualism and humanism were principles of the ideology of the bourgeoisie. Historically that is not true. The Renaissance was a humanist revival; it invoked the humanist tradition of the pagan culture of the Greco-Roman antiquity. Individualism is an equally ancient principle of libertarian thought. The Renaissance declared the dignity and sovereignty of the individual on the authority of the Sophists, Epicureans, Stoics and also of early Christianity. A careful study of the economic conditions of the early Middle Ages shows that there was no causal connection between the rise of the trading class and the Renaissance, that humanist individualism was not a mere super-structure, nor a justification, of any particular economic system."[3]

In a speech delivered in December 1946, Roy dealt with the genesis of both the Renaissance and the Reformation. Referring to the commencement of the Renaissance movement, he said, "Genoa was the most prosperous trading republic of the time; it did not produce a single man of the Renaissance. It was untouched by the

3 *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* Vol. I, p. 65

spirit of Humanism. So was Venice until the late Renaissance. On the other hand, Florence, where the great men of the Renaissance were born, was not a trading republic. The Medicis were not bourgeois; socially, they were classical representatives of mediaevalism. There was no connecting link, no causal connection, between Renaissance Humanism and the rising bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie of the time did not support the Renaissance. Therefore, some modern sociologists have condemned the Renaissance as a reactionary aristocratic movement."[4]

Referring to the origin of the Reformation, Roy said, "Coming to the next chapter, the Reformation, Calvin and Luther are called representatives of the bourgeoisie. The fact, however, is that bourgeoisie were against the Reformation also. In France, it was revolt of the lower military officers, all hailing from the feudal nobility. The monarchy, under the pressure of financial interests, concluded the Italian wars. Thousands of army officers were thrown out of employment. They swelled the ranks of the Huguenots, and the bourgeoisie suppressed that movement. In Germany, Luther's revolt against Rome was supported by the feudal princes who wanted to break away from the Holy Empire. When the bourgeoisie came to power, control of the means of production was not enough to fortify their position. They had to have spiritual sanction for their ambition to rule. They found that Calvin's and Luther's ideas served their purpose very well. They adopted Protestant Christianity as their religion."[5]

The immediate cause of the great French revolution was the philosophy of Enlightenment. With reference to the connection between Enlightenment and the French revolution, Roy observed, "The Enlightenment was the effective cause of the revolution; and the origin of the philosophy of the Enlightenment could be traced to the intellectual Renaissance of the twelth century, if one did not want to go back further into the long, long process of the spiritual growth of man. The eighteenth century Materialism was not the philosophy of the rising bourgeoisie, nor was the Enlightenment a bourgeois ideological movement."[6]

4 *Beyond Communism,* 2nd reprint, January 1981, p. 40.

5 *Beyond Communism,* 2nd reprint, January 1981, p.41

Thus the way to the bourgeois democratic revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries was paved by the philosophical revolution brought about by the Renaissance movement. That is why the revolutions were not confined merely to the economic transformation from feudalism to capitalism. Their liberating effect was experienced in all aspects of life. That they promoted the progress of mankind is beyond dispute. The revolutions were undoubtedly "worthwhile."

The story of the subsequent communist revolutions in Russia, China and elsewhere was materially different. These revolutions also were preceded by an ideological movement generated principally by Marx, Engels and Lenin. This ideology also did not arise from the proletariat. Neither Marx, nor Engels nor Lenin came from the working class. Their ideas were derived partly from previous thinkers and partly from the economic situation of their time. The difference, however, was that they deliberately excluded moral and cultural values from their ideology. In fact, they characterised the socialism based on moral and cultural values as "utopian". The result was that communism was a purely economic system having no cultural counterpart. The communist revolutions did not have a value-base.

It is, therefore, not surprising that communist revolutions took place only in culturally under-developed countries. It is also not surprising that the communist revolutions resulted in dictatorships of indefinite duration which have refused to wither away, and in which the people have been deprived of basic civil liberties including freedom of expression. The hope which Marx and Engels expressed in the Communist Manifesto that after a communist revolution, "we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all" has been wholly belied. Communism triumphed but Marxism failed.

The democratic revolutions as seen above promoted to a considerable extent the political, economic and social freedom of man. The same cannot be said about the communist revolutions. Such political and social freedom as is available in bourgeois society has been abolished under communism. Even the economic system built up in the communist States is anti-humanist. It can be more

6. *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution,* vol.I.pp. 258-59.

appropriately described as State capitalism than socialism. What has been achieved is to transfer economic power from the capitalist class to another class consisting of successful politicians. On balance, the outcome of the communist revolutions is negative.

Socialism is cherished as an economic institution which would function for the common benefit of all the people. A socialist economy can function successfully only in a society in which socialist values have come to prevail. We have seen in an earlier chapter (Chapter 12) that the utility of any institution depends upon the people who work that institution and the people among whom the institution is worked. If the concerned people do not cherish the values which a particular institution is meant to express, the institution is utterly worthless. A socialist economy cannot function unless a substantial number of the people which constitute the society cherish the values of freedom, equality and fellowship, and are actuated by the spirit of rationalism, secularism and self-reliance. Where a society has gone through a cultural transformation in which these values are generated, and where a social revolution takes place in consequence thereof, the economy established after the revolution will function as a socialist economy. Values must have precedence over social institutions if the latter are to fulfill their purpose. That is why a worthwhile social revolution must be preceded by a philosophical revolution which generates the values of the future society. These values will constitute the inspiration of the revolution and also be the basis of the successful functioning of the post-revolutionary institutions.

Philosophy of History

Radical Humanist philosophy of history (historiology) is best understood by contrasting it with that of Marxism.

