

BEYOND COMMUNISM

BY

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INTRODUCTION

India is passing through a very critical phase of her history. On the one hand, British power is being withdrawn from India; on the other, this process of rapid disappearance of foreign rule is not being attended by the growth of a healthy democracy to take its place. On the threshold of independence, our problems and difficulties have multiplied and become more complex. Not only has communal antagonism assumed appalling ferocity, the ways in which the provincial and central governments, manned by the two major parties, are conducting public affairs, suggest more of totalitarianism and domination than democracy and freedom. Hence, although the British prime minister has promised unequivocally to transfer power before June, 1948, it is impossible for thoughtful people to look to the future with easy assurance.

In this situation, it is obvious that what we will do in the coming months will go a long way in deciding our future. Hence it is essential today to approach Indian politics with a critical and responsible attitude, and with a spirit free from dogmatism and intolerance. Old habits of thought and action are clearly unsuitable to the rapidly changing situation of to-day. What was fit and proper a short while ago may be entirely out of date by now. The present time calls for a boldly non-conformist and ruthlessly rational outlook.

Those who feel the necessity of striking out new ways in the realm of political theory and practice, will find it worthwhile to go through the stimulating ideas and plans of action of the Radical Democratic Party presented in this book. For, however complicated and perplexing the recent political situation may appear to be, it is an unquestionable fact that the Radical Democratic Party had very clearly visualised and anticipated it, and that no other political school in India can claim that distinction. Having foreseen these developments, the party has naturally been

striving to meet the situation; and in this attempt, it has developed a body of political doctrines, relating to ends as well as means, which can provide guidance and inspiration to those who have now become conscious of the failure of traditional politics.

One difficulty in the way of a dispassionate consideration of the views and policies of the various political schools in India arises from the undemocratic and illiberal attitude of the main press organs in India. It deserves to be more widely realised than it is that the Indian press is mostly owned by the leading financiers in the country, and that the news and the views expressed in it provide a very traitorous guide to the formation of individual judgement. The activities of the R.D.P. are consistently blacked out from the press, and what is occasionally published about the party is often fabricated and always misleading. While the liberating effects of fascist defeat in the last war are being experienced in India to-day, it is curious that a good deal of misapprehension still exists about the war-stand adopted by the Radical Democratic Party. At the beginning of the war, practically all the political parties in India, "rightists" as well as "leftists", decided to oppose it on the ground, mainly, that the success of great Britain in the war would result in consolidating British imperialism and strengthening the chains of India's slavery. The founders of the R.D.P. on the other hand, declared that, in the very process of opposing fascism, British imperialism was bound to be liquidated, and that it was the duty of all honest democrats to aid this process by supporting the war efforts, and not to act as champions of fascism by opposing them. It should now be easy to see that the radical stand has been completely vindicated by history. British imperialism is not stronger in 1947 than it was in 1939; on the contrary it has been liquidated, leaving behind a formal foreign rule which also will,-) soon disappear. This desirable consummation has been brought about by the anti-fascist war, not by the totally misdirected efforts of Indian nationalists. In the fateful years of the war, the

radicals alone acted as fighters for freedom and democracy should have done.

But while the Radical Democratic Party foresaw the disappearance of foreign rule in India after the war, it had no illusion that this would automatically lead to the establishment of democracy in the country. The party anticipated that political power, transferred by foreign rulers, would not reach the Indian people, but would be usurped by powerful upper class parties which would tend to establish an essentially totalitarian regime under a thin garb of formal democracy. The party decided at the Lucknow conference in December, 1942, to resist this danger by developing and organising a genuinely democratic movement in India. Contemporary experience is bringing into relief the undemocratic, demagogic and dictatorial nature of the forces which are dominating Indian politics and clamouring for power. Rational social politics is at a discount; those who can best exploit the cultural backwardness of the masses are at the forefront; and their narrow ambitions and mutual jealousies have brought the country to the verge of disaster just when it is on the threshold of independence.

History having vindicated the accuracy of its political approach, the Radical Democratic Party claims the hearing and attention of those who are concerned with the fate of India's millions and who cannot approve of the power-politics pursued by the major Indian parties. Readers will find in the following pages a comprehensive survey of the aims and ideals of the Radical Democratic Party, its analysis of the present political situation, and the ways and means adopted by the party for the solution of our problems.

The third all-India conference of the R.D.P., held in Bombay from 26th to 29th December, 1946, has been of more than usual importance because, besides expressing its views on current political problems, the conference formulated, for the first time, the fundamental philosophical and political principles

Which determine the ultimate social ideals and immediate political practice of radical-democrats. Such a formulation is essential for those who take to politics seriously and do not regard it as a vulgar scramble for power. Politics being a part of social life, political ideals and political practice must be correlated, not only to each other, but to a total view of existence with a clear conception of the basic instincts of man, the place of the individual in society, and the general course of history and evolution. With a clear formulation of its basic philosophy, and having grasped the implications of its ideal and the means of attaining it, a political organisation can go ahead with its task with confidence and conviction. The whole contemporary world indeed stands in need of such a new ideal; for recent experience has discredited the various alternative political ideologies, including formal democracy, fascism and dictatorial communism; and the vacuum will be filled by cynicism, mysticism or mere opportunism, unless efforts are made to evolve a new political ideal adequate to the needs of to-day and justified by contemporary experience. Accordingly, the Radical Democratic Party formulated its fundamental philosophy in this conference in the form of "theses on radical democracy".

It is hoped that the reader will find in the following pages much that will stimulate thought and much that will inspire.

V. M. Tarkunde.

30, Faiz Bazar,

Delhi, may 1st, 1947.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CRISIS OF OUR TIME*

THESE are terrible times. I can say that calmly, but to many of you the statement has a more vivid meaning. In the last few months many of you have seen blood in the streets; you have seen people stabbed and shot; you have known what panic is; you have known what it is when the order of daily life comes to an end, when the social machine ceases to work. We are witnessing the dissolution of a social system. As revolutionaries we might be expected to welcome this dissolution of the social system. Revolutions usually begin with a destructive phase. But we don't feel that way about it. It is not a revolution according to our plan. We feel about it much as the left wing must have felt in face of the Nazi revolution in Germany. Communalism is just an enormous irrelevance. It has scarcely anything to do with what we regard as the important things. After all, revolution need not take a destructive form. In our time a revolution which begins in catastrophe is as likely as not to end in reaction. Obviously, communal violence hastens the coming of a regime of militant reaction.

For years past now we have argued that Indian nationalism is potential fascism, and that if it comes to power it will tend more or less quickly towards

* Presidential Address by Philip Spratt at the Third All-India conference of the Radical Democratic Party held in Bombay from 26th to 30th December, 1946.

fascism in a complete form. I may say that the few months in which the nationalists have been in power have tended to confirm our view. There has been little sign of progress towards the "co-operative commonwealth" we were promised. We have all noticed the turn towards national capitalism in economic policy, the ominous trade disputes legislation, and the hesitation about implementing the pledge to liquidate landlordism. In the South, where I come from, attention is divided among prohibition, Hindi, and khadi. There is no reason to revise our analysis. Indian nationalism, without meaning it for the most part, and without yet understanding it, is being pushed by the logic of its dominant economic interests and its obsolete ideas towards fascism. The communal division does not affect that analysis, but alternative developments of the communal struggle can affect the appearance of events, and their speed.

The present violent quarrel was not inevitable. A peaceful settlement was possible on the lines of the Cabinet Mission's grouping scheme, which both parties have accepted at different times and in very slightly different versions. Indeed if they really preferred peace they could settle it now on that basis. This compromise would lead to the most stable bourgeois regime possible in the circumstances. A third course of development which has sometimes seemed possible is, that the League should go into consitutional opposition and rally the other minorities to its support. The cause of the minorities is, so far, the cause of democracy, and the accession to the democratic side of so powerful a body as the League might be regar-

ded as a favourable development. However, the minority cause is only part of the democratic cause, and the leadership of the League would at best be one-sided and would otherwise show serious defects.

The League would not be an effective leader of Indian democracy, or even of a more narrowly conceived alliance of minorities, because the Muslims' position is different from that of the other minorities. The Muslims claim to be more than a minority; they say they are a nation. This expresses the fact that the urge behind their movement is more than a mere fear of majority rule. There is also in it an ambition, a nationalist ambition. Fear of the majority, fear of its superior numbers, wealth and competitive ability, and fear even of oppression by it, is reasonable; it expresses the interests of the broad mass of Muslims, and demands our sympathy. The ambition behind the movement is quite another matter. It expresses the interests only of the Muslim upper classes, to whom the separate state would be a source of profit. If achieved, its object of partition would undoubtedly impoverish the ordinary people concerned, that is to say, predominantly the Muslim masses, to whom this prospect appeals largely because of the fraudulent religious and nationalist glamour which has been attached to it. This puts Muslim communalism or nationalism in a very different position from the purely defensive demands of the other minorities, and makes an effective alliance between them unlikely. The Muslim movement is as nationalistic as the Hindu, and only less fascist in that the Muslim bourgeoisie is less developed, and the sentiment and structure of the

Muslim community are perhaps a shade more democratic than the Hindu.

It is largely because Muslim communalism is also an ambitious nationalist movement that we maintain that the two movements are unlikely ever to agree. If they do agree, it can only be through a compromise; on the lines of the grouping scheme. This scheme is not a diabolical plan to keep the communities righting, as our communist friends argue. It, or something closely similar, is the only apparent basis for an agreement while the two communities remain under the leadership of their present 'ambitious privileged classes. But if it is carried through, it will result in a very defective state structure, with highly inadequate powers for the centre. This sort of state will be incapable of planning the capitalist development of India, and incapable of organising an effective fascist regime.

It is in this sense that we have to interpret the general analysis we gave long ago, that the Indian bourgeoisie coming to power will set up a fascist economy and state, but their ability to do this will be lessened by the communal split. It seems obvious that the split in the ruling class should weaken it. It has weakened its struggle for power in the past. It will weaken its regime, if a regime based on a communal compromise ever is set up. But while the two sections are fighting over the form of the compromise it does not weaken them, it strengthens them. Some of our members claim to have discovered signs that the rank and file on both sides are becoming disgusted with

their leaders. I hope it is so, but I have found no such signs myself. Reaction was never so strong as during the recent communal fighting. And that is just what we should expect. It is the experience of other national wars also. "Turn the communal war into a class war" is difficult to put into practice as the similar slogan Lenin launched in 1914. The fiercer the fighting, the more closely attached to their respective sides the masses become. And quite reasonably so, for they know that the side which holds out a day longer than the other wins. The Muslim masses, who have something to lose from a victory of Hindu reaction, will hardly be persuaded to abandon their cause. The Hindu masses, who have little real interest in the struggle, have been so indoctrinated by a generation of nationalist propaganda that they are no more likely to flinch.

This will remain true, I believe, so long as violence is kept within such limits that the social structure does not collapse altogether. When people are killed on a really big scale, all control is lost, trade ceases, and starvation sets in. Then people may become quickly disillusioned—if there are any people left. It seems possible that experience has taught the communal leaders so much. Their best line is to keep tension acute by occasional outrages in one place or another, but not to let things go so far as a complete collapse anywhere. Then their hold over the people is its strongest.

As an immediate policy in regard to the communal question we follow the traditions of the socialist movement. We tell the people it is not their quarrel.

Their blood is being shed, and that of equally inoffensive people on the other side, for the sake of third parties. Peaceful people of all communities must organise to enforce peace upon the minority of ruffians who do the fighting, of fanatics who inspire them, and of rich men who hire them. And once organised, the peaceful majority can well extend their activities to other matters that concern them. The vital thing is to get common interests and activities into the foreground, when the sentiments which divide take their proper back seat. It is a matter of common knowledge that in this communal fighting rich men stay in the rear and hire poor men to do their dirty work for them. There is a clear appeal to the common interests of common men. As I have said, it is unlikely to prove effective quickly. But eventually it should have effect, if unhappily the conditions persist which call for it.

As opposed to this the Congress and the League appeal to national and religious sentiment to bring about peace. But no very stable peace is going to result from that sort of thing. The Communist Party's approach is hardly better. Its appeal is to the two nationalist parties to switch the war—to use a classic phrase—to unite to fight, not those who are responsible, the ambitious propertied interests and political leaders on both sides, but a third party whose responsibility is at any rate less immediate, the British. Our immediate appeal therefore is far more sensible than that of the other parties. The same is true of ultimate solution of the problem as opposed to theirs.

The constitutional proposals of the Congress and

the League are, of course, inconsistent one with the other. Neither is desirable in itself. Quite apart from the resistance it would provoke, partition would be economically harmful to the Pakistan areas, unless it were in effect cancelled again by the most intimate and continuous co-operation with Hindustan. The League have refused altogether to tell the public what they propose to do with Pakistan. There is no reason to believe that initially its economic and political system would be very different from that of Hindustan. It would be a conventional capitalist democracy, with no very firm foundations, and liable therefore to degenerate quickly towards a static reaction or a dynamic fascism; though on the other hand democratic and socialist sentiments might grow comparatively quickly. The future of Hindustan as the Congress proposes to shape it, is scarcely more definite and equally unpromising. There is no reason to expect Congress democracy to emerge from the Constituent Assembly entirely changed. We can see it at work now as it will work then, and it is not an inspiring sight. It gives us no cause to hope that the tremendous problems of regeneration will be tackled in a way likely to avert the catastrophes which threaten us. If, finally, there is a communal agreement, neither of these projects, bad as they are, will be realised and the compromise which will emerge will be in some respects worse. Its economy will be capitalist, but it will be denied the powerful centralised state which alone in our time enables capitalism to achieve anything constructive, or even to go fascist successfully. I cannot imagine that the result will be happy, or will last long.

As opposed to the indefinite, or where definite, reactionary, proposals of other parties, we have published comprehensive outlines of the policies we would implement if we had power. I do not want to claim any special credit on that account, but I ought to point out that it is the proper way to conduct politics, and that there is something suspicious about a party which demands power without telling the public what it intends to do with it. That applies to all the parties I have mentioned, and it applies to what is going on in the Constituent Assembly. It seems to me particularly scandalous that the Constituent Assembly is proceeding with its work without any serious consultation of public opinion at all. There has been very little public discussion of any of the issues involved, except Pakistan, which is quite a subsidiary issue. Indeed, just as the communal fighting has put extreme reaction into power in the parties and the Government, so the communal controversy is obscuring the important constitutional questions and permitting the spokesmen of vested interests to put through a constitution which on other issues will be old-fashioned and unsuitable.

We suggested that the proper course would be for each of the main parties or schools of thought in the matter to draw up a fairly full draft constitution, and that these should all be placed before the public by the Government, to ensure that all were given a certain minimum of publicity, and then a referendum taken. This procedure does not conform to the precedents quoted in the text-books, but we recall that this is the twentieth century, not the

eighteenth. In France a few months ago they did something like this. Why not here? I think we should make a strong protest against this hole-and-corner settlement of the constitutional issue.

I do not mean to prophesy that the constitution which will emerge from the Constituent Assembly will be obviously reactionary. But I should like to remind you of an ancient Indian philosophical doctrine, which I find is still a pervasive feature of Indian affairs—I mean Maya. The recent Session of the Congress was an example. The President's speech was impeccably Gandhian and the resolutions were "statesmanlike". I have no doubt the outside world was duly impressed by the responsibility and restraint of the Congress under provocation. Yet the message the country received from the Session was a summons to arms—literally—against the Muslims. That is political Maya. And I have little doubt that the same sort of contrast will be found between the constitution which will be drawn up by the Constituent Assembly and the way it will work out in practice. We may have a constitution as liberal as the famous Weimar constitution of 1919 and the outcome may be about the same. The National Philosopher began the proceedings by recalling the ancient national ideals of comprehension and charity, and looking upon things in that way he naturally opposes modernisation of the ancient social structure. But if you try to fit a mediaeval social structure into a modern, or not very old-fashioned, liberal constitution, you must expect the same kind of trouble as overtook that experiment in Germany.

We, at any rate, have let the public know what we would do if we had power. Our policy would cut at the roots of communalism by a campaign of modernisation of society. We should largely replace capitalism by socialism as the economic method. The rival ambitions which inspire aggressive communalism are at present mainly of capitalist origin, though they thrive on a mediaeval mentality among the people at large. The fears and resentments which rally the educated class to their communal banner are also mainly due to the insecurity of life in a highly competitive but inefficient economic order. If there were a job for everybody, and reasonable chances for an able man to rise, communal politics would lose most of its appeal. We propose a system in which these provisions would soon become practical politics.

In addition to that we propose a type of constitution in which the public are not left merely idle spectators of gladiatorial shows as they are now—a show in which the gladiator who attacks the other side most brilliantly is likely to get the most applause. We propose a constitution in which all the voters, that is all adults, are brought into close working contact with the political and economic administration in their locality. They will in that way be compelled to realise the identity of interest on all practical matters among the various communities. They will also be brought into contact with modern ideas and techniques. They will not have to make the best of a mediaeval rural economy. They will modernise their economy. They will not, as in the Gandhian

village constitution, have to be represented in all the higher organs of government by people who can afford to work without remuneration. That is the mediaeval conception of politics as the preserve of the aristocracy and the priesthood. We propose to be modern in that matter too.

We also propose specific constitutional safeguards of the orthodox type for minority communities. The right of separation, by majority decision, of areas delimited according to cultural criteria, is the final safeguard beyond which a state cannot go. Despite the objections, we support that principle. Partition or unity is a secondary issue given importance by the majority community either because of its nascent capitalist imperialism, or because of mere sentiment. If communal peace can be obtained by partition, as we believe it can, we are certainly willing, and any rational man would be willing. We also uphold the principle of separate electorates, without weightages, for all minorities who want them, for all types of elected body. We support, of course, the other accepted minority safeguards, such as reservation of jobs in the services and of seats in educational institutions, guarantees against discrimination, and guarantees of individual liberty.

But it is our fundamental belief that communalism is a secondary issue. It overshadows everything else at the moment, but even if by some happy change of heart it were solved as a problem, the problem of social transformation would remain, while if the problem of social transformation is solved, communa-

lism will disappear without special trouble. Our main job is to bring about that transformation.

For some years past the leading comrades in the party have been thinking seriously about this task, and they have come to some important conclusions. These conclusions have caused surprise and opposition among some members, though they have, I believe, been generally welcomed. Speaking for myself, I cannot claim to have taken any part in the thinking out of this new approach to our problems. But I had been vaguely aware for some years of the need for a new direction in socialist policy, and it was realisation that the Radical Democratic Party was thinking a new line in the general direction of a reconciliation of socialism and democracy, that drew me towards it. My hopes were confirmed by Comrade Roy's "Draft Constitution for India", published just two years ago. I ventured to welcome that draft as embodying a combination of the Soviet principle and liberal democracy, and in particular for its insistence on individual freedom. I ventured to write that Comrade Roy must have been prompted by his experience of the ill effects of dictatorial methods even where they are intended to achieve good ends. I am happy to say that my guess was right.

I say all this, not because my reactions matter, but because I fancy a great many people think as I do. In fact I believe that this is the typical line of thought of the last few years. People feel sure that socialism has to come; and they look to it for a more equalitarian society, perhaps a less commercial type

of culture, and perhaps internal peace. But still they hanker after their own life. They want religious freedom. They want freedom of speech. They want freedom of news. They want to be free to chuck up their job and take another. They want to be free to go abroad if they can afford it. They want political freedom, in the sense that they want the feeling that they control the government, and it is not the government that controls them—even if in fact they don't bother to exercise their control. They don't like any body or organisation to be above the law, or to exercise very wide arbitrary powers. They don't like secrecy in any important matter. Above all, perhaps, they don't want to be spied on.

Anti-socialists have always said that socialism would deprive us of exactly these freedoms. And unfortunately, when socialism was tried out for the first time, the anti-socialists' predictions were fulfilled, to the letter. Now, what our comrades have been thinking is that if we are to have a serious socialist movement in this country it must be freed from this paralysis of doubt. It is not a matter of window-dressing. They have not been trying to make out a case. They have been inquiring whether it is possible to devise a practical socialist policy free from the defects which have brought socialism into disrepute. It is easy and obvious enough to say that socialism ought to preserve the values of liberalism. Everybody says that. Jawaharlal Nehru says it. The question is whether it can, and if so, how. Our comrades have satisfied themselves that it can, and they have begun working out means whereby it can do so. Comrade

Roy's "Draft Constitution for India" is a first outline of a state structure which he believes could be stable, could work, and would combine the merits of socialism and of liberal democracy. However, our comrades have been thinking also of other aspects of the problem. They want to show that this apparent new departure is really in line with the more general principles we have always held. It is in line with our philosophy, but it does involve some departure from what many people in the socialist movement have come to regard as ultimate principles. So far as I can tell, all these departures are justified, and hardly any of them are new or unfamiliar to the students of the subject. Few people took quite literally the dogmatic statement of the Marxian theory which has been customary among the communists. Lenin almost admitted that he insisted on this simplified, rigorous statement because if the members of the party were permitted the luxury of intellectual freedom, their political discipline would collapse. Some may fear we lay ourselves open to that danger. But our conditions are different, and after all (Lenin may have been wrong. In any case it is a question of the facts. If the facts are complicated you cannot stick to a simple theory. It is obvious that the facts are complicated, and we shall retain agreement among ourselves only by honestly facing them and their implications.

There has been some questioning of the stress on the individual in the opening paragraphs of the statement (the Principles of Radical Democracy). This is merely a matter of clarification, which previous Marxist authors have never bothered about. The

statement does not deny society or the social nature of man or even the existence of social good. It merely points out, what is obvious, that there is no independent, self-existent social good or well-being. Social good consists solely of individual goods, though it is not simply their sum; it is, as the statement plainly says, a more complicated function of individual goods. It depends on how individual goods are distributed in relation to desert, and so on.

But there is one conspicuous departure from tradition, at least as tradition has been handed down since Lenin. That is the great emphasis on freedom. Before Lenin's time freedom was admitted, in theory at least, to be a supreme value. Marx certainly made it so. The revolution was to be the step from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom. But following Hegel, freedom was usually given a social rather than an individual meaning. Here we have to admit departure, but all that we can say is that we are right and tradition is wrong. There is no experience other than the experience of individuals. Freedom is a matter of direct experience. It is experienced in choices, which are mental acts, that is, individual acts. Therefore if the statement about the freedom of a social group has any meaning it must be analysable into individual freedoms. A society cannot literally choose. It is only individuals who can choose, and therefore ultimately it is only individuals who can be free.

It will probably not be questioned that freedom is highly valuable. The deprivation of freedom at least is admitted to be painful, and it is also damaging to

character. Freedom is directly experienced as good, and is also good instrumentally, as a necessary condition for the development of the best type of character and intellect, that is, for the best type of good. There can be no doubt that the position taken up in the statement is sound. If we want to be orthodox, too, we can remember that the emphasis on freedom at this time is called for by a material factor, namely, modern technology. There is a very widespread fear that this immense development of technology will bring slavery for mankind, and the fear is not unreasonable. The Nazis were only a little ahead of their time when they tried to set up a single world tyranny, and if such a tyranny is ever established it will be almost impossible to overthrow. Thus this great development of technology puts the problem before us in the form of a choice; world slavery or world freedom. It is time to begin thinking out these problems of freedom.

The more serious questions will arise about freedom in practice. Why do we bother about theory? This statement was not drawn up just for the fun of it. Theory is a practical necessity. It is sound theory which makes the difference between mere blundering good intentions and real political leadership. There is no lack of good intentions in any party; only they don't understand what they are doing. I believe that our party is superior to every other on that score; our theories are thought out not to justify our political ideas, but in the light of truth. That applies, I believe, to this new theoretical development. A theory, a philosophy, has other advantages too. The

policy which proceeds from it is commended by that fact to others who hold philosophical ideas similar to ours. And the fact that our policy does proceed from a basis strengthens our own enthusiasm and determination to bring it to fulfilment. The power of a theory to move men can be very great. What gives a theory that power I do not know, but presumably the more profound it is, the wider its sweep, the more convincing its reordering of familiar facts, the deeper will be its effect on the emotions as well as the understanding.

But theories can repel and divide as well as attract and unite. There are many people who hold philosophical ideas quite different from ours and are trained to hold our ideas in abhorrence, and most of them will certainly never be converted. But they are worthy people, who cannot be dismissed as enemies. Many of them will agree with our practical aims and policies. It follows that our ideas must be expounded at two different levels. We aspire to be a broad, all-embracing people's movement, which must be held together by a minimum programme of principles and aims. We also aspire to be a more closely-knit party, held together by a comprehensive philosophy and a fully elaborated political programme.

It is a familiar picture. It is exactly the position of the communist parties. And we know the outcome of this sort of two-level politics. It is a story of deceit, intrigue, machiavellism, and finally general discredit. The failure of the communist movement abroad »s not only due to developments in the Soviet Union; it is

also due to its own unprincipled methods. And one main source of these improper methods has been the existence side by side of two bodies, the tight, disciplined, theoretically pure party, and the broad popular movement, and the efforts of the one to control the other.

We do not want to fall into that trap. Yet the parallel between our position and theirs is close. We could avoid it by giving up the ambition to lead, and confining ourselves to the elaboration of ideas, like the British Fabians. If we don't want to be as self-effacing as that, we can avoid the trap only by being quite honest. And that is where this re-orientation of ideas comes in. We shall find it possible to combine leadership with genuine co-operation with people who differ from us, because of the nature of our policy. We have nothing to hide. We are not trying to get the support of democrats for a movement which in the end will establish a dictatorship. Broad cooperation is possible because we stand for freedom.

Corresponding to that difference, we aim at being a different kind of party from the traditional party. We do not aim at dictatorship, and therefore we need not be a dictatorship. There has been some dispute about this, I believe. Members have complained that our leaders are unrealistic. The leaders are said to regard the problem of making the party work efficiently and grow adequately as a purely psychological problem, whereas in the view of the critics what is needed is a touch of the whip.

It is a question of emphasis. I should say it is

obviously Utopian to try to do without organisation and discipline altogether. I don't suppose anyone advocates that. But the most effective kind and degree of discipline must be found by experience. On the other hand I do not suppose that the upholders of discipline would question that the psychological problem is more fundamental. Unless there is a reasonably large group of members who are really burning with enthusiasm for this policy, there is not going to be a party at all, and no amount of discipline can create one.

The communist party is in nearly all countries the outstanding instance of political energy. It is therefore instructive to see how they work. Where does this enthusiasm come from? First, the communist party member believes in an all-embracing theory, which justifies everything he does and gives him a conviction of ultimate success. Second, he is encouraged to regard this theory as superior to all other thinking. There is a very direct appeal to the communist's superiority feeling, which comes out all over his propaganda and causes much friction with other socialists. Third, he is spared all doubt, since his thinking, on fundamentals at least, is all done for him. Fourth, he feels the warmth of membership in a great world-wide family, all striving for the same object, with a father in Moscow for whom, he can feel the appropriate reverence. Fifth, he looks forward to a final catastrophe, after which Utopia sets in. This is a very satisfying idea—like the conventional happy ending to the story. It raises dim but exciting images of birth (like the Christian doctrine of rebirth). Marx used the word birth and other genetic images repeatedly. It is a leading theme

of the dialectic. Sixth, this final catastrophe is a purge for his feeling of guilt. It is equivalent to a punishment, an expiation and a wiping away of all sins. The communists regard the capitalist world very much as the early Christians regarded Rome—as the embodiment of sin. Seventh, his aggressiveness is systematically worked upon. He is always in the attitude of fighting some excessively sinister enemy. The communist press has evolved an ingeniously bellicose vocabulary. Deliberate use is made of the Gandhian technique of provoking repression by the authorities so as to work up an atmosphere of hate. Even abstract theory is made bellicose—the philosophy is called “militant” materialism.

We obviously cannot rival that catalogue of stimuli to fanaticism, and I don't suppose we want to. But on one point we can claim that we are better off than the communists. Their movement seems to be on the decline, on the world scale, whereas ours is still in its hopeful phase. We also are members of a world-wide movement of thought, which if yet unorganised is making headway. We can hope to find ourselves “riding the wave of the future”. Beyond that I think we have to be content with less infantile, more rational sources of inspiration. We are not certain we shall win; but that makes our effort all the more necessary. Our ideas are not the last word in human wisdom; but they are intellectually respectable and I am sure nobody need be ashamed of them. We don't or at least we ought not to let our thinking be done for us: but that should be a matter of pride. We don't exalt our leader above the level of humanity and make him

infallible; but we can legitimately take pride in his remarkable accomplishments. I think it can be a matter of legitimate pride to you that these ideas were first thought out by an Indian thinker (though since we repudiate nationalism that may seem a paradox). We make no cheap appeal to aggressiveness, but we can comfort ourselves that when we do attack an enemy it is a real enemy. In short while we cannot take recourse to any of these subtle substitutes for rational satisfactions, we can derive strength from the genuine virtues of our ideas and our movement. For we are a movement. It does not bulk large in the press, but it exists, and makes itself felt. I ask you to recall what is happening in Bihar, for example. We can take pride in what we stand for, in the rationality, honesty and intellectual grasp of our ideas, and in the fact that the ideas we set before ourselves is not a spurious ideal, but is supremely worth while.