Marxian historiology consists of the theory of economic determinism. The theory has two elements, one subjective and the other objective. The subjective element is expressed in the famous statement in the Communist Manifesto that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." The objective element is expressed in the dialectical view that every

economic system generates forces which eventually overthrow it and give birth to a higher economic order.

The first of these elements of Marxist historiology, the theory of class struggle, assumes that all persons, to whatever class they belong, are actuated only by the economic motive. In a capitalist society, the working class as well as the capitalist class act according to their respective economic interests. They are, therefore, constantly engaged in class struggles. The determining factor is the economic motive.

A little reflection will show that that is also the basic assumption of the apparently objective dialectical element in Marxian historiology. Why, after all, does Marxism say that capitalism will be destroyed by a contradiction created by itself? The contradiction visualised by Marxism arises from the assumption that although with the growth of capitalism, productivity of labour would go on increasing in association with more advanced plant and machinery, the wages given to workers would always be kept on the subsistence level. Labour, Marx pointed out, is treated by capitalism as a mere commodity. Its price corresponds with its cost of production. The cost of production of labour consists of what is required for the subsistence and reproduction of labour. Workmen, therefore, will always be paid the amount of wages which are barely necessary for the maintenance of themselves and their families. The base of the capitalist contradiction conceived by Marxism is thus the assumption that capitalists would always pay to workers subsistence wages, irrespective of the profitability of their undertakings. Both the subjective and the objective elements in Marxian historiology assume that man is an economic animal.

Radical Humanism says that Marxian historiology is only a half truth. Man is influenced by the economic motive, but that is not his sole motivation. Man does require bread for his existence, but he does not live by bread alone. The humanness of man, if properly understood, would lead to a different historiology.

Consider first the statement that human history is the history of class struggles. This is only partially true. The entire development of scientific knowledge, from the discovery of how to make fire to the latest discoveries relating to inter-planetary flight, falls outside

the ambit of the history of class struggles, although it is undoubtedly a part of human history. This is also true of the history of literature and all other cultural and ethical pursuits. Even in economic affairs, man's motives are not always selfish. Several employers treat workers as human beings. In the relation between employers and employees, there is an element of cooperation as well as antagonism.

Rejecting the fallacious view that all human history is the history of class struggles, a view which represents a half truth, Radical Humanism says that human history is the history of man's struggle for freedom. The struggle for freedom, as explained earlier (Chapter 8), is a continuation on the human plane of the biological struggle for existence. The statement, therefore, that human history is the history of man's struggle for freedom is based upon the solid truth that struggle for existence is the basic urge of all biological species and that man is a part of the biological world. Such a view of history covers not only man's struggle for physical existence, but also his intellectual, artistic and ethical pursuits.

Turning to the dialectical aspect of Marxian historiology, it is found to have been disproved by history. The working class in developed capitalist countries is not being paid only subsistence wages. Their wages are often comparable to those of university professors in developing societies. In fact, advanced capitalism is now facing an opposite type of "contradiction", arising from the fact that powerful labour unions are able to demand and occasionally secure a level of wages which is above the productivity of labour and this constitutes one of the causes of stag-flation. As shown in a previous chapter, capitalism is a very unsatisfactory economy, and deserves to be replaced by a better economic system. The history of capitalism, however, does not corroborate Marxian dialectics.

On the dialectics of social development, the Radical Humanist view is that history is shaped not only by economic impulses but by cultural values and moral ideas we well. Blind urges and consciously conceived ideas both contribute to the making of history. Social developments and the development of ideas run a parallel course, each influencing the other. Ideas contribute to the shaping of social events and social events contribute to the shaping of ideas.

Radical Humanist historiology has been expressed in two Theses: Theses Nos. 6 and 15 of the Twenty-two Theses of Radical Humanism. They run as follows:

Thesis 6

"Ideation is a physiological process resulting from the awareness of environments. But once they are formed, ideas exist by themselves, governed by their own laws. The dynamics of ideas runs parallel to the process of social evolution, the two influencing each other mutually. But at no particular point of the process of the integral human evolution, can a direct causal relation be established between historial events and the movements of ideas. (Idea is here used in the common philosophical sense of ideology or system of ideas). Cultural patterns and ethical values are not mere ideological superstructures of established economic relations. They are also historically determined--by the logic of the history of ideas."

Thesis 15

The function of a revolutionary and liberating social philosophy is to lay emphasis on the basic fact of history that man is the maker of his world--man as a thinking being, and he can be so only as an individual. The brain is a means of production, and produces the most revolutionary commodity. Revolution pre-supposes iconoclastic ideas. An increasingly large number of men conscious of their creative power, motivated by the indomitable will to remake the world, moved by the adventure of ideas, and fired with the ideal of a free society of free men, can create the conditions under which democracy will be possible."

SEVENTEEN

WAY TO HUMANIST REVOLUTION

A Twentieth Century Renaissance based on a radical form of humanism is the need of the contemporary world. This would involve the dissemination among the people of certain values and attitudes, followed by the setting up of appropriate political, economic and social institutions through which those values and attitudes may be expressed.

The movement for this second Renaissance would in the first place assert that individual freedom is the basic value of personal and social life. Being derived from the biological urge for existence, the urge to freedom-the urge to live a life in which the human potentialities of the individual would be fully developed-is inherent in human nature and is shared, consciously or unconsciously, by all human beings. Collectivist cults and totalitarian doctrines are destructive of individual freedom and must be opposed on that ground. Secondly, human reason-the thinking faculty-is a product of biological evolution, being a natural adaptation to physical determinism, and is possessed in different degrees by all human beings. Reason enables an individual to acquire knowledge, to develop self-reliance, to appreciate the necessity of moral norms in social life, and to secure freedom in cooperation with fellow-beings. A rationalist movement, i.e. a movement based on the recognition of the supreme value of reason, must be developed so as to oppose all forms of superstition, blind faith, religious bigotry and social cant. Thirdly, it is necessary to assert that the moral impulses of

human beings are products of the biological evolution, that morality does not require the sanction of religious faith, and that moral standards in a society grow with the growth of reason. A humanist resurgence, based on the scientifically derived values of freedom, rationalism and secular morality, is required by the entire contemporary world.