CHAPTER TWO

GANDHISM AND RADICALISM*

SURVEYING the Conference as best I can, and considering especially the main business before it, namely, discussing and placing before the country the Theses on Radical Democracy, I think the significance of this Session is that in it we emerge as a distinct political entity. Here we set forth in complete outline a definite ideology, different from all the others which compete for the allegiance of the Indian public.

There are three other ideologies that matter— I do not mean mere political trends, but, systems of ideas inspiring political policies. First is liberal capitalism. It has now relatively few adherents who favour it for theoretical reasons, and the great number who have supported it for other reasons are now fast deserting it for fascism.

Second is communism. The Theses are formulated in such a way as to make clear our differences from communism, and much has been said on that point. I need not dwell on it therefore.

Third, and by far the strongest in the number of its supporters, is Gandhism. Since our “New

* Concluding Speech by Philip Spratt at the Third All-India Conference of the Radical Democratic Party, held in Bombay, from 26th to 30th December, 1946.

Orientation" began to become manifest two or three years ago, many have commented that we were reverting to Gandhism. There are indeed some similarities, but there are also vital differences.

A few weeks ago, at the Meerut Congress, Acharya Kripalani devoted his presidential speech to an up-to-date re-statement of Gandhism. He demanded individual freedom, democracy, universal suffrage and decentralisation, and showed hostility to capitalism, while accepting the need for some employment of modern industrial technique. We find little to object to in that, and if it were a true account of Gandhism there would be no quarrel. But in fact, the whole trend of Gandhism in practice is quite different, and it is unlikely to re-orient itself in this way.

The core of Gandhism, its fundamental urge, is its hostility to industrialism and the modern world. When Gandhi went to Europe and South Africa fifty years ago he met industrialism, and like most people he reacted against it. But he did not merely think of changes, reforms, which would make it a tolerable and useful thing: he came to regard it as wholly and monstrosly evil, he formed an obsession about it, and could agree in principle to no compromise with it. He was, of course, predisposed to that attitude. Psycho-analysts give varying accounts of it. Some talk of the fear of freedom; others of the mother-fixation. Whatever it was, he was predisposed to an intense attachment to the old order and a vehement hostility to any attempt to separate him from it or to violate its integrity. Industrialism came to stand for him as

the fantasy monster who tries to do those things. He feared it, he hated it, association with it filled him with feelings of guilt.

The first result of this was, of course, to make him propound a social programme in which industrialism and nearly everything associated with it and the modern world are rejected. It is not merely industrial technique that is spurned. His unconscious guilt drives him to reject almost everything that normal people like. I remember that the late Mahadev Desai, the Mahatma's Secretary once formed the project of learning French. He was a good linguist and a man of literary ability- He would probably have learnt it in a short time quite well enough. French is a very fine language, with a splendid literature, which he would have greatly enjoyed. It might even have led him to see the errors of Gandhism. But no, the Mahatma forbade it. Learning French was to him sinful vanity and waste of time. Poor Mahadev had to spend the rest of his days toiling at the correspondence and forgo his innocent pleasure.

What of French: the Mahatma does not want us to know English. We must use Hindi. At bottom he regards all learning and art as sinful, because they are enjoyable, and because learning is modern. Why is he so insistent that everybody should spin? Not so much to produce a few yards of yarn, but so that they shall have no time to enjoy themselves.

The second result of this obsession of the Mahatma's was to lead him to put forward an impossi-

bly "lofty" moral system—non-violence, poverty, continence and the rest. Now exaggeration is as absurd and harmful in morals as in other matters. Unduly idealistic moral preaching does harm by leading ordinary people to think that since these principles cannot be practised they can be disregarded altogether. I believe that this reaction to the Mahatma's impracticable demands is partly responsible for the cynicism and the low moral level of the nationalist movement.

The third result of the Mahatma's phobia was to associate his movement closely, and I believe indissolubly, with capitalism. It has been emphasised in this Conference that ideologies do not always arise in response to practical circumstances, but are sometimes formulated independently and achieve general acceptance when circumstances arise which suit them, perhaps long afterwards. This is true of the Mahatma's teaching. He certainly had no idea of serving the purposes of capitalists when he came to these conclusions. But some parts of his doctrine chime in with the needs and traditions of capitalists, and in fact in both South Africa and India they followed him enthusiastically.

In India and Europe there is a long tradition of pacifism among capitalists. Perhaps it is because in lawless feudal conditions the rich man, who was the obvious victim of all his social superiors and of any marauders who might be going about, could often best defend himself and rally opinion to his side by putting on the garb of righteousness, inoffensiveness and ostentatious piety and charity.

More pronounced still is the association of the capitalist class with a puritanical morality. The movement led by Calvin and Wesley will occur to mind. The capitalist, by the nature of his occupation, is cut off from society and this makes him feel guilty. Moreover, he has often to do things which morality condemns. Consequently, he tends to atone for it by mortifying the flesh. He wears coarse or severe clothes, lies on a hard bed, restricts his diet, and so forth, and feels that the moral balance is thereby maintained. He does bad things and makes a lot of money, but after all he does not enjoy himself. Puritanism has the further advantage that it inspires both the capitalist and his employees to work hard and spend little, thus making possible the accumulation of capital and survival in competitive economy. For these reasons, and because of its nationalism, the Mahatma's teaching has acquired great prestige among the capitalists of India, and the movement identified with him is now so closely intertwined with national capitalism that a split is most unlikely.

Now this sort of capitalist puritanism has been in some respects a progressive thing in the past. When capitalism was young, moral fervour and the material advantages accruing from these ideas were substantial assets. But though capitalism in a sense is young in India, it has no future, as we believe, and therefore this puritanical ideology cannot, on this ground, be regarded as suitable. And in fact we reject it. We believe that even if there was in the past, there is no longer any good reason for a morality of mere abstention, of self-suppression. Technology is capable, in

principle, of providing an enjoyable life for all, and there is no good reason why life should not be enjoyed. We believe that it should,

Some Gandhists do argue that their doctrine can be applied independently of capitalism. But they always retain its puritanism, even if they make concessions about the use of modern technology, and in fact when they depart from capitalism they usually become even more reactionary.

Thus, consider the Gandhian model constitution for India, drafted by Mr. S. N. Agarwala and approved generally by the Mahatma. This provides for democracy at the base, in the election of the village panchayats; but the taluka panchayat consists of the chairmen of the village panchayats. The district panchayats, consist of the chairman of the taluka panchayat, and so on right up to the top. It is a most extreme type of indirect election, and would in the best case provide a remote, irresponsible, rigid government. But it is further provided that none of these elected representatives shall be paid for his services. It follows that from the chairmen of the village panchayats upward, the whole pyramid is manned by the rich, or by sanyasis who can live on nothing. It is a completely mediaeval conception.

And in this it is quite consistent. Freedom, equality and democracy are impossible if you reject modern technology. For in a poor society there will be a scramble for what consumption goods there are, and the majority who are deprived of them must be

kept in order by the lucky minority in one way or another. Further, freedom, equality and democracy are impossible without a high level of education; but education is an expensive matter, which a non-industrial society cannot afford.

Thus on all these matters, which are integral to Gandhism, we differ from it. We do not share its puritanical morality; we do not strive to deny the world the benefits of technology or of knowledge; we are not tied to capitalist or pre-capitalist social forms as Gandhism in its alternative versions appears to be. Gandhism is restrictive all round; it wants to shut mankind in, to enclose it within national frontiers, to deprive it of all that makes life worth living, of knowledge, of art, of sport, of enjoyment of any kind. We want to open the frontiers—that is why we are opposed to nationalism—to open the windows, to let all the winds of the world blow over the land, the art, the literature, the science, the technology of the world, to let people know them and enjoy them and profit from them.

Gandhism is diseased at the core. It is the product of a pathological mentality, of guilt, fear, obsession and self-hatred. Our ideas are healthy and rational. In the end we must win.

CHAPTER THREE

TOWARDS A NEW PHILOSOPHY*

AS explanation of the points raised yesterday, I wish to say a few words at this early stage of our discussion. The most fundamental question raised was implicitly dealt by Prof. Sibnarayan Ray while he summarised the Theses; but it has to be separately and explicitly treated. It is our attitude to Materialism. Philip Spratt asked, since we are differentiating ourselves from what the orthodox Marxists call Materialism, why should we not make it clear that the usual objections to Materialism are not applicable to our philosophy? He further said that there were many people, particularly the Christian moralists, who would have no objection to the rest of our Theses, if they were satisfied that we are not insisting on the idea of Materialism. Subsequently, one comrade disparaged the idea that we might try to win the sympathy of the Christian moralists. A few words in that connection will be necessary to remove a misunderstanding.

While explaining the Theses, Sib Ray divided them into three groups. In respect to the first he said that history cannot be interpreted unless

Speech delivered by M. N. Roy at the discussion meeting preliminary to the Third All-India Conference of the Radical Democratic Party. Bombay, December, 25, 1946.

we have certain values. Our orthodox Marxist tradition still makes us fight shy of the very idea of value. But history shows that, though, ethical principles and moral values have been enriched or expanded or amplified in course of human experience, there are certain things which can be called basic human values; and they, as a matter of fact, can be traced back to biological evolution prior to the appearance of *homo, sapiens*. Ethical values are not of: spiritual tradition. We do not derive them from God. They can be traced to biological tradition; we need not disparage those who would rather put a spiritual interpretation on those values. As a matter fact, it may be maintained by the religiously inclined people that very little has been said as regards morality since the Sermon on the Mount. Even non-religious people cannot very well dispute that contention without themselves being dogmatic.

If there are Christians prepared to act according to the Sermon on the Mount, and co-operate with us on that basis, why should we object to their worshipping the fantasy of Christ at the Cross? Therefore, while trying to formulate our fundamental principles, we should not be frightened by the possibility of their being accepted by Christian moralists. Truth cannot be appreciated by those who are constantly frightened of unfair and unreasonable criticism. Our ideas must be tested by their own internal logic. We should see that our Theses are not self-contradictory; that they stand by themselves, on their own merit. Others may not agree; but that is no criterion for us.

Then, practically speaking, what provides the incentive for our search for new principles, new ideals

and a new faith r It is the breakdown of ideals we have been cherishing until recently; experience has exposed the inadequacies of old ideas also. If we could still hold on to our old ideals honestly, consistently and intelligently, this discussion would not be necessary. Marx's Theses on Feuerbach should be good enough for our philosophical guidance. But by experience we have found out that those philosophical principles, formulated one hundred years ago, have been proved to be inadequate in the light of human knowledge acquired since then.

Another difficulty which will be felt by the average party member in appreciating the Theses has been expressed in the question whether we propose to transform the party into a philosophical society or whether it still remains a political party. The doubt should be obviated by the political part of the Theses. We do not want to transform the party into a missionary society, but we do say that politicians who want to create a really new world, must be guided by a philosophy; that ethics should be given an important place in a social philosophy. The philosophical point of departure of our politics is derived from the eleventh thesis of Karl Marx on Feuerbach; until now, philosophers have interpreted the world; now they must remake it. So, to have some clearly defined philosophical principles as the basis of a political theory is not deviation from Marxism. Commenting upon Marx, we say that until now politics has been practised by loafers and charlatans; now some principles will have to be introduced in it by men who are guided by a philosophy. As a political party, we must

conduct political struggles, but in that we must be guided by philosophical principles. While formulating those principles of an ideology, we cannot talk of demonstrations, strikes and insurrection—all that stock-in-trade of professional revolutionaries. The cardinal point for political activists to note is that the necessity of a political party, its programme and structure, are discussed in the Theses. A political party is organised for political action. The doubters in our rank may be reminded of Lenin's saying—there is no revolutionary action without a revolutionary ideology. Why should you apprehend that, armed with a clear and correct ideology, our party will be incapable of political action?

The difficulty results from the fact that, though Marxist politics still remains our ideal, more or less, the relation between Marxist politics and philosophy is overlooked. Marx wrote the Theses on Feurbach, which laid down the philosophical foundation of his political doctrines and their practice, years before working class parties appeared on the political scene. We are trying to practise politics and formulate its philosophical principles at the same time. When Karl Marx wrote the Theses, there was no Communist Party. To-day we are doing two things at the same time; laying the foundation and raising the walls in quick succession. Two things done over a period of fifty years in the time of Marx have to be done by us simultaneously. Hence the confusion. One cannot discuss philosophy and plan insurrection at the same time. Therefore, the impatient and shortsighted fear that we are giving up politics for philosophy. On the

contrary, we are clarifying our revolutionary ideology, so that our revolutionary action may be more effective, though it may be less spectacular, and also less abortive.

Now let me take up the question of Materialism. We should not underestimate the value and importance of co-operation from people and movements who may not fully accept our philosophy. At the same time, we should not be ambiguous about our philosophy. In our country, there may not be very many people who, while professing a different philosophy, would be prepared to work with us. But that is not the case in Europe to-day. For instance, the Progressive Christian movement is a specific feature of post-war Europe. It has become everywhere a dominating factor. The political problems of no country can be solved without the co-operation of parties which advocate a programme of democratic freedom and social justice, while professing Christianity, rather as a moral creed than a religious faith. They are middle class parties. The dissolution of the bourgeois social order and the resulting economic disequilibrium and cultural chaos have thrown the middle classes into confusion. Previously, some of them were, to some extent, attracted by Communism; later, they were stampeded by Fascism, because of the communist: deification of the proletariat, and general intolerance; non-proletarian elements, notwithstanding their other merits, including intellectual attachment to the ideal of social revolution, were suspect, and could have only a subsidiary place in the communist parties. However, experience, particularly during the war, repelled the middle class from Fascism. At the same time, they

are also repelled by die communist denunciation of all the values of the bourgeois European culture. That tradition alone gives them an ideal to fight for in the present atmosphere of despair and frustration. But old Liberalism does not satisfy them. Therefore, they are driven back to the nostalgia of the early Christian ideal of social justice.