The humanist values express themselves in social life as the popularly known democratic values of liberty, equality and fraternity (freedom, equality and fellowship). They must be realised through appropriate political, economic and social institutions.

The framework of these institutions will of course vary from country to country but they should reflect the common humanist inspiration. The political constitution should be so altered as to provide for the maximum decentralisation of power and its exercise by the people through suitable local democracies. The excessive economism of capitalism and the excessive centralisation of communism should be replaced by a decentralised economy based upon the principle of cooperation. Humanist values should guide the relations, between races, communities and nationalities, and also between family members. Education should be so designed as to promote critical intelligence and moral sensitivity.

The practical steps to be taken for bringing about such a humanist renaissance cannot be the same for all countries. The internal situation differs in different regions of the world. There are, in the first place, western capitalist countries having parliamentary democracies which protect the civil liberties of the people in various degrees. There are, secondly, communist countries now (under transition) with nationalised economies and one-party governments which do not allow the expression or organisation of dissident opinion. the third group consists of authoritarian States in the Third World-in Asia, Africa and South America. India and some other Third World countries, in which the weak unstable forms of democracy continue to exist, form the fourth group.

It is mainly with reference to India and countries in the fourth group that we will examine the practical steps which may be taken to bring about a humanist revolution. Humanists in other countries will naturally devise the steps appropriate to the local situation to promote a humanist renaissance.

It may be added that India occupies a pivotal position in relation to the Third World. If Indian democracy is saved by converting it into a comprehensive political, economic and social democracy, as visualised by Radical Humanism, democracy in all the countries of the Third World, including those which have authoritarian regimes, is likely to be revived and revitalised. Eclipse of democracy in India, on the other hand, would strengthen the forces of authoritarianism throughout the Third world.

Communist Way to Revolution

We are here using the word revolution in the sense of a basic transformation of society. We are, therefore, not referring to the palace revolutions by which one group of authoritarian rulers in replaced by another. We are also not referring to those so-called revolutions by which the nascent democracies which came into existence in the countries of the Third World after the Second World War were replaced by dictatorial regimes. They can more appropriately be described as counter-revolutions. If by revolution is meant a basic transformation of society, the only way (apart from the humanist way) which is currently recognised as being capable of achieving a revolution is the communist way.

Till recent times, communists were of the view that the revolution cherished by them can be brought about only by a forcible seixure of power and not through the ballot box. The prospects, however, of a successful violent revolution have been on the decline. This is because the military strength of a State today is far greater than what it was at the time of the French or even the Russian revolution. It is not possible to overthrow a modern State by using primitive weapons like spears and axes or a few stolen or purchased pistols and guns. In the conditions of today, a violent communist revolution is possible only in an under-developed country where the local government is wholly disintegrated and has little military strength. It is, however, obvious that a violent revolution brought about in this manner will establish a highly authoritarian State. For reasons given in the last chapter, the balance sheet of such a revolution will be negative.

In more advanced countries where the governments are relatively stable, communists are now trying to achieve their objective through the ballot box. Here also the chances of communist success are meagre.[1] In advanced Western democracies, the apprehension that the success of a communist party would lead eventually to the establishment of a dictatorship prevents most of the voters from voting in favour of communist candidates. On the other hand, in developing countries like India where democracy is still weak and unstable, a substantial electoral advance of communism is likely to provoke a counter-revolution. This is because the electoral advance of communist parties is not based upon the spread of democratic values among the people. So long as the voters are not educated in the values of democracy, the electoral contest between communist and other parties takes place on the basis of deceptive populist slogans. In such a situation, a reactionary upper class party, which is already in power and is faced with the prospect of a communist electoral success, would discard the shackels of formal democracy and establish a dictatorial regime. The communists also, if perchance they come to power, will abandon democracy to form a dictatorship of their own. The latter may be less reactionary than a dictatorship established on upper class support, but it cannot satisfy democratic aspirations. Once established, a dictatorship tends to perpetuate itself, whether it arises from the right or the left.

Some features of the communist way to revolution deserve to be emphasised in order to appreciate by contrast the characteristics of the humanist way.

In the first place, although the ultimate objective of communism is the economic transformation of society by expropriation of the capitalist class and nationalisation of the means of production, this objective is to be achieved by the attainment of political power by the communist party. A communist revolution is brought about *from above,* by use of the political power concentrated in the State.

Secondly, under the influence of the theory of economic determinism, the communist appeal to the deprived majority is exclusively economic. It is an appeal to their class interests. To

1. The chances have been almost wholly destroyed by the collapse of communism in Russia and Eastern Europe.

appeal to the cultural aspirations of the masses would conflict with the theory of economic determinism. The theory assumes that the masses of the people, being immersed in poverty and subject to a constant three of starvation and insecurity, have no cultural aspirations and cannot appreciate humanist values. The masses, according to this theory, must first be raised to a higher economic level before these values can appeal to them. The theory, however, also assumes that some members of the upper classes become "declassed," join the communist party and become leaders of the working class and the other exploited masses. We have thus a typical communist movement consisting of an elite leadership and an unenlightened mass following. The success of such a movement must necessarily result in an authoritarian regime which would establish, not the dictatorship of the proletariat, but the dictatorship of the communist party over the rest of the society including the proletariat.