This is a verification of the Marxian prognosis that decomposition of the bourgeois social order, amounting to a profound cultural and spiritual crisis, would follow the breakdown of capitalist economy. Only, the process is not taking place strictly according to the Marxian scheme of polarisation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie engaged in a fierce class struggle. The Marxist analysis ignored the numerous and important middle class in capitalist society. In the period of decay, the middle class loses its faith in capitalism, but it is not proletarianised, not in the intellectual and cultural sense, at any rate. It remains loyal to the values of bourgeois culture even when losing faith in capitalist economy. It also demands, at least feels the necessity of a social revolution, though not of the proletarian type. This change in the social orientation of the middle class is conclusive evidence of the decomposition of the capitalist order. It is the Nemesis – own blood turning against oneself.

Exactly that is happening to-day. But because this very significant process was not visualised in the Marxist scheme of the dissolution of bourgeois society and the resulting revolutionary crises, orthodox Mar-

xists of our time, blinded by their orthodoxy, would not take notice of it, even when it takes place under their very nose. The middle class, though still loyal to the tradition of the so-called bourgeois culture, is

actually revolting against the economic relations and political practices of the passing bourgeois society. It has become an active factor of the impending social revolution. The middle class is dissatisfied with the established order. They do not want to rehabilitate it. But they are not prepared to accept orthodox Marxist ideals; they are repelled particularly by communist political practice, and the negative attitude to cultural tradition and ethical values.

Proper appreciation of this development, which no longer permits of the doctrine that the proletariat is the only revolutionary class, is the crying need of the moment. The army of revolution has swelled; but the unexpected (by Marxist orthodoxy) accession of strength must be properly evaluated and skillfully integrated. That cannot be done on the basis of an antiquated theory of the relation of forces in the social crisis of our time. Marxist economism cannot move the middle class towards the ideal of a social reconstruction. The cultural tradition of modern civilised mankind and universal ethical values must be given their due importance in the philosophy of the revolution of our time. Nobody has as yet raised the philosophical platform on which the greatly swelled army of revolution can stand together. The importance of our Theses is that, from a long distance, we are trying to cast the pattern of the revolution which is actually taking place in Europe, out of which a new Europe

will be born, and a new world of freedom and justice will take shape.

The Theses are deduced from materialist philosophy. As one of those who have formulated these principles of the philosophy of revolution in our time, I am firmly convinced that Materialism, is the only philosophy possible. That conviction breathes through all my other works, philosophical and scientific, not directly related to political theories. In those works, written without being haunted by the disgruntled faces of party members, I have shown that all systems of philosophy since the dawn of human civilisation, which have received any place in the history of thought, are essentially materialist. Therefore I do not think that there is any reason for us to make a secret of our philosophical convictions. But the suggestion to take up a more catholic and philosophical attitude is prompted. by a genuine apprehension. Materialism has been so badly misinterpreted and vulgarised by its protagonists that, as soon as you say that you are a materialist, you are taken for a man without morals, without principles, a Jesuit and a cut-throat. From that point of view, the apprehension regarding the declaration of our adhesion to Materialism is quite well-founded, and if we modify the term, the apprehended reaction may be obviated. As regards the substitution of the term Materialism by another, I have been thinking about it for many years. Strictly speaking, the term has lost its meaning. It makes a wrong impression. But it has not been possible to find a more appropriate term. Terms like Monistic Naturalism or Physical Realism may be considered.

But then we shall have to write an essay to make people understand. In the beginning, it may create more confusion. The communists will say we are dishonest; that we reject Materialism, but do not dare to say so. Others will think that we still remain materialists, but have not the courage to say so, and are only trying to insinuate ourselves into their favour. Therefore, I would rather not attach any importance to terminology. It is so very clear that our theory of history, as of social reconstruction, is deduced, and can -be deduced only, from materialist philosophy, that it may not be necessary to use the odious term at all. These who will like our political practice will eventually accept its philosophical motivation. The communists will call us idealists, Gandhists, etc., and that *a priori* denunciation will create prejudice against our philosophy. Why run that risk unnecessarily? Therefore, while it is superfluous in the context of the document, yet I would rather retain the term Materialism,. It will be neither demagogic nor dogmatic to do so.

V.G. Karnik has raised a question; I should think that his doubts have-been dispelled by what I have already said. But I might add that we cannot simply substitute "search for truth" by "struggle for existence", nor "biological struggle for existence" by "the primitive form of the quest for freedom". The struggle for existence, in the negative sense, is quest for freedom. The environments are continually trying to crush the organism, and the struggle for existence is the striving of the organism to free itself from the tyranny of nature. On the sub-human biological

level, that is a very largely mechanical struggle. But quest for freedom is purposive. When the struggle for existence takes place with purposiveness, on the human level of evolution, we call it quest for freedom. That is our main point of departure from the orthodox Marxist theory.

Quest for freedom becomes identical with the struggle for existence when the latter is progressive as well as purposive. As Sib Ray pointed out yesterday, unless there is some significance in the sequence of events, simple sequence of events does not mean progress. And that will be very dear to those who have some knowledge of modern physics. For example, you cannot indicate the direction of motion. There is no one way motion. Simply because the twentieth century follows the nineteenth century, there is no reason to say that the twentieth century is more progressive than the nineteenth century. There must be some significance in the historical processes, and that can be measured by purposiveness. Otherwise, social evolution becomes mechanical. The Weimar Republic of Germany, for instance, was a progress compared with the Kaiser regime. If its progressiveness was only due to the fact that it followed the Kaiser regime in time, then we should say that Hitler's Germany was a progress over the Weimar Republic. The Weimar Republic marked a progress because it satisfied certain human aspirations which were thwarted under the Kaiser regime. Hitler destroyed them all; under him, Germany moved retrogressively. Therefore, substitution of "quest for freedom" by "struggle for existence" will not do.

The proposition that "search for truth is a corollary to quest for freedom" has been questioned. Freedom is a human idea, whereas truth is a metaphysical category. How can we deduce the one from the other? Quest for freedom in human evolution is purposive. The struggle for existence is no longer carried on by mechanical adaptation. On the human level, it is carried on by purposive efforts for the conquest of nature. What differentiated man from his immediate ancestor: The latter prolonged his arms to adapt himself to his arboreal environment. The moment an ape discovered that he could break a branch and pluck fruits with it, the process of mechanical evolution ended; purposiveness became the basic feature of the subsequent biological evolution. Man's struggle for the conquest of nature began. The struggle for existence became quest for freedom. From that very modest beginning, we have come to the twentieth century with its modern technology; powerful instruments for conquering nature, all invented by man, no longer for mere existence, but in quest for freedom. Science is a search for truth, and it is the result of man's quest for freedom. Therefore we say that search for truth is the corollary to the quest for freedom. In quest of freedom, ever since biological evolution became purposive, man strove for the conquest of nature; knowledge of nature was a precondition for the success of that striving. Science was thus a by-product of man's quest for freedom, and science reveals truth.

The final point is that truth is the content of knowledge. What is truth? Truth is correspondence

with objective reality. Scientific knowledge does give us at least an approximate picture of what we are studying, either of the whole of nature or any particular sector thereof. Therefore we say that truth is the content of knowledge. We have the knowledge that two plus two is four. That is a truth. You can take any two things and add two more things, the result will always be four things. That is an invariable phenomenon. It happens under all circumstances. We might, say that truth is a mathematical concept. But mathematics is only a manner of measuring things, otherwise immeasurable; of judging statements of facts beyond the reach of direct experience. Thus, quest for freedom does result in knowledge, and the content of knowledge is truth; knowledge always is acquaintance with reality. Truth being correspondence with reality, the content of knowledge is truth. Thus, freedom, knowledge and truth can be woven harmoniously in the texture of one philosophy explaining all the aspects of existence—material, mental, moral. Such an all-embracing philosophy, which eliminates dualism, reconciles Idealism with Materialism, accommodates ethics with naturalism, is outlined in the Theses. Search for truth being a corollary to the quest for freedom, itself a purposive continuation of the biological struggle for existence, recognition of universal moral values cannot be repugnant to any theory and practice of social reconstruction, provided that it is undertaken with the purpose of promoting human freedom. In our philosophy, rationality is not a metaphysical concept: it is identified with physical determinism; therefore, man is essentially rational. Nor is ethical behaviour referred

to some superhuman, spiritual sanction; it is physically (biologically) determined; man is moral because he is rational.

A few words in connection with a doubt expressed by S.K. Das. He suspects dualism in the statement that the dynamics of ideas runs parallel to the process of social evolution; he feels that dualism creeps in when we differentiate between historical events and movements of ideas. His anxiety to avoid the pitfall of dualism must be shared by us all. But there is no dualism in our philosophy as outlined in the Theses. A physiological process can be reduced to chemical and physical processes, and they again, ultimately, to atoms or electrical fields. So, the origin of mental activities can be traced in the physical background of the living world. Ideas are not *sui generis* metaphysical entities which somehow interject themselves into the material make-up of man; nor are they *a priori* ethereal forms pre-existing or existing simultaneously with the events of the material world. So, as regards the origin of ideas, there is no dualism in our philosophy. As foundation of a philosophy, monism is preferable, but it would be naive to apply it to the multifarious manifestations of the phenomena of life. In formulating the fundamental principles of our philosophy, we only say that, while ideas do not grow by themselves, they can be traced to the background of the physical Universe: once they are formed, they have an existence of their own. After the generation of ideas, the single basic current of physical events bifurcates, so to say; the biological world, on the higher levels of evolution, is composed

of a double process—dynamics of ideas and succession of physical facts. Mind and matter can be reduced to a common denominator; but, as such, they are two objective realities. Descartes went Halfway—as far as to recognise the objective reality of matter; but he failed to find the bridge over the apparent gulf between mind and matter. Ever since, scientific philosophy was vitiated by dualism. Reading Descartes more closely, we learn that he did discover the bridge; but courage failed him at the bridgehead. He would not go over it. He went as far as to declare that animals were machines. Are not human beings also animals? Descartes begged the question, because he could not reasonably give a negative answer. It is not generally known that one of his disciples carried the master's revolutionary thought to its logical consequence. De la Mettrie wrote a whole book called "L'Homme Machine" (Man is Machine). Biological knowledge, vastly enriched since the days of Descartes, has made his arbitrary dualism utterly untenable.

With the help of scientific knowledge, philosophy can go beyond Descartes, abolish his arbitrary dualism, and build the bridge over the gulf which seems to separate the mental world from the material world. But even with scientific knowledge, philosophy could not break out of the vicious circle of dualism, unless and until it was realised that monism did not exclude the pluralism of the phenomenal world. We show that by saying that ideas, once formed, exist independently as objective realities, governed by their own laws. Any attempt to deny the objective reality of ideas only vulgarises monism. The problem was

to explain the genesis of ideas without going outside the physical world. We have solved the problem by tracing the double process (mental and physical) of the biological world; including the process of social evolution, to a common origin.

It is simply not enough to say that the cultural and ethical patterns are not mere superstructures of economic relations. One must explain how otherwise they develop. There is the religious view of an immaterial soul, which is believed to supply the impulse of what is called the spiritual life. The explanation of idealist philosophies either does not explain or lends to mysticism. If philosophy is to avoid either of those blind-alleys, the origin of ideas, recognised as objective realities, should be discovered inside the physical world. We have done that.

That is perhaps the central point of our philosophy, our contribution to philosophical thought. When that point will be fully developed, it may turn out to be a new philosophy, neither Materialism nor Idealism, as until now generally understood. As far as epistemology is concerned, we reject Idealism categorically. To the extent that Idealism claims autonomy for the mental world, we agree. Without denying the creativeness of the human mind, the objective reality of ideas cannot be disputed. Monism cannot be strictly applied to history. The monistic approach, either idealist or materialist, is bound to give a partial view of history. If you look at history from the economic point of view, you see only one aspect of it. History must be studied as the process

of integral human evolution—mental intellectual social. We must trace the parallel currents of ideal and physical events. Connecting new ideas causally to established economic relations, we put things on their head. It is an experience of history that invariably a new ideology rises to herald a new social order. New ideas inspire action for the destruction of established economic relations and the creation of new ones. Karl Marx himself could not deny that. So, we shall have to answer the question: How does a new revolutionary ideology develop? A new system of ideas grows out of older systems. That is to say, ideas have a history of their own. The relation between the growth of a new ideology and the rise of a new social class is not causal, either way; it is accidental. A new ideology expresses the urge for human progress, The same urge also expresses itself in social dynamics through the rise of a new class, which finds in the new ideology a justification for its strivings and incentive for action.

CHAPTER FOUR

MATERIALISM AND ORTHODOX MARXISM*

THE part of the Theses which deals with abstract ideas should be judged by its logical cohesion, The other part describes a Utopia. That word has a rather bad odour; we may not use this word. But we should be very clear about it that nobody is in a position to make an exact blueprint of the future. Only dogmatic defenders of the economic interpretation of history claim to be able forecast exactly what will happen to humanity in future. I would sound a word of warning against that method of casting the horoscope of mankind. Experience of modern times has proved it to be unreliable. To have anything more than an approximate idea of the future being beyond the reach of human ingenuity, any picture of things to come must necessarily be of the nature of Utopia.

We are, however, not setting up an Utopia as the ideal of our political activity. In the latter part of the Theses, the structure of the Radical Democratic State is outlined, and a rough picture of the Radical Democratic Society is depicted. Everything written in that connection is tentative, hypothetical and, therefore, may have to be changed and recast in the light of

* Concluding Speech by M. N. Roy at the discussion meeting preliminary to the Third All-India Conference of the Radical Democratic Party, December 25, 1946.

experience. But the ideological part of the Theses is either right or wrong. There we make propositions of pure thought which transcend space and time; their validity is logical. The adjective tentative is not applicable in that case. It is a matter of logical deduction. In the realm of ideas, deductions can be made with mathematical certainty from logically sound premises. It is permissible to test the logical soundness of the premises; but after they have stood the test, deductions made from them are valid, not tentatively, but as conclusively established propositions, provided that the methodology of the process is not fallacious, and the deductions themselves are not self-contradictory.

Regarding this part of the Theses, doubts have been raised on two scores, both of fundamental nature. Firstly, about the relation between Idealism and Materialism, the relation between the physical or socio-historical processes, and the movements of ideas. On that point I could add very little to what I said in my last speech. If there is still any doubt on that account, it is due to the fact that you are approaching the problem from a different angle of vision. We cannot run away from our shadow. We have been educated in certain ways, and subconsciously those ways still haunt us. For the moment, the position is that, approaching the problem from the point of view that I represent, one reaches a solution which does not convince those who still visualise the same problem from a different point of view, even though no longer consciously; at the same time, they find the problem baffling, or the solution offered by themselves unsatisfactory. Otherwise, there would be no occasion for discussion.