The Humanist Way

For the sake of clarity, the various characteristics of the humanist way to revolution are given below serially:

(1) Revolution From Below

A humanist revolution will be brought about, not from above by capturing political power and utilising it for the transformation of society, but from below by educating the people in the democratic values of freedom, equality and fellowship and helping them to form suitable political, economic and social grass-root organisations. The values of self-reliance and rationalism are implicit in the value of freedom. A humanist revolution, being basically a cultural revolution, cannot be achieved by the use of political power.

As a general rule, the people in every country get the government they deserve. This is particularly so in a democracy. The government in a democracy is constituted by people's representatives. These representatives represent, among other things, the prejudices and irrationalities of the people. They cannot be the instruments of a cultural transformation of society. Those on the other hand who cherish the values of a higher culture cannot successfully compete

in an election against candidates who represent the prevailing cultural values. It follows that a cultural revolution must come from below, by a process of revaluation of the values prevailing among the people, and not from above, by the use of State power. In a democracy, it is the people who can change a government, and not the government the people.

This is well illustrated by the Central and State Governments in India. They are mostly composed of corrupt and power hungry politicians. It is idle to expect that such governments will create a better society, or in the alternative that governments composed of better men and women can be set up so long as a majority of the people remain steeped in superstition and blind faith. The vicious circle of a superstitious and credulous electorate setting up a government of corrupt and self seeking politicians can be broken by working among the people from below and not by trying to improve the society from above.

So long as the bulk of the people remain at the level of blind faith and religious orthodoxy, any attempt by a revolutionary group to capture State power must result in the establishment of a dictatorial regime. Only an enlightened people can set up an enlightened government. Educative and organisational work undertaken at the level of the ordinary people is the only way to achieve a humanist revolution.

(2) *Humanist Approach*

Humanists approach all the people, to whatever class they belong and however poor and ignorant they may be, as human beings who can appreciate the basic humanist values of freedom, rationalism and secular morality and the democratic values derived therefrom, freedom, equality and fellowship.

Humanists know that the urge for freedom, being a continuation on the human plane of the biological urge for existence, is shared by all human beings. They also know that the thinking faculty and the moral impulse are also among the biological attributes of human nature. These, as we have seen are among the basic conclusions of humanist philosophy. The democratic values of freedom, equality and fellowship, being derived from the biological attributes of human

nature, must eventually appeal to all human beings. Superstition, blind faith and preconceived notions may come in the way, but not for long and certainly not for ever.

In fact, the humanist values of freedom, equality and fellowship should have a far greater appeal to those who are sunk in poverty and degradation than to those who are free from physical want. Freedom, which includes the individual's ability to earn an honourable living, is particularly needed by those who are compelled to live in conditions of semi-starvation. The need for equality is particularly felt by those who are subjected to extreme inequality. The value of fellowship is easily appreciated by those who have to fight for freedom and equality in cooperation with others who are similarly situated.

The notion that those who live at the starvation level cannot appreciate these humanist values is a time-honoured prejudice. The prejudice exists among those who have never approached the masses or who have approached them only for the purpose of seeking their votes or of organising them on the class basis. Those who have approached the deprived sections of society with a humanist outlook have found that the so-called masses respond enthusiastically to the humanist appeal. They are also human beings and have the same urges and aspirations.

The humanist approach to the people should further be distinguished from the humanitarian approach. Humanists do not go to the masses as do-gooders. Their object is not merely to satisfy their conscience by helping others. Their object is to help others to help themselves. They want the people to stand on their own legs, conscious of their human dignity, proud of their moral sensitivity and convinced that they can make their future by determined cooperative effort.

(3) *Reliance On Moral Appeal, not Class Appeal*

Moral appeal is the fulcrum of the humanist way to revolution. Humanists champion all the just demands of workers and other deprived and exploited sections of the people, but they do so on grounds of morality and justice and not on purely economic grounds. Humanists are not interested in intensifying the class struggle.

There are two reasons why the moral approach is far superior to a purely economic or class approach.

In the first place, when workers or peasants fight for their economic demands, they fight mainly because they feel that the demands are morally justified. To regard them as mere economic demands is factually wrong. It is also a bad strategy. A moral struggle is far more powerful than a mere economic struggle.

Secondly an economic demand, if it is a just demand, gets far greater popular support when it is presented as a demand for justice. Persons not belonging to the aggrieved class would join the movement for the enforcement of a just demand. The struggle becomes a moral struggle and does not remain a class struggle.

A moral approach is also necessary in dealing with caste or communal issues. In a society consisting of different castes and communities as in India, it frequently happens that some castes and communities are given unfair and discriminatory treatment. Even in such cases, the movement against the unfair and discriminatory treatment should be a moral movement of all those who stand for fairness and justice, and not a sectarian movement of only the aggrieved caste or community. In particular, the struggle against untouchability in India should not merely be a struggle of millitant members of the scheduled castes, but should be a joint struggle of members of the scheduled castes and progressive members of the rest of the society.

(4) *Total Revolution*

The main characteristic of a humanist revolution is that it is based upon certain values. In social terms, the values are freedom, equality and fellowship. Now it is in the nature of values that their operation cannot be compartmentalised. If a certain value is cherished by the people, it will get expression in all aspects of life. If the people desire freedom, they will want it not only in political life but in economic and social life as well. For the same reason, they will want equality and fellowship in all aspects of life. We have seen above that a communist revolution is expected to take place in two stages, first a political revolution resulting in power being captured by a communist party, and secondly, an economic revolution brought

about by the use of that power. A communist revolution takes place in these two stages because it is a revolution from above and is not based on propagation of values. A humanist revolution will not have such a sequence. There is certainly a priority of ideas and ideals in a humanist revolution. Such a revolution is preceded by a cultural-philosophical revolution. But once values have spread among the people, the expression of these values is simultaneous in the political, economic and social spheres of life.

Jayaprakash Narayan popularised the idea of a total revolution. A humanist revolution will necessarily be a total revolution because it is based on humanist values. The necessity of a total revolution was brought out in Thesis No. 10 of the Twenty Two Theses of Radical Humanism, where it is stated: "Economic democracy is no more possible in the absence of political democracy than the latter is in the absence of the former." Democracy to be real must be simultaneously a political, economic and social democracy. Democracy will necessarily have this comprehensive character if it is preceded by a cultural--philosophical revolution.

(5) *Nature of Educative Work*

Humanist education of the people will not consist merely of teaching in the abstract the values of freedom, equality and fellowship and the humanist approach based on self-reliance, rationalism and secular morality. The values will be explained to the people by reference to their present conditions of life and the glorious future which they can create for themselves. It can be shown to them that they themselves are responsible for setting up governments consisting of corrupt and self-seeking politicians, because they yield to populist appeals and caste considerations in casting their votes; that they allow the continuation of an exploitative economy because of their passivity, lack of self-reliance and lack of mutual cooperationl that they allow a hierarchial social system to continue because they remain fatalistic and superstitious and do not revolt against social inequality. It can also be shown to them that if they decide to take the future into their own hands, and work in cooperation with their fellow beings, they can create comprehensive political, economic and social democracy in which the values of freedom, equality and

fellowship will be realised by all. They can create a political structure where power is radically decentralised and is exercised by them through People's Committees. Instead of being employees of some master, they can become self-employed by forming producers' and consumers' cooperative societies. If that is not possible and they continue to be employed by somebody else, they can claim an increasing share in the management of the undertaking and in the profit earned. They can create a cultural climate in which communal harmony would prevail. They can set up an educational system in which pupils will be taught to be self-reliant and conscious of the superiority of a life of moral integrity. They will give maximum importance to the upliftment of women. The propagation of humanist values in society is thus a wide ranging programme of variegated activity.

(6) *Grass-root Organisations*

Humanist work will consist of not only educating the people in humanist values but helping them to form grass-root organisations. People's Committees and cooperative societies are the basic grass-root organisations. Other organisations which may be mentioned in this context are voters' councils and trade unions.

A local People's Committee should be the main political organisation formed for the purpose of realising the ideal of an organised democracy. At the initial stage, a People's Committee will not consist of persons elected by all the people of a village or a town mohalla. If a People's Committee is elected before the bulk of the people in a locality have come to appreciate humanist values, the elected committee will not really be representative of the people. It would represent the hegemony of upper classes in the locality. At the initial stage, therefore, the People's Committee will consist of those social revolutionaries who appreciate the basic humanist values of freedom, rationalism and secular morality, and the specific democratic values of freedom, equality and fellowship, and who want to see that those values are spread in the rest of the locality. The People's Committee will try to generate a spirit of self-reliance and mutual cooperation among the rest of the people. It will combat superstition and blind faith and propagate a rationalist

attitude. It will find ways and means to improve agriculture, to increase irrigation facilities and to promote local small scale industry. It will try to improve school education and promote adult education. It will have a variety of other activities such as dealing with problems of health and hygiene, rural housing and roads, family planning, etc. It will propagate against untouchability and caste hierarchy. It will promote communal harmony. It will open a centre for the elimination of corruption. In the course of its work, it will radicalise the whole locality so that the local panchayat or municipal committee will eventually consist, not of representatives of the upper classes, but of representatives of the people as a whole. When that is achieved, the local panchayat or municipal committee will itself become a People's Committee, and a separate People's Committee will be unnecessary. If a movement for People's Committees developes properly, a stage may come when the People's Committees in a constituency would be able to set up their own candidate in the election of the State assembly or the Parliament. The People's Committee movement should culminate in an amendment of the Constitution so as to provide for an organised democracy in the country.

A cooperative movement would be closely linked up with the People's Committee movement. Where cooperatives already exist, their functioning should be improved by securing the services of genuine cooperators. Producers' cooperatives may be started in agriculture and small-scale industry. Distribution of goods should take place through a network of consumers' cooperatives.

The main purpose of voters' councils is to ensure purity in elections. Voters' Councils will function as watch-dogs over the election process. They will explain to the voters the programme of various parties and candidates. They will try to get parties and candidates committed to certain basic demands of the people.

Trade Unions should be free from the influence of political parties. Their main function should be to bargain collectively with the employers. They can also function as social centres for such purposes as adult education, child care and family planning. They can develop into centres of social reform.

(7) *People's Struggles and Developmental Work*

Once People's Committees are formed, they are bound to sponsor the various demands of the people, whether those demands are economic, social or political. A People's Committee may have to strive for adequate wages to agricultural labour in villages or to unorganised labour in towns and cities, for drinking water and other facilities to Harijans, for government assistance in a local irrigation project, for removal of a corrupt revenue or police officer, and so forth. A People's Committee is bound to be strengthened by leading these struggle, provided the demands are just and are capable of being granted and the struggles are conducted peacefully and without violence. Sponsoring of an irrational demand which is not capable of being granted, or recourse to violence even in support of a just demand, would weaken a People's Committee. If a People's Committee consists of humanists who share the spirit of self-reliance, rationalism and secular morality, struggles led by them are bound to be just and fair and they would result in making the People's Committee an effective instrument of people's power. It requires to be emphasised, however, that a People's Committee, besides being involved in people's struggles for just causes, will engage itself in a great deal of developmental work such as improvement of agriculture, promotion of small-scale industry, undertaking local schemes of irrigation, securing facilities for school and adult education, removal of untouchability and casteism, creating communal harmony, encouraging a movement of women's equality and so forth.