We shall have to go down to fundamentals. We shall have to compare notes about the respective points of view of our approach to the problem. Some comrades do so still from the points of view of Materialism as understood and expounded by orthodox Marxists, who believe that their scriptures contain the final truth. There are formulations in the Theses which cannot be squared with that dogmatically materialist point of view. I also stand firm on the ground of materialist philosophy. But what is materialist philosophy? There seems to be some difference about materialist philosophy itself. I do not think that it can be identified with economic determinism. The latter is applicable only to society, and even there it does not explain every aspect of social evolution. The former is a cosmological conception, applicable for explaining the entire scheme of nature, including society. I have dwelt on, this point at some length. Now I can only add that, unless some or any of you would or could still not see that difference and insist that a partially true method of interpreting history should be considered to be the whole of materialist philosophy, no fundamental fault could be found in the Theses. Equal importance is attached to the dynamics of ideas and the dialectics of social-historical development. I would ask for agreement on that point. If we agree that ideas cannot be simply dismissed as the superstructure raised, from time to time, on the shifting foundation of changing economic relations, we cannot come to a common conclusion on all other points. That is the point of departure of our philosophy, and in that it differs from orthodox Marxism. As a comprehensive, logically consist-

ent philosophy, Materialism does not deny the objective reality of ideas, because their origin can be traced in the background of the physical Universe. If ideas are not mere by-products of ever changing economic relations, they must have a history of their own. We call it dynamics of ideas, because throughout history new ideas are found to inspire actions ushering in a new chapter of history.

There has been a suggestion that we should not use the word Materialism in the Theses. What does that imply? It implies that either what is said there is not consistent with Materialism; or that we should give up Materialism as our philosophy, and so in a straightforward manner. It may also be that some of you apprehend that, using the term Materialism, we shall run up against prejudices. Clearly, there is again some misunderstanding among ourselves regarding Materialism. Materialist philosophy as I understand it does not warrant the contention that ideas do not have an independent existence of their own; we can trace the development of ideas as a logical process from the birth of humanity until our days, without referring it anywhere causally to social movements. I categorically reject the view that ethical values, cultural patterns, movements of ideas, are mere ideological super-structures raised to justify established economic relations. It has been asserted that causal relations between ideas and historical events can be established. Yes, but in the reverse direction not in the Marxist sense. If you mean that sort of causal connection, where ideas have the causative force, then you throw away the economic interpretation of history. It has been clearly admitted

in the Theses that, in that sense, there is a relation between the movements of ideas and what we call social dynamics.

It seems that you are terrorised by the possibility of being defamed as idealists. But we must recognise truth wherever and whenever discovered, and be guided by it in our thought and action, if we call ourselves scientists or philosophers. I suppose we agree on rejecting the relativist view of truth, and ethics in general. Otherwise, it would not be necessary to take all this trouble of formulating new principles of political theory and practice.

Let me say a few more words to lay the spectre of Idealism' which seems to be haunting some of you. Once again, I say, I am a confirmed, unmitigated, Materialist, *philosophically*. I am of the opinion that Materialism is the only philosophy possible; any other philosophy, in the last analysis, takes us outside the physical Universe, into the wilderness of a mystical metaphysics over which presides God; it makes no difference if creation out of nothing is conceived mathematically (a contradiction in terms) or anthropomorphically, or pantheistically, or in any other of the subtle and sophisticated ways which modern men in search of God imagine to have discovered. The result in each case is the end of man's freedom on this earth. If philosophy, that is, an explanation of being and becoming, cannot free us from the freezing grip of fate, why not remain satisfied with the honest religious mode of thought? All systems of philosophy other than Materialism are

dishonest religion; they smuggle religiosity in through the backdoor; perhaps their founders and propounders do not realise that; but that does not alter the significance of their intellectual gymnastics. Once the significance dawns on them, and they have the intellectual honesty, all non-materialist or anti-materialist philosophers must echo Kant's famous declaration: philosophy ultimately reaches a point where it must yield place to faith. Perhaps that admirable intellectual honesty of Kant is to be traced to the materialist point of departure of his philosophy also.

But prejudice apart, Materialism has been brought to disrepute by its fanatical defenders who are simply incapable of thinking philosophically, because they cannot appreciate the supreme importance of the human spirit (please, note the word human) and implicitly deny the creativeness of man's mind. Materialism must be raised above the level of the vulgarity of dogmatic orthodoxy, and developed so as to conform with the advancing knowledge of nature, from physics to psychology, if it is to carry-conviction to all thinking minds, and be generally accepted as the gospel of freedom—of course, only by the lovers of freedom. That is my purpose; as far as these Theses serve that purpose, I shall stand or fall by them; and I venture to believe that all fighters for human freedom, not merely national or class emancipation, will take up a similar attitude.

So, let me revert to the ghost of Idealism, and exorcise it. Having exhaustively, carefully and criti-

cally studied the history of ideas ever since the earliest founders of philosophy up to Karl Marx, I do not find any justification to deny that the history of ideas can stand by itself without any reference to social and political history as its incentive. On the contrary, Hegel was nearer to the truth than Karl Marx when he said that the history of philosophy is the history of civilisation. What is history today? How was it at the time of Vico, when history became a science? Philology was the most powerful instrument in the writing of history of language, and the history of language is the history of thought, of ideas; that is to say, we could write history only when we knew the history of ideas. Social and political history has big gaps, still to be filled in. But fortunately, barbarians and counter-revolutions could not efface whole chapters of the history of ideas. From the writings of early Christian theologians, we could reconstruct the history of the period after the invasion of Rome by the barbarians—the political and social history of the early Middle-Ages. We shall have to adopt the same method while writing Indian history. In that, we shall be confronted with a greater difficulty—lost chapters in the history of thought, particularly, after the fall of Buddhism. But that difficulty can be overcome with the help of logic, the law of the development of ideas. Two apparently isolated chapters of the history of thought can be logically connected, and the intervening period logically reconstructed.

Much evidence can be adduced in support of the contention that gaps in social and political history can

be filled in by deductions from the history of thought. That can be done because movements of thought always preceded epoch-making social and political events. Let it be repeated that, at no point of history, ideas were divinely inspired. From any point of their history, ideas can be traced back to their biological origin, which is embedded in the background of the physical Universe. To illustrate my argument, I may refer to the history of the Renaissance and the Reformation. Both are considered to be bourgeois movements. That is to say, those ideological ferments were produced by the rise of the commercial classes. That is simply not true, historically. 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 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 medievalism. 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. But if we want to regard history as a progressive process, we shall have to look for the source of inspiration of the Renaissance. It was in the ancient pagan culture of Greece and Rome. The Renaissance was the revolt of man against God; as such, it heralded the modern civilisation and the philosophy of freedom, Materialism.

Coming to the next chapter, the Reformation, Calvin and Luther are called representatives of the bourgeoisie. The fact, however, is that the bourgeoisie were against the Reformation also. In France, it was a 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 a 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. There was no causal connection, as I understand it. Malinovski or Westermark define superstition as misapplied rationalism; economic interpretation of history similarly is often misapplied determinism. Two things happen together, and it is maintained that one is caused by the other. Great confusion is created consequently.

I do not think that materialist philosophy justifies the economic interpretation of history. The quintessence of Materialist philosophy is monism. Economic determinism is a dualist conception; therefore, it cannot be deduced from Materialism; much less can the two be identified. The concept of

causality must be freed from the fallacy of dualism, if determinism is to withstand the positivist onslaught. Causality must be conceived as a function of the physical and social processes, and proved to be so. If it implies two things, one acting upon the other, there is absolutely no escape from the extravagant empiricism of Bertrand Russell, for instance, who argues that, since nobody can ever see all the crows in the world, "all crows are black". We can defend the proposition against pan-empiricism only by proving that a certain biological organism, by virtue of its own structure, produces black feathers. So long as a bird is constructed as a crow is constructed, it must be black. Causality is not an empirical, but a logical concept. Economic determinism cannot be established either empirically or logically.

On the basis of this fallacious interpretation of history, Marx set up the theory of class struggle which, in course of time, became the cardinal article of faith of Marxism. The history of the civilised world is the history of class struggle, which ultimately develops into the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The latter will overthrow the former and establish a classless society. Here is the Achilles' Heel of Marxism. A classless society will be stagnant. Because, according to Marxism, class struggle is the lever of all progress. In a classless society, the dialectics of history will cease to operate; progress will cease to operate; progress will come to a standstill; humanity will die. Marxism, as understood and expounded by its dogmatic apostles as the last word of wisdom, the final truth, is thus

not the philosophy of freedom, but a sentence of death for mankind. In theory, economic determinism logically leads to such an absurd conclusion. In practice, it becomes a negation of the Marxist Utopia. The State does not wither away under Communism. Since the State, particularly as a dictatorship, is an instrument for the suppression of all forces discordant with the established order, its not withering away under Communism proves that economic relations do not constitute the whole of human life, or that even under Communism they are not equitable. In either case, the economic interpretation of history is proved to be false; and a scheme of political practice and social reconstruction elaborated with that false philosophical sanction, can no longer serve the purpose of the struggle for freedom.

¹ As against the exploded Marxist Utopia of a stagnant society or the reality of a permanent; dictatorship, we revert to the humanist ideal of freedom. I am not ashamed to say that I derive my inspiration from the Renaissance. Karl Marx was also a humanist. His followers have forgotten that he declared man to be the root of mankind. I do not think that anything more can be said with reference to the doubt about the relation between the movement of ideas and the operation of material social forces. As a materialist, I regard them as two currents in the integral process of human evolution; the two together constitute human evolution. In so far as our philosophy traces the origin of human evolution to the background of the physical Universe, it is Materialism. But it differentiates itself from

Marxist materialist determinism by recognising the autonomy of the mental world, in the context of physical nature. In building up a social philosophy on the basis of Materialism, we do not allot a subsidiary role to ideas. Originating in the prehuman stage of biological evolution, emotion and intelligence are decisive factors of social and historical progress. The behaviour of human beings is determined by the autonomous movement of ideas as well as the dynamics of social evolution. They influence each other continuously; history can be regarded as an organic process only in that sense.

The other fundamental question is about ethics and rationalism. In course of the discussion, one of you came very near the mark, but somehow he again moved away. Somebody asked what is rationalism? There are so many kinds of it. The most acceptable definition should be that rationalism is accordance with reason. That is platitudinous. Verbal definitions usually suffer from that defect. The definition of this particular term immediately provokes another question: What is reason? Unless we can trace reason to the common denominator of monistic Materialism, rationalism has no meaning for me. I attach greater importance to meaning than to verbal definition. Albertus Magnus, for example, was a great rationalist, one of the greatest of all ages. But there is a world of difference between his rationalism and ours. Modern rationalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was essentially ideological. Reason was conceived as a metaphysical category or it remained veiled in mystery. It was not a personal

idiosyncrasy of Robespierre to have raised Reason to the pedestal of a goddess; nor was it a perversity on the part of the Hibbertist members of the Convention to have a Parisian prostitute impersonate the deity of the Revolution. Unless reason is identified as inherent in physical nature, and its operations are brought within the reach of intelligence, rationalism is hardly to be differentiated from a sophisticated religion)—a philosophical or scientific faith. Therefore, we are searching for the material content of the concept of reason.

In biology, we come up against such terms as instinct, intuition, impulse, etc. Are they all elementary indefinables? Are they just given *a priori*? Materialism knows no elementary indefinable. It reduces everything to the common denominator of the physical Universe, subject to its fundamental law. Not finding a rational explanation of reason in biology, I go farther. The entire physical Universe is a determined process—of becoming. Therefore, I identify reason with determinism in nature. All biological processes, including man's mental activities, take place in the context of the physical Universe, being integral parts thereof. So, reason is a property of physical existence. It is neither metaphysical nor a mystic category.

The physical Universe is law-governed; nothing happens without a cause; it is rational. Thus, we place reason in the, physical Universe. Only when biological processes are discovered to be a continuation of determinism in physical nature, does it become

possible to explain rationally such mysterious phenomena as instinct, intuition, impulse, etc. They can be traced to their origin in the mechanism of prehuman evolution. Tracing the rational thread further downwards, we come up against the problem of another missing link in the chain of evolution: the origin of life. How does life grow out of the background of inanimate nature? Unless that problem is solved, you cannot reduce reason to determinism in the physical Universe. The problem is no longer baffling, even if we take an extremely sceptical attitude: towards the suggested solution. The first appearance of life out of certain chemical processes can be theoretically conceived, though it may not yet be experimentally demonstrated.

There is an unbroken chain connecting the elementary indefinables of psychology with physics; it runs through physiology, cytology and chemistry. Once the rationality (determinateness) of the mysterious phenomena of instinct, intuition, impulse, etc. is revealed, the chain can be traced to the other direction also—to the highest expressions and greatest creations of the human mind. There is an unbroken chain of evolution from the vibratory mass of electric currents to the highest flights of human intelligence, emotion, imagination—to abstract philosophical thought, recondite mathematical theories, the sublimest poetry, the master works of arts. Only the materialist philosophy, call it by any other name you may prefer—such as Physical Realism, Scientific Rationalism, Materialist Monism—can trace this red thread of unity running through the entire cosmic

system of being and becoming. Unless that is done, we cannot explain history. If we cannot explain man, if we cannot show that man is an instinctively, naturally, rational being, history cannot be explained. History is a rational process because it is made by man. If you can never know how man will behave in a given situation, you cannot make a science of history.

There may be defective formulations, here and there. But on the whole, the Theses outline a completely monistic picture of the world: "Arising out of the background of the law-governed physical Universe, man is a rational being." Begin with psychology and anthropology; they, together with the allied sciences, all merge in biology—the science of life. Biology, through bio-chemistry, merges in chemistry; the dividing line between chemistry and physics has disappeared; consequently, you have an unbroken chain of the descent of man from the fiery mass of the primeval physical being to the pluralistic picture of the world of to-day. Every man being the incorporation of similar instincts and urges, similar because they can all be deduced from the same origin, the ideal of a human brotherhood is not a Utopia. There was a time when we could not have such an all-embracing unitary picture of the world. Let us make some use of the scientific knowledge which we are so proud of. With its help, let us declare that it is wrong to hold that human society is only a civilised jungle and can progress only as long as human beings cut each other's throats; that there is a common human urge, a common human destiny.