(8) *The Human Agency*

The educational and organisational work necessary for a humanist revolution will not be done by a political party. The work will be carried out by dedicated humanists who will not aspire for political power, but who will ensure that power will percolate in increasing measure to the people, in proportion as the latter espouse humanist values and form grass-root organisations. In the course of that work, humanist workers will function as guides, friends and philosophers of the people, and not as their would-be rulers. Consistently with their philosophy, their practice will be rational and ethical. They will be a band of free men and women united in the determination to create a world of freedom.

(9) *Peaceful Me1lans*

Since their work is primarily educative, humanists are committed to the ways of peace. Resort to violence is counter-productive. It leads to a much greater violence on the part of the police and other State authorities. So long as the minimum civil liberties continue to be available, humanists will function openly and lawfully. Besides meetings, seminars and distribution of literature, processions and demonstrations can have educative value when properly organised. If civil liberties are abolished, resort to underground activities may become necessary. These may be supplemented by open satyagraha, whenever feasible.

(10) *Relation with the State*

The humanist way described above is not indifferent to the problem of power. A friendly government would be useful for some aspects of humanist activities. No official assistance is of course required in propagating humanist values or in forming People's Committees. Much of the work of People's Committees will also be done without reference to the State authorities. But when a People's Committee wants to have a school building, or to improve roads, or to promote a small irrigation project, or to secure essential commodities through consumers, cooperatives, cooperation of the governmental machinery will be required. This cooperation would be available in increasing measure, because politicians have to depend on the votes of the people for their re-election. A politician cannot afford to non-cooperate with a self-reliant and vigorously functioning People's Committee. Where a local party representative adopts an attitude of non-cooperation, which may happen frequently, the People's Committees will set up their own non-party candidate at the next election and secure his success. Government cooperation with People's Committees will increase progressively as People's Committees succeed in securing the allegiance of the electorate.

All power today is concentrated in the State. Unorganised and atomised people are helpless for all practical purposes. People's power, 'Lok-Shakti' as Jayaprakash Narayan called it, will be built up from below, as the people begin to cherish humanist values,

become self-reliant and mutually cooperative, and form themselves into People's Committees. People's power will increase with the increase in the number and the strength of People's Committees. With the increase in Lok Shakti, there will be increasing cooperation between the organs of people's power and organs of State power, between Lok Shaki and Rajya Shakti. A stage will come when State power, Rajya Shakti, will be subordinate to and under the control of, people's power or Lok Shakti. That is one of the perspectives of a humanist revolution.

(11)*Relation with Political Parties*

We noticed earlier that political parties play an important role so long as parliamentary democracy continues to exist. They would become redundant when democracy is organised from below on the basis of People's Committees and representatives of People's Committees are elected in large number to the legislatures. So long as that is not achieved, political parties will form the government as well as the opposition. It is therefore, desirable that, as far as possible, political parties should consist of persons possessed of intelligence and moral integrity. Humanists claim that so long as the bulk of the electorate continues to be ignorant and superstitious, persons of moral integrity will not succeed in party politics. As the work of educating the people in humanist values proceeds, a better type of politician will come to the forefront in different political parties. Humanists, therefore, have a friendly attitude towards all persons of moral integrity who join political parties. Humanists themselves are convinced that the non-party work described above is of far greater importance, but they wish nothing but good luck to those sincere persons who disagree with them and join political parties.

(12)*Short-Term Programme*

The work of spreading humanist values in society is bound to take a long time. In the intervening period, there is a danger that, in countries like India, the existing superficial democracy may be replaced by an open dictatorship. In order that humanists may be able to continue their educative and organisational work, it is necessary

that the present limited democracy should be protected and existing civil liberties should continue to be available. Radical humanists, therefore, have a short-term as well as a long-term programme. The short-term programme consists of protecting the available civil liberties and preventing the imposition of a dictatorship. The long-term programme consists of the spread of humanist values and the creation of grassroot organisations. In India, Radical Humanists have set up, in association with several other friends, two organisations, the People's Union for Civil Liberties for the short-term programme of defending civil liberties and the Citizens for Democracy for the long-term programme of humanist education and organisation. It is hoped that, with the cooperation of these two organisations, the superficial and limit democracy of today would be gradually transformed into a comprehensive political, economic and social democracy of the future. For carrying out this short-term and long-term work and generally for the purpose of developing a radical humanist movement in the country, an organisation called the Indian Radical Humanist Association has been formed as a coordinating centre of the activities of radical humanists. This is the basic organisation of radical humanists in India.

(13)*Means and Ends*

The ideal of a comprehensive political, economic and social democracy cannot be achieved by resort to undemocratic means. Capture of political power would not be a means to the achievement of a genuine democracy if you create thereby a dictatorial regime. Only democratic means can lead to a democratic end.

Some critics have pointed out that the cultural revolution visualised by radical humanists is bound to take a very long time. It is implied in the criticism that a shorter way would be preferable. The criticism is correct, but the implication is wrong. A cultural revolution may take a good deal of time, but it is wrong to suppose that there is a shorter way to achieve the goal of a genuine comprehensive democracy. All the shorter ways proposed so far have led in the opposite direction.

Radical humanists are not disheartened by the long period of time which must elapse before a humanist revolution is fully achieved. They know that the means adopted for achieving a humanist revolution constitute in themselves a partial attainment of the goal. To the

extent to which humanist values are spread in society and grassroot organisations are built for realising those values, to that extent a humanist revolution is achieved.

We have emphasised earlier that democracy is a path rather than a goal. No society can be fully democratic; it can only be more democratic than before. A humanist revolution, which is designed to achieve the ideal of comprehensive democracy, must necessarily partake of the character of the ideal. A humanist revolution is also a path to be traversed rather than a goal to be achieved. A radical humanist who traverses the way to a humanist revolution is, therefore, succeeding all the time. Radical Humanism known no failure.

APPENDIX

TWENTY TWO THESES OF RADICAL HUMANISM

(These Theses were adopted by an All-India Conference of the Radical Democratic Party in December 1946, and were published as "Principles of Radical Democracy." These 19 and 20 were amended in 1948 when it was felt that functioning as a political party was inconsistent with Radical Humanism and the Radical Democratic Party was therefore dissolved. The Theses are reproduced below as amended in 1948. The original Theses 19 and 20 are given in a Note to this Appendix)

ONE

Man is the archetype of society. Co-operative social relationships contribute to develop individual potentialities. But the development of the individual is the measure of social progress. Collectivity presupposes the existence of individuals. Except as the sum total of freedom and well-being, actually enjoyed by individuals, social liberation and progress are imaginary ideals, which are never attained. Well-being, if it is actual, is enjoyed by individuals. It is wrong to ascribe a collective ego to any form of human community (viz. nation, class etc.), as that practice means sacrifice of the individual. Collective well-being is a function of the well-being of individuals.

TWO

Quest for freedom and search for truth constitute the basic urge of human progress. The quest for freedom is the continuation, on a higher level-of ingelligence and emotion-of the biological struggle

for existence. The search for truth is a corollary thereof. Increasing knowledge of nature enables man to be progressively free from the tyranny of natural phenomena, and physical and social environments. Truth is the content of knowledge.

THREE

The purpose of all rational human endeavour, individual as well as collective, is attainment of freedom, in ever increasing measure. Freedom is progressive disappearance of all restrictions on the unfolding of the potentialities of individuals, as human beings, and not as cogs in the wheels of a mechanised social organism. The position of the individual, therefore, is the measure of the progressive and liberating significance of any collective effort or social organisation. The success of any collective endeavour is to be measured by the actual benefit for its constituent units.

FOUR

Rising out of the background of the law-governed physical nature, the human being is essentially rational. Reason, being a biological property, is not the antithesis of will. Intelligence and emotion can be reduced to a common biological denominator. Historical determinism, therefore, does not exclude freedom of the will. As a matter of fact, human will is the most powerful determining factor. Otherwise, there would be no room for revolutions in a rationally determined process of history. The rational and scientific concept of determinism is not to be confused with the teleological or religious doctrine of predestination.

FIVE

The economic interpretation of history is deduced from a wrong interpretation of materialism. It implies dualism, whereas materialism is a monistic philosophy. History is a determined process; but there are more than one causative factors. Human will is one of them, and it cannot always be referred directly to any economic inventive.

SIX

Ideation is a physiological process resulting from the awareness of environments. But once they are formed, ideas exist by themselves, governed by their own laws. The dynamics of ideas runs parallel to the process of social evolution, the two influencing each other mutually. But in no particular point of the process of the integral human evolution, can a direct causal relation be established between historical events and the movements of ideas. ('Ideas' is here used in the common philosophical sense of ideology or system of ideas). Cultural patterns and ethical values are not mere ideological superstructures of established economic relations. They are also historically determined-by the logic of the history of ideas.

SEVEN

for creating a new world of freedom, revolution must go beyond an economic recognisation of society. Freedom does not necessarily follow from the capture of political power in the name of the oppressed and exploited classes and abolition of private property in the means of production.

EIGHT

Communism or Socialism may conceivably by the means for the attainment of the goal of freedom. How far it can serve that purpose, must be judged by experience. A political system and an economic experiment, which subordinate the man of flesh and blood to an imaginary collective ego, be it the nation or a class, cannot possibly be the suitable means for the attainment of the goal of freedom. On the one hand, it is absurd to argue that negation of freedom will lead to freedom; and, on the other hand, it is not freedom to sacrifice the individual at the altar of an imaginary collective ego. Any social philosophy or scheme of social reconstruction, which does not recognise the sovereignty of the individual, and dismisses the ideal of freedom as an empty abstraction, can have no more than a very limited progressive and revolutionary significance.

NINE

The State being the political organisation of society, its withering away under Communism is a utopia which has been exploded by experience. Planned economy on the basis of socialised industries presupposes a powerful political machinery. Democratic control of that machinery alone can guarantee freedom under the new order. Planning of production for use is possible on the basis of political democracy and individual freedom.

TEN

State ownership and planned economy do not by themselves and exploitation of labour; nor do they necessarily lead to an equal distribution of wealth. Economic democracy is no more possible in the absence of political democracy than the latter is in the absence of the former.

ELEVEN

Dictatorship tends of perpetuate itself. Planned economy under political dictatorship disregards individual freedom on the pleas of efficiency, collective effort and social progress. Consequently, a higher form of democracy in the socialist society, as it is conceived at present, becomes an impossibility. Dictatorship defeats its professed end.

TWELVE

The defects of formal parliamentary democracy have also been exposed in experience. They result from the delegation of power. To make democracy effective, power must always remain vested in the people, and there must be ways and means for the people to wield the sovereign power effectively, not periodically, but from day to day. Atomised individual citizens are powerless for all practical purposes, and most of the time. They have no means to

exercise their sovereignty and to wield a standing control of the State machinery.

THIRTEEN

Liberalism is falsified or parodied under formal parliamentary democracy. The doctrine of *laissez faire* only provides the legal sanction to the exploitation of man by man. The concept of economic man negativates the liberating doctrine of individualism. The economic man is bound to be a slave or a slave holder. This vulgar concept must be replaced by the reality of an instinctively rational being who is moral because he is rational. Morality is an appeal to conscience, and conscience is the instinctive awareness of, and reaction to, environments. It is a mechanistic biological function on the level of consciousness. Therefore, it is rational.