Let a larger and larger number of people become conscious of their common human heritage, and we shall come nearer to the Utopia.

My approach to the problem of ethics is also materialistic. I believe that not only is a materialist ethics possible, but that materialist morality is the noblest form of morality. Because it enables man to be moral without debasing himself before imaginary super-human powers. Unless ethical concepts and moral values can be derived from the process of prehuman biological evolution, they cannot stand criticism except on the authority of God or some *ad hoc* metaphysical assumption. Either morality is inborn in us, or we are moral under the dictate of some external agency. You cannot have it both ways. If you reject the proposition that man is moral because he is rational, then, you have to reject morality, or you have to accept the morality of the priests and pundits. Morality is a kind of human conduct. If human beings are rational, there must be a connection between morality and rationalism. Morality is an appeal to conscience. But what is conscience? Here is another concept which has remained veiled in mystery even in modern rationalist moral philosophies. I conceive conscience as awareness of social responsibility. The sense of social responsibility does not necessarily run counter to individual freedom. On the contrary, it can easily be shown how it results from the urge for freedom. The struggle for existence, in the form of that urge in human beings, led to the foundation of society. Unless the relation was deliberately distorted, means should not defeat

the end. Founded with the purpose of enabling its constituents to pursue the urge for freedom more successfully, society should not be an instrument for the suppression of freedom. The existence and continuation of society are conditional upon its individual members feeling their social responsibility, and discharging it loyally. In a rational system, social responsibility, therefore, is not antagonistic to individual freedom. If human beings become conscious of their essential rationality, the harmony of social responsibility, that is to say of respect for others' urge for freedom, with the freedom of each citizen would be automatically established. Let me illustrate what I mean.

If I started with the conviction that I was a member of society because, in co-operation with others moved by the same urge, I could develop my potentialities more successfully, social responsibility should be my natural impulse. I do not like anybody restricting my freedom; therefore I should willingly grant the same right to every other member of society. Consciousness of the urge for freedom is the decisive factor; once that is there, the respect for others' freedom naturally follows, and social responsibility is voluntarily undertaken by all. Imagine a community of people, everyone of them acting according to this conviction, and we shall have a moral society. It will be moral, because it is rational. Because I do not want any one to do any harm to me, I should not do any harm to others. This reciprocity is the foundation of society. In a rational society, appeal to

conscience is not a mystic device for subordination to some metaphysical compulsion or divine coercion.

If we do not trace ethical sense to the rational instinct of man, then moral values become dogmatic propositions; somebody dictates them to us. The relativist attitude to morality is the natural reaction to dogmatic, irrational, coercive ethics. And moral relativity is immorality. As soon as you take a relativist attitude to morality, you take your stand on the declining plane of Jesuitism. Everything will be tested by result, and if the most immoral behaviour will lead to a good result—good for you—you will say that it is moral. Therefore, if we want at all an ethics, we shall have to start from the proposition that there are such things as human values; and human values are eternal, in so far as humanity is eternal. The term eternal is not used in the physical sense. What is meant is that ethical concepts and moral values originated with *homo sapiens*; they have no super-human origin, nor any divine, transcendental sanction. Since all human urges can be traced back to prehuman biological evolution, morality also must ultimately be derived from that source. There was no class struggle in the pre-human world. Ethical behaviour being of pre-human biological origin, moral values of the human world are universal. The humanist approach to history, the humanist philosophy, enables us to conceive of universal human values. Therefore, I place ethics in the context of the rational scheme of the physical Universe. A rational ethics is possible only as a part of materialist philosophy.

The first part of the Theses goes to the root of things. It enables us to have a rational picture of history. Thereupon, it becomes possible to visualise what is most likely to happen in future. That is outlined in the latter part of the Theses. Subject to what I said before, our picture is necessarily tentative, in the nature of a Utopia. The Radical Democratic Party has set before itself a task, that is, the establishment of a Radical Democratic State. We can visualise approximately—leaving a very wide margin of error and uncertainty—what will be the picture of the Radical Democratic State. Human action must be impelled by an ideal. Otherwise, there will be no incentive for action. So, we say we want to establish a Radical Democratic Society. Once that is done, why should the party still continue to exist? We cannot say with any measure of certainty what will happen thereafter. We can only say that, once we have achieved what we want to do, we shall have nothing more to do.

To eliminate the present inequities of life, society should be economically reconstructed in a certain manner. But we do not assert dogmatically that abolition of private ownership, nationalisation, of the means of production, planned economy, will necessarily establish an equalitarian social order; and remove all restrictions for the unfolding of human potentialities. The misgiving is no longer theoretical; there is the Russian experience to learn from. Our critical attitude to Russia is entirely objective. Personally, I would go to the extent of saying that the Russians could not do anything else. But the fact remains that they have

done what has actually happened, not what was desired, nor as is still imagined by blind believers. After that experience, it will be sheer dogmatism to say that, if Indian society was reconstructed according to a certain plan, the pattern of the future would be predetermined. The variables of the equations of social science are not infinite, but they are innumerable. It is not possible to take them all into account at any given moment. Therefore, with all the concreteness of a political programme and economic plan, one cannot foresee exactly what will be the relation of forces after the revolution, how the post-revolutionary society will be actually constructed; numerous un-calculated and contingent forces having come into operation in the meantime, what will be the ambition of men at that time? How can we say now if then there will be one or ten political parties? We can only say that we shall not be there. Upon the establishment of the Radical Democratic social order as outlined in the latter part of the Theses, our party will have nothing more to do. It will not mechanically liquidate itself; nor will the Radical Democratic State wither away. The party will merge in the people and the State will be coterminous with society. That is our Utopia. We do not pretend to see beyond. Because we simply cannot make that miracle. Why speculate?

Doubt has been expressed about the possibility of a political party being composed of detached individuals. Political practice need not be motivated by the lust for power. The Radical Democratic State, being based on the widest diffusion of power, power

actually wielded by the entire people, will leave no opportunity for any party to capture power in the name of the people or a particular class. A party working for the establishment of such a political order will naturally be composed of detached individuals. Why is it so difficult to imagine a detached individual? In Marxist parlance, we have the word declassed individuals. You come from the bourgeois class. You break away from that class and join another class, the proletariat. But then you are no longer declassed. You attach yourself to a new class. Karl Marx was not so primitive. He could not elaborate the idea. The idea of declassed, or detached individuals can be traced back to Plato, who was the first to realise that a society could be ideal if it had completely detached individuals for its rulers—the so-called Philosopher-Kings. The Marxian scheme of proletarian dictatorship had a striking resemblance with the Platonic Utopia. According to Karl Marx, the Communist Party was to be composed of the philosophers of the proletariat. Revolutionary vanguard of the class is not just a verbal cliché. Their purpose would be to establish an ideal society. The Utopian idea of the State withering away has a profound significance which has been missed by its protagonists. It was that the proletarian State was not to be a vested interest; it should be only the means to an end—an instrument in the hand of detached individuals who did not wish to hang on to power. As soon as the end of communist society was reached, the instrument should be thrown away. That supreme act of sacrifice could be performed only by individuals with no attachment, by philosophers

pursuing the urge for freedom. Therefore, Marx expressly wrote that the time had come for philosophy to remake the world. Only through philosophers could philosophy perform the mission Marx entrusted to her.

Unfortunately, carried away by his idea of class struggle, Marx used wrong words to express his great Idea of power being vested in detached individuals during the transition period. If a class captured power to suppress other classes, it can never be divested of power. Therefore, dictatorship of the proletariat was a palpably inappropriate term to express Marx's idea; it was bound to defeat its end. Exactly that has happened. The Communist Party did not rise as an association of philosophers, acting as instruments of philosophy remaking the world; to reconstruct the world rationally as a commonwealth of free moral men replacing the greedy economic man of the modern fable. Instead of becoming an association of spiritually free men striving to make others conscious of the urge for freedom inherent in themselves, the Communist Party was fascinated by the prospect of capturing power and wielding it dictatorially in the name of the proletariat. A party deliberately forged as the instrument for capturing power could not possibly help its members to grow 'up to the stature of free men. Thirsting for dictatorial power, it voluntarily submitted itself to an internal dictatorship. The magic word "discipline" did the trick. The individuality of its members was sacrificed at the altar of the collective ego of the party;

and a party is the archetype of the society it proposes to build.

If the members of the Russian Communist Party had the freedom to unfold their potentialities, it would be composed of spiritually free men and women; as such, it could not degenerate into the instrument of dictatorial power. If there were more men of the stature of a Stalin, Stalin could not be the dictator. He himself would be a different man, as the prototype would be equally different. The more such developed individuals in the ranks of a party, the greater the chance of diffusion of power. Technology creates a small class of experts. Given the structure of modern technological society, why should it not be possible to create thousands and thousands of such experts? And if industry was decentralised, the State would be quite different. But the Russians had not so many qualified men, and so industries and power became centralised.

The future society which we propose to establish will depend on the number of detached individuals who have inherited the humanist tradition. I believe that is possible. The decisive factor is education. Such a high degree of education cannot be obtained before the revolution for all individuals; not before the Radical Democratic State is established. But in a vast country like India, a sufficiently large number of men and women, moved by the urge for freedom, can educate themselves. And once that preliminary condition is created, the process will accelerate under its own momentum. The revolution will take place

as a matter of course. Let the Radical Democratic Party be composed, say, only of 20,000 men and women convinced of the principles stated in the Theses, fired by the ideals visualised therein, and we shall be much nearer to revolution than you can imagine to-day.

CHAPTER FIVE

HISTORY CORROBORATES RADICALISM*

EXACTLY six years ago, the Inaugural Conference* of the Radical Democratic Party was held in this very hall. That was perhaps the darkest moment in the history of the modern world. Having overrun practically the whole of Europe, international Fascism was extending its cruel tentacles towards Asia. The gravity of the situation, however, was not realised by the political leaders of our country. Haunted by the ghost of Imperialism, they disregarded the danger of Fascism. Imperialism, indeed, was not yet dead; but it was in the throes of death, having no chance of surviving the war. To refuse to participate in the war against Fascism, on the pretext of non-cooperating with Imperialism, therefore, was to fight a shadow instead of the real menace to freedom. It should not be very difficult to imagine that neither India nor any other single country could be free in an enslaved world. A callous and short-sighted attitude towards the danger of Fascism, however plausible that attitude might appear, not only might have made of India an easy prey to the imminent invasion by one or another Axis Power, if that

* Speech by M. N. Roy at the Inaugural Session of the Third All-India Conference of the Radical Democratic Party, Bombay, December 26, 1946.

calamity did happen; it was bound to give birth to the greater danger of the rise of indigenous Fascism.

Notwithstanding fundamental differences as regards philosophy and social outlook, the Radicals until then had remained inside the Congress with the hope that democratic and progressive forces might eventually gain the upper hand. When the war broke out, they tried their best to persuade the Congress leadership to take a far-sighted view of the great crisis. But the Congress leaders refused to see that British Imperialism could not survive the war, no matter how it ended; and that, therefore, the entire weight of India should be thrown in the balance so as to bring about the defeat of the Axis Powers; because, should the war end differently, British Imperialism would be destroyed, but India would not be free in a world dominated by triumphant Fascism. The policy advocated by the Radicals in that critical moment should have commended itself as realistic and practical to those engaged in power politics, who might be indifferent to greater issues and larger considerations. A total mobilisation of the country for war purposes under Congress Ministries in eight provinces, and a Central Government reconstructed according to the August Offer, would have set the stage for a final struggle for power, should it come to that. Imperialism could not possibly resist the Indian people virtually capturing power during the war, if the nationalist leaders had the skill of political strategy, not to mention a broader vision and concern for greater issues at stake, to link up India's struggle for freedom with the world struggle against international

Fascism. Six years ago, the Congress could have occupied the positions of power it does to-day, if callousness for the menace of Fascism did not induce its leaders to prefer political gambling. If they had the sagacity to act differently, to-day India would not be standing at the threshold of independence, baffled and bewildered; she would have safely come to her own. Imperialism, would be gone and there would be no indigenous Fascism threatening to make a fraud of the freedom within reach.

When the Congress leaders missed the opportunity and preferred to gamble with the fate of the Indian people, the Radicals had no other alternative but to warn the country against the danger of that policy. Much more than the future of India was in jeopardy; the fate of the modern world and civilisation hung in the balance. The Radical Democratic Party was born out of that great crisis of history. It declared that India's fight for freedom should be merged in the world struggle against international Fascism, and appealed to the Indian people to cooperate voluntarily, actively and without any reservation, in the war against the Axis Powers. The appeal was based on our belief that British Imperialism could not possibly survive the defeat of international Fascism. Therefore, we argued that by contributing to the defence of the freedom of the world, India would win her own freedom. The voice of reason raised by the Radic

emotions, unfounded hopes and false expectations. A congenital lack of self-confidence expressed itself in the fear that British Imperialism was, like the fabulous thousand-headed hydra, immortal; and that fear was sublimated as anti-imperialist patriotism. Having analysed the relation of international forces at the outbreak of the war, we had come to the conclusion that an armed conflict with the Axis Powers was not in the interest of British Imperialism; that the Axis Powers were the spearhead of international reaction; and that, therefore, their defeat would be a defeat for world reaction, including British Imperialism. The corollary to the conclusion was that it was suicidal for British Imperialism to have entered the war against the Axis Powers. Still another consideration determined our political perspective: a gigantic conflict of mechanised armies was bound to be economically ruinous for all involved in it, except the U. S. A. Victorious and vanquished Powers alike would be financially bankrupt. Therefore, even a victorious Britain could not possibly remain an imperialist Power.

Our analysis of the international situation and the resulting prognosis of the future of the world, including India, though in the nature of mathematical calculation and a matter of logical deduction, nevertheless were dismissed by nationalist intolerance as wishful thinking on our part. Our critics could not disprove what we maintained; they only asserted that things could not happen that way; that the Machiavellian wickedness of British Imperialism was sure to find some way out of the crisis aggrandised,

and its tentacles dug still deeper in the vitals of India. They believed that victory of the Axis Powers alone could free India and the rest of the world from the evil of British Imperialism. The logical implication of that line of thought was a wish for Axis victory. That was wishful thinking, which was rationalised by arguing that the military power of Germany was invincible. So, while dismissing our analysis of the world situation and prognosis of the future, as wishful thinking, it was our critics who actually indulged in that psychological practice of escapism. Since we could not be fought by fair means, our critics resorted to all manner of questionable methods: we were ridiculed, misrepresented, maligned, vilified,, and physically assaulted. The entire nationalist press was drafted in that crusade. We had little means of making ourselves heard; in addition to the press boycott, our public meetings were often broken up by organised hooliganism.