FOURTEEN

The alternative to parliamentary democracy is not dictatorship; it is organised democracy, in the place of the formal democracy of powerless atomised individual citizens. The parliament should be the apex of a pyramidal structure of the State reared on the base of an organised democracy composed of a country wide network of People's Committees. The political organisation of society (the State) will coterminous with the entire society, and consequently the State will be under a standing democratic control.

FIFTEEN

The function of a revolutionary and liberating social philosophy is to lay emphasis on the basic fact of history that man is the maker of his world-man as a thinking being, and he can be so only as an individual. The brain is a means of production, and produces the most revolutionary commodity. Revolutions presuppose iconoclastic ideas. An increasingly large number of men, conscious of their

creative power, motivated by the indomitable will to remake the world, moved by the adventure of ideas, and field with the ideal of a free society of free men, can create the conditions under which democracy will be possible.

SIXTEEN

The method and programme of social revolution must be based on a reassertion of the basic principle of social progress. A social renaissance can come only through determined and wide-spread endeavour to educate the people as regards the principles of freedom and rational co-operative living. The people will be organised into effective democratic bodies to build up the socio-political foundation of the post-revolutionary order. Social revolution requires in rapidly increasing number men of the new renaissance and a rapidly expanding system of People's Committees, and an organic co-ordination of both. The programme of revolution will similarly be based on the principles of freedom, reason and social harmony. It will mean elimination of every form of monopoly and vested interest in the regulation of social life.

SEVENTEEN

Radical Democracy presuppose economic recognisation of society so as to eliminate the possibility of exploitation of man by man. Progressive satisfaction of material necessities is the precondition for the individual members of society unfolding their intellectual and other finer human potentialities. An economic recognisation, such as will guarantee a progressively rising standard of living, is the foundation of the Radical Democratic State. Economic liberation of the masses is an essential condition for their advancing towards the goal of freedom.

EIGHTEEN

The economy of the new social order will be based on production for use and distribution with reference to human needs. Its political

organisation excludes delegation of power, which in practice deprives the people of effective power; it will be based on the direct participation of the entire population through the People's Committees. Its culture will be based on universal dissemination of knowledge and on minimum control and maximum scope for, and incentive to, scientific and creative activities. The new society, being founded on reason and science, will necessarily be planned. But it will be planning with the freedom of the individual as its main purpose. The new society will be democratic-politically, economically as well as culturally. Consequently, it will be a democracy which can defend itself.

NINETEEN

The ideal of Radical Democracy will be attained through the collective efforts of spiritually free men united in the determination of creating a world of freedom. They will function as the guides, friends and philosophers of the people rather than as their would be rulers. Consistently with the goal of freedom, their political practice will be rational and therefore ethical. Their effort will be reinforced by the growth of the people's will to freedom. Ultimately, the Radical Democratic State will rise with the support of enlightened public opinion as well as intelligent action of the people. Realising that freedom is inconsistent with concentration of power, Radical Democrats will aim at the widest diffusion of power.

TWENTY

In the last analysis, education of the citizen is the condition for such a recognisation of society as will be conducive to common progress and prosperity without encroaching upon the freedom of the individual. The People's Committees will be the schools for the political and civic education of the citizen. The structure and function of the Radical Democratic State will enable detached individuals to come to the forefront of public affairs. manned with such individuals, the State machinery will cease to be the instrument in the hands of any particular class to coerce others. Only spiritually

free individuals in power can smash all chains of slavery and usher in freedom for all.

TWENTY-ONE

Radicalism integrates science into social organisation and reconciles individuality with collective life; it gives to freedom a moral-intellectual as well as social content: it offers a comprehensive theory of social progress in which both the dialectics of economic determinism and dynamics of ideas find their due recognition; and it deduces from the same a method and a programme of social revolution in our time.

TWENTY-TWO

Radicalism starts from the dictum that "man is the measure of everything" (Protagoras) or "man is the root of mankind" (Marx), and advocates reconstruction of the world as a commonwealth and fraternity of free men, by the collective endeavour of spiritually emancipated moral men.

NOTE TO APPENDIX

In the original version, Theses 19 and 20 ran follows

NINTETEEN

The ideal of Radical Democracy will be attained through the collective efforts of spiritually free men united in a political party with the determination of creating a world of freedom. The members of the party will function as the guides, friends and philosophers of the people rather than as their would-be rulers. Consistently with the goal of freedom, the political practice of the party will be rational and therefore ethical. The party will grow with the growth of the people's will to freedom, and come to power with the support of enlightened public opinion as well as intelligent action of the people. Realising that freedom is inconsistent with concentration of power, its aim will be the widest diffusion of power. Its success in attaining political power will only be a stage in that process, and by the logic of its own existence, the party will utilise political power for its further diffusion until the State becomes counterminous with the entire society.

TWENTY

In the last analysis, education of the citizen is the condition for such a recognisation of society as will be conducive to common progress and prosperity without encroaching upon the freedom of the individual. The Radical Democratic State will be the school for the political and civic education of the citizen. Its structure and function will enable detached individuals to come to the forefront of public affairs. Manned with such individuals, the State machinery will cease to be the instrument in the hands of any particular class to coerce others. Only spiritually free individuals in power can smash all chains of slavery and usher in freedom for all.

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PRESS COMMENTS

"...The author addresses the book to the reader who wants to work for the uplift of the deprived sections of society without getting involved of power politics. May there be many of them."

—Debonair

"...attempts to offer a framework of ideas ideals which he hopes will help the reader lead a more useful social existence.

—Financial Express

"...work to give the works to all the work in the social, economic and political spheres that has gone before...."

—The Daily