But history was on our side; it vindicated us time and again. Even when our reading of the international situation was ridiculed, events moved almost exactly as we had anticipated, during the war and afterwards. What concerns India directly, also happened as we had predicted; no sooner the war was over than India found herself within the reach of the nationalist goal of independence. Unless British Imperialism was irreparably shaken in consequence of the war, it would not easily abdicate power in India, as it is doing to-day. Congress leaders refused to participate in the war against the

Axis Powers on the ground that a victorious Britain would tighten her imperialist stranglehold on India; to-day they are proclaiming triumphantly that British Imperialism has ceased to be a decisive factor of the Indian situation. The British are quitting India neither under the pressure of the Congress resolution nor for any particular goodness of heart. They simply do no longer possess the power, financial as well as military, to hold this country. Since they can no longer rule, they have no other alternative but to quit. The already shaken foundation of British Imperialism has been blasted by the war. Nationalist India has reached the threshold of independence thanks to the very war which she condemned as the outcome of a wicked conspiracy of British Imperialism and therefore refused to participate in it. Were the Radicals not right when, in the very beginning, they characterised this war as revolutionary and liberating? Should not they, who maligned us for holding that view, to-day hang their heads in shame?

During these six years since the Radical Democratic Party was founded, many things have happened. They are recorded in history. It is not necessary to narrate them here. We must take notice only of one sinister development. The consequences of the war have been very approximately as we anticipated; the consequence of the nationalist attitude towards the war has also been exactly as we apprehended: it has fostered the rise of Fascism in India. Therefore, while welcoming the fact that India has reached the threshold of

national independence, this conference of the Radical Democratic Party is constrained to note also the cognate fact that the future of India is heavily darkened by the menace of Fascism. There is another side of the sinister picture which is equally depressing. Having reached the threshold of national independence, India is threatened with a communal civil war, the alternative may be chaos, which will only enable Fascism to establish itself firmly in the saddle. The perspective is gloomy; but it is not unexpected for us. We founded the Radical Democratic Party to sound the alarm against the coming danger, and with the object of providing a rallying ground for the advocates of freedom, determined to fight that danger. The fight can no longer be delayed. During the last six years, the Radical Democratic Party has prepared the ground; now the time has come for all lovers of progress and democratic freedom to take the field.

In the manifesto issued by the Inaugural Conference of the Radical Democratic Party, we said: "India's future is linked up with the future of the world. The path to Indian freedom lies through a victorious struggle against Fascism. While the Fascist hordes are nearing the Indian borders from both sides, Fascism is raising its ugly head in our very midst. The democratic and progressive forces must, therefore, fight simultaneously on two fronts. The fight on the home front must begin immediately. The decisive battles for the political freedom and social emancipation of the Indian masses will be fought on that front."

Two years later, the First Conference of the party, held at Lucknow, while declaring that military defeat of international Fascism was already certain, drew public attention to the rise of Fascism in India, and appealed for the mobilisation of the progressive and democratic forces for the coming fight against Fascism on the home front. The Second Conference of the party was held in Calcutta in 1944, actually under the fire of Fascism rising with the connivance and under the protection of the decaying imperialist State. That painful experience demonstrated that the Radical Democratic Party was being forged as the spearhead of the democratic and progressive forces still to be mobilised in the coming fight against Fascism. This Conference will sound the tocsin for the battle. History, not made by nationalist India, but by other world forces, has brought India to the end of the first stage of her journey towards freedom. Will the progressive and democratic forces in her life be able to assert themselves at this juncture, and lead her towards the goal of freedom? Or will the disappearance of Imperialism mean the triumph of Fascism? That is the question of the moment.

It is not generally realised how rapidly the public life of India is coming in the grip of Fascism. But no lover of freedom will have any doubt when the facts are brought to their notice. The practice of Fascism need not be identical in every country; nor is the employment of brute force in its nakedness the characteristic feature of Fascism. It is suppression of liberty and regimentation of public life, either

forcibly or by appeal to irrationalism. Now look around and see what is actually happening in India since "popular" ministries were restored in the provinces, and an Interim National Government installed at the Centre.

Already regimented emotionally and by monopolist ownership, the nationalist press has been placed under further restrictions which have been 'willingly accepted. Freedom of expression, already throttled by nationalist intolerance, has received the sanction of law, provided that it will be subservient to the "National Government." By far the major section of the press has readily submitted itself to Government control. Having denied freedom of expression to non-conformist, critical, not to mention hostile, views, the nationalist press has now abdicated its own freedom.

The freedom of association is equally in danger. The odious Section 144 I. P. C. has never before been enforced so frequently. Meant to be an emergency measure, it has now come to be the common law of the land. The communal tension provides the Government with a plausible pretext for suppressing civil liberties. The power of the police to act arbitrarily is rapidly expanding under the National Government and the popular ministries. Ordinances are issued even when Legislatures are actually in session, and some of them are veritably Draconian, sanctioning long-term imprisonment and even shooting at sight. Firing on workers' demonstrations has become a usual experience.

Regimentation of the labour movement is well advanced. The plan is to incorporate trade unions in the totalitarian nationalist organisation. The Congress Labour Front is meant to swallow up the Trade Union Congress and, with tacit support of the employers, fight independent workers' organisations such as the Indian Federation of Labour. The Trade Union Congress is already to a considerable extent an adjunct to the National Congress. If the Communists, who control a number of unions, do not fall in line with the Congress Labour Front, they will be driven out. To make that process easier, Communists are being prosecuted by Congress Ministries in all the provinces. Arrests of Communist trade-unionists and externment of Communists from areas where they are active, are daily news features.

Interference with private correspondence has become more sweeping than ever before. In this act of outrage against civil liberties, the Congress Ministry of the United Provinces has gone to an incredible extent. According to a recent circular to all District Police Officers, the correspondence of the prominent members of all the political parties except the Congress are to be censored, and the interference is unrestricted; the instruction is that all letters containing information useful for the Government should be sent to the latter either in copy or in original; correspondence can be altogether suppressed or withheld from the addressee, if considered necessary. The judgment is left to the Intelligence Branch, the Secret Police, inherited from Imperialism. This is thorough-going totalitarianism—dictatorship of one

party. Only those suspected of being public enemies are subjected to state surveillance. Our National Government has placed all political parties except the Congress in that category. The logical corollary to this attitude of intolerance will be suppression of all political parties by the one in power.

Congress Ministries have begun interfering even with the private life of men and women. On the pretext of defending public morality, they propose to lay down rules which should be observed in producing cinema films, for instance. They are more concerned with taboos and prohibitions than with conferring some positive benefits on the people; and taboos and prohibition mean restriction of liberty.

While intellectual and emotional regimentation and suppression of civil liberties are creating the atmosphere for the rise of a dictatorial political regime, in the economic field Fascism has been making long strides. One of the initial major acts of the Interim National Government has been to provide legal sanction for the creation of an industrial finance corporation, to be the channel through which public money will flow into private business. Long steps towards autarchy have also been taken during the short time since the formation of the Interim Government. The most outstanding evidence for the fascisa-tion of the economic life of the country is the ominous talk of creating a large and powerful army, equipped with the most modern weapons. What is the immediate need for such an army, which is bound to be an extremely expensive luxury? Apart from this question

and also the consideration that the heavy financial burden will mean additional taxation for the common people whose taxable capacity is already exhausted, one may marvel at the contradiction of the preachers of the cult of non-violence planning the creation of a powerful army, particularly when there is no need for it. The contradiction results from the logic of the Indian situation. The National Government has made the Bombay Plan of Economic Development its own. Rapid industrialisation is the central idea of the plan; and that process is conditional upon the building of heavy industries, to begin with. Before that initial stage of the plan will be reached, ambitious industrialists, even though financed with public money, will be faced with the baffling problem of a market. Where will the produce of heavy industries be sold? Not many motor cars or railway locomotives and many less aeroplanes can be purchased by the Indian people. The only solution of the problem is to create a market artificially. A large and powerful army equipped with the most modern weapons will serve the purpose. The Government will be the purchaser for the produce of the privately-owned heavy industries, initially financed with public money. That is a classical Fascist method of solving economic problems, and it presupposes a regimented public opinion and a totalitarian political regime.

That is the direction to which events in our country are moving. I could draw the picture only in broad outlines. But the contours are clearly visible and the general tendency unmistakable. Having risen

six years ago, to sound the alarm against this danger, the Radical Democratic Party is naturally on the alert when the country has been driven to the very brink of the precipice by intolerant and short-sighted nationalism. To head off the imminent danger, however, is a tremendous task. The Radical Democratic Party does not minimise its magnitude, ever determined to fight it. In spite of the great difficulties, which it had to cope with in the earlier part of its life, the Radical Democratic Party has grown. Now it will grow more rapidly, because the thinking section of the people is getting already disillusioned by the experience of nationalism in power. The time has come when all the lovers of democratic freedom and progress will surely rally under the banner of the only party which raised the voice of reason, even when it was crying in the wilderness.

This Third Conference of the Radical Democratic Party, therefore, feels strong enough to take up the challenge of Fascism, the rise of which it anticipated already six years ago. Consistent with the specific conditions of the country, Fascism will adopt different methods in India. In addition to the nationalist sentiment, backwardness of the masses, and persistence of mediaevalist tradition in the intellectual and cultural life of the country, are the greatest assets of Indian Fascism. In order to fight it effectively, we shall also have to forge suitable weapons. To begin with, well-equipped battalions of sappers and miners must be put in the field to undermine the social foundation of the enemy. With the weapons of enlightenment and rationalism, our vanguard will fight cultural backward-

ness, obscurantism and blind faith. In India, Fascism must be fought on the cultural and ideological front. Our army is very well equipped for that battle. During the short period of their existence as an organised party and the years previous to that, the Radicals have developed a revolutionary philosophy suitable for our time. This Conference will place that invincible armour at the disposal of all the lovers of freedom, while calling them to the fateful battle for the future of India.

CHAPTER SIX

MARXISM AND RADICALISM*

I do not propose to wind up the discussion. If these Theses are to be understood in their full implications, much more discussion will have to take place. In submitting the Theses to this conference, we had not the slightest intention of imposing them on the party. I said at the Dehradun Camp, and again in the circular letter to the Provincial Camps which followed, that from the discussions in the Camp, held on the basis of our experience, certain deductions must be made, but they would not be binding on the party as a whole before the party conference endorsed them. Those deductions are contained in the Theses which have been submitted to this conference. They can be examined from two points of view. Firstly, whether they logically follow from our discussions; secondly, going a step further, you may also examine whether the analysis of our experience was correct.

In the Dehradun Camp, we came to the conclusion that our analysis of the international situation, and also of the situation in our country, was correct. The discussion was carried on throughout the party. In the Provincial Camps, some doubts were expressed. Some voices of opposition were also raised. But after

* Concluding Speech by M. N. Boy in the discussion on the Draft Theses submitted to the Delegates Session of the Third All-India Conference of the Radical Democratic Party, Bombay, December 27, 1946.

full explanation was given, by and large, the party accepted the view that the judgment of the Dehradun Camp about our analysis of the international and national situation was correct. There might have been some individual members, not present at the Camp, who contended that, as they were not there, they could not be bound by the result of its deliberations. If this sort of extravagant empiricism was introduced in the party, it would create worse havoc than in science. Our ultra-empiricists are the representatives of a kind of individualism which is exactly the contrary of the individualism we talk about in our Theses; and those very members may part with the party precisely on the issue of individualism ! If on entering a new phase in the life of the party we shall have to suffer some casualties, that loss will be regretted, but cannot be helped.

There is hardly anything that could be added to what has already been said by way of explaining the details of the Theses. Nor can its implications be fully described all at once. I shall only say a few words by way of removing some doubts and apprehensions which seem to be still lingering in the mind of certain comrades. They have been expressed in two different ways. Firstly: Are we deviating from Marxism? And if we are, how far are we going? The question has been put in another form: Are we rejecting Materialism in favour of Idealism? It has also been asked: Is it permissible for our party to commit itself to any kind of philosophy? That means, we should reject both Idealism and Materialism.

The Theses do not warrant the doubt; nor do they accept the advice. They are the result of an examination of Marxism in the light of experience in the fields of social and historical development. Marxism is subjected to an analysis on the basis of that experience. In doing that, an attempt is made to rescue what is abiding, what is stable and permanent, in Marxism; to put our experience in the setting of the world of our days; and deduce conclusions to guide our behaviour. That is not rejecting, or even revising, Marxism; that is developing Marxism, which, not being a closed system of thought, is capable of enriching itself continuously with the lessons of new experience. That is the essence of Marxism, and therefore it is capable of being the philosophy of the future, provided that it will not be debased into dogmatism approximating a religious faith. Those of you who have been feeling rather nervous about our suspected apostasy, that we are deviating from Marxism, should be reassured by these few words of explanation.

Now I shall immediately proceed to prove that we are perhaps the only loyal followers of Karl Marx in our days. Loyalty does not exclude intelligence. Our Theses maintain without ambiguity that all attempts to remake the world, even only economically, must be inspired by philosophical Materialism. In no uncertain words, I have rejected political pragmatism which is another name for political practice without any principle, that is opportunism. On the one hand, we reject the advice of "practical" or "pragmatic" politicians in our ranks who say that we should not commit ourselves to any particular philosophy; on the

other hand, our acceptance of Materialism is unambiguous. I believe that economic relations, human behaviour, political practice, cultural pursuits, are so many facets of various human activities. Man is a part of society. Society is a part of nature, and the animate nature, is a part of the physical Universe. Therefore, no political practice can guarantee ultimate success, unless it is guided by fundamental philosophical principles. Philosophy is the science of sciences, that is to say, the science of knowledge. How can politics, then, be divorced from philosophy, unless politics should be declared a preserve for ignoramuses? Except on the basis of a monistic philosophy, no laws for human behaviour—economic, social, political or cultural—can rationally be laid down. And Materialism is the only consistently monistic philosophy possible.

But Marxism has two sides. It is materialist, and also teleological. Unfortunately, those who claim a monopoly of Marxism, lay emphasis on its teleology and we have grown up in the midst of that tradition. Therefore, some amongst us contradict themselves so hopelessly. They regard determinism as a teleological concept, which makes marionettes of men. They believe that the entire process of human development is predetermined; men have only to fall in line to goose-step wherever the Providence of history will order them. Call them social forces or means of production, whatever you like, but all these modern gods are only so many manifestations of prejudices. As against this kind of Providential Will, smuggled into Marxism by Marxist scholastics, we pose Humanism. We draw inspiration from the Renaissance, which was the revolt

of mail against God and his agents on this earth. The sanction for our so doing can be found in Marxism, which originally also breathed the liberating tradition of Renaissance Humanism. Marx celebrated man as the maker of his world, before the technological aspect of Marxism sacrificed man at the altar of the imaginary collective ego of society.

Until the Renaissance, the world was guided by one form of determinism, the belief that everything goes on according to a Providential Will; everything is preordained; men have only to fall in line. The Renaissance was a revolt of man against that fatalistic attitude. But later on, for various other reasons (it will be impossible to go now into that past history in detail), that spirit of the revolt of man was forgotten, although on the foundation of that spirit other forms of social philosophy were created, which, consciously or unconsciously, resurrected the teleological view.

Just think out what it means that everything is determined by the means of production. Previously, everything in this world was traced to some superhuman power. Marx traced it to the means of production. But may we not ask who created the first means of production? What was there originally? Did the first man appear with hammer and sickle in hand? No. But he did come into the world with another means of production, the most powerful ever created. And that was his brain, which was a creation neither of mystic social forces, nor of God. The history of the growth of that instrument of creation, with which man appeared on the scene, is to be traced all

the way down the process of the evolution of the higher biological forms. That history finally vanishes into the background of the physical world. The brain is the most powerful means of production; when you talk about means of production, do not forget that. We are all born with it, and it remains our basic asset, provided that we can appreciate its worth and make proper use of it. If you prefer a crude hammer, or even an electric hammer, or something still better, the most modern technological inventions, to your brain, I wish you luck.

The human species was born with the most basic and powerful means of production, which was not produced by man, but inherited from his animal ancestry. With the help of that creative weapon, he produced the first non-biological means of production. Man is greater than any means of production, which are his creation. But while settling the fate of humanity, you take into calculation everything except man. That is the defect of Marxism, as of all other forms of philosophy; and it is owing to that defect that the world has come to its present impasse. We propose to free Marxism from its basic fallacy. We have been thinking that way for a long time. Whatever we say to-day has been developed in a rigid logical process ever since the founders of the Radical Democratic Party began to think.

Now, I do not want to be autobiographical. But in order that you may not be obsessed with the idea that we suddenly got scared of something and produced a high-faulting document to hoodwink you and

others, I may tell you that ever since I began to think for myself, I have been looking out for something which would make politics worth while. In the beginning, I thought that I found it in Marxism. I followed the Marxian path for quite a long time. But it was not a faith with me. It was only a guide to show me the way. I accepted Marxism critically. While behaving as a Marxist, I was continually subjecting Marxism to my critical faculties, examining it in the light of the experience of our time. You all know why I broke away from the Communist International. That was nearly twenty years ago. You know only the facts. But I am afraid you did not look into the implications of those facts. It was not a difference only on this or that point of fact; it was an ideological difference.

All political workers talk glibly about ideology. What does it mean? An ideology is a system of ideas; in other words, an ideology is the ideal sanction for social and political practices. When you talk of ideology, you do not act according to economic determinism. You admit, not knowingly, that your social behaviour is not determined only by economic relations, but to a large extent ideally also. Because, you profess an ideology, according to which you act. That means, you have a philosophy. Any political party, socialist or communist, reactionary or revolutionary, rightist or leftist or even fascist, every political party, unless it is a band of gangsters, has a philosophy. Many parties perhaps are not conscious that they have a philosophy; yet they do have one.

When my book, "The Philosophy of Fascism," was published, the whole Marxist world shouted: Absurd ! How could Fascism have a philosophy? They were a gang of bandits. As against Fascism, Communism claimed to have a perfect philosophy. Therefore, Marxist Pundits characterised Fascism as monopoly capitalism, and predicted its collapse even before it rose. They did not think it necessary to explain why a political system backed up by powerful monopoly capitalism would collapse at the raising of the magic wand of communist propaganda. Exactly the contrary happened; communist parties, which claimed the command of the international army of the proletariat, could not stop the rise of Fascism.

Evidently, it was a mistake to think that Fascism had no philosophy. Such a superficial view could be taken only by political theorists uncontaminated by any philosophical thought. Those who take such a stupid view of events are not entitled to call themselves Marxists. As a scientific method of explaining history, including contemporary history, Marxism must give a rational and convincing explanation for all events. Fascism is the most outstanding phenomenon of contemporary history. It has to be explained. It is not enough to call it monopoly capitalism or Hitler Imperialism, whatever that curious phrase might mean. It is not historically correct to identify Fascism with monopoly capitalism. The latter had been in operation in other countries years before Fascism rose in Germany. In those countries, Fascists could not capture power. On the other hand, Italy, where Fascism first succeeded, was an economically backward country.

Fascism cannot be explained unless ideological antecedents, the cultural atmosphere, are taken into account. The doctrines with which Fascism swept to power in Germany can be traced in the ideological and cultural history of that country. Fascism also was a result of the dynamics of ideas. Monopoly capitalism, more correctly, capitalism in decay, found that those ideas could serve its purpose very well. The cultural tradition of Germany or of any other country which fell victim to Fascism, might have been determined by economic conditions in the past. But it is palpably wrong to connect the consequences of economic backwardness causally with monopoly capitalism. Failure to appreciate the role of ideas in history leads to such absurd explanation of subsequent events. Examine the action of any political party without preconceived notion, and you will find that ultimately there are certain philosophical principles which guide those actions. It may be a false philosophy.

Those who are afraid that these Theses will paralyse the activities of our party, are comparing us with the Communists. Has not the Communist Party also a philosophy? Does not the Communist Party say that it is a Marxist party? They profess Marxism, and Marxism is a philosophy. If a philosophy cannot paralyse the activities of the Communist Party, but inspires it with an incredible fanaticism, why should it paralyse us? So, even on the analogy of the Communist Party, one cannot maintain that politics must have nothing to do with philosophy. Who talks more about ideology than the Communists, who still seem to be the ideal of some amongst us? A wrong philo-

sophy or misunderstanding or falsification of a right philosophy, leads to fanaticism in action. A sound philosophical attitude is bound to inspire rational action, which is ultimately more powerful and therefore more effective. Why cannot we have some confidence in our honesty of purpose and sincerity of our sentiments? Those who are afraid that an intelligent understanding of philosophical principles to inspire, motivate, and give moral sanction to our political activities, will lead to passivity in action, are themselves predisposed to passivity. They will be passive whether we have a philosophy or not; sooner or later, that inglorious fate will overtake them. Even now they do not believe in the effectiveness of our activity, because it is not cast on the communist pattern. If our Theses will be an immediate cause for their disappearance from the field of party activities, I cannot help it. They are only looking out for a plausible excuse. Even now they are not active, in the right way.

After what I have said about our relation to materialist philosophy, it is hardly necessary to add anything to remove the utterly unfounded apprehension that we are relapsing into Idealism. The two Theses which deal with this question are very clear; but a thesis cannot be an essay. It is only a theoretical proposition. It cannot but be formulated tersely, almost aphoristically. Without the requisite knowledge of the subject, one may find it difficult to understand such propositions. But if one will fall back on his com-monsense, setting aside prejudices and preconceived notions, it will not be at all difficult to understand rational propositions. No technical expressions have

been used. There is no obscurity. It is a clear statement in a clear language, and anybody who will only desire to understand it, and take some trouble with the purpose, will understand it. Approaching it with suspicion and prejudice, one will of course only find fault and say he does not understand. That is an intellectual subterfuge; some of you, only a few, I believe, do not agree with the view that politics must be rational and moral, that a revolutionary need not be a Jesuit; but they do not possess the intellectual equipment to oppose our propositions convincingly. Therefore,, they plead inability to understand. They cannot impose this attitude on the whole of the party. They are thus isolated. But it would be repugnant to the principles and spirit of Radicalism to threaten them with disciplinary action. The comrades who are opposed to the Theses, or to some parts thereof, are the defenders of mechanical discipline. They believe in intellectual coercion; for a Radical, discipline is organisational ethics. Those who plead inability to understand the fundamental principles of Radicalism, will also not understand our attitude towards discipline, and consequently fanatical disciplinarians may try to introduce indiscipline in the party.

Since we reject the view that historical events are determined only by economic relations, we certainly do not apply that standard to the realm of ideas. We do not accept the Marxist doctrine that moral values, cultural patterns, aesthetic tastes, are all ideological super-structures of economic relations. They talk of bourgeois art and bourgeois philosophy. If these were super-structures of the economic relations of the

bourgeois society, then they are the outcome of capitalism. But what is the fact? What is called bourgeois philosophy, modern Idealism, rose before the establishment of the capitalist social order. Karl Marx may have put Hegel on his feet, but he has certainly placed himself on the head. Was he not the prophet of the ideology of the proletariat, which was still to appear on the scene as a dominating factor? He disproved his theory that a particular ideology was the creation of a class which adopted it.

It is very easy to take the negative attitude, and say that your opponents' ideas are all wrong. That is not enough; you must offer an alternative. We cannot reject off-hand this palpably absurd Marxist dogma unless we can show that the so-called ideological superstructure is not hanging in the air; that it too has its own roots. Ideas, undoubtedly, are influenced by social experience, influencing, at the same time social and historical events. But they have a logic and dynamics of their own. Only when this proposition is established, can the doctrine of super-structure be challenged. It must be shown that ideologies are not superstructures; but they are structures standing by themselves. If they are influenced by social relations, that is accidental, and not a causal connection.

If we cannot trace the dynamics of ideas somewhere within the limits of the physical Universe, then we land in Idealism. If they cannot be related to the material processes of history and life, then they must be traced to some super-natural or metaphysical origin, and we relapse into religion. Therefore, we point out

how ideation takes place, how ideas are born. Epistemologically, we reject Idealism, and Idealism can stand only epistemologically. Any other sanction for it is very shaky. Idealist epistemology could hold its ground until recently because of the backwardness of biological knowledge. The discoveries of modern physiology and various other cognate sciences have solved the problem of perception, which provided idealist epistemology all the arguments to combat Materialism. The problem of perception being no longer a baffling problem, the gulf between physics and psychology being no longer unbridgeable, ideas can be traced through the entire process of biological evolution down to the monistic conception of the physical Universe.

That is our ideology; Ideas are not simply given. Just as the physical structure of man grows out of the background of inanimate nature, similarly, man's reason and his emotions can also be traced down the processes of pre-human biological evolution to the common foundation of the physical Universe.

A philosophy which enables us to take any aspect of existence and trace it, together with others, to a common origin which is inside the scheme of the physical Universe, is certainly the most inspiring philosophy. It deposes God, and unless we can depose God, no use fighting for freedom. Because, if man is not spiritually free, he cannot conquer freedom on this earth. Such a philosophy of freedom should fire any man with the desire for action and enable him to do great deeds. The Radical Democratic movement, how-

ever, cannot be exclusive. Its main function will be to educate its adherents. Even all our party members may not from the very beginning accept intelligently all our philosophical principles. But once they are in the party, they will be helped to become full-fledged conscious Radicals. To perform the mission of remaking the world, the Radical Democratic Party shall have to be a party of confirmed materialists.

We cannot remake the world from to-day to tomorrow. Therefore, when you create a movement, you cannot ask everybody wanting to join it whether he believes in God or not. Why do people believe in God? Because they are helpless. They must have some support, some consolation. Therefore, they fall back on God. If the Indian people could not find solace in the belief in a life hereinafter, India would be one vast lunatic asylum, so very bleak has been the life of the masses through the ages. Religious belief was a necessity for them; it kept them going, gave a meaning, though imaginary, to their barren, depressing, distressful life in this world. That spiritual atmosphere must change before the Indian masses will begin to move purposefully towards the goal of freedom and happiness in this life. A philosophical revolution must precede any radical social transformation. Therefore, a truly revolutionary party must have a philosophy, and such a philosophy as will bring to the masses the message of spiritual freedom. The belief in God and fate is the strongest link in the chain of the slavery of the Indian people. The philosophical principles of Radical Democracy will deliver smashing blows to the chains of spiritual subjection,

accepted voluntarily from time immemorial. The Radical Democratic movement will be the school to teach the Indian people to revolt against fate and the God or gods who preside over it. The Radical Democratic Party will be the training college for the teachers. It will educate the educators of the people. We shall not begin by asking the people to revolt against God. We shall show them that they are not so helpless as they have been taught to believe; that they are the makers of their destiny. As soon as they will realise that this world of misery is very largely their own creation, a result of their voluntary subjection, resignation and passivity, they will begin to see that they can recreate it as a better world with less misery. In this way, gradually, they will have confidence in themselves. If a democratic movement is not thus inspired, it is bound to be misled. Therefore, dictatorship has become the fashion of our time. Radical Democracy is the only effective check for this madness.

Our party does not live in a vacuum. It is a cross-section of Indian humanity; all the diseases and weaknesses of the latter will be represented in it. Since the majority of Indians still believe in God, some members of the party may also have a share of that national heritage. But in the party, they will no longer be like lepers spreading their disease unchecked; they will be, as it were, in hospital where there are qualified doctors and trained nurses to treat and cure them of an inherited malady.

Suppose, in a short time after this conference, we recruit 20,000 new members; they will naturally be

average Indians full of prejudices which are our "national characteristic" or "cultural tradition." You certainly do not expect so many Radicals growing outside the Radical Democratic Party. If that was possible, there would be -nothing for us to do, and the Radical Democratic Party would be a superfluity. Our new members will be only potentially Radical. That much they will be; otherwise, why should they join the Radical Democratic Party? It is our task to make them full-fledged Radicals. But among our veterans, there are many who do not realise that this will be a very important form of party activity. They are afraid that an influx of a large number of new members, not fully mature as Radicals, will disintegrate the party, making it the happy hunting-ground of opportunists. Those veteran Radicals, with all their loyalty to the party, have a wrong idea of what is party activity. They think that the party must always act upon its outside world. They forget that the party can have an internal life. They make this capital mistake, which obstructs the growth of the party, because they do not realise that the party is composed of human beings, full of potentialities; but their potentialities must unfold themselves before the members of the Radical Democratic Party can claim to be free human beings better qualified to lead the struggle for human freedom. The role of the party is to help its members unfold their human potentialities, and thus qualify themselves as the leaders of the struggle for the liberation of mankind.

You see that we have a new conception of party. To drive the point home, let me use a fashionable

simile. A political party is compared with an organism; it is a living thing, with an internal life. What is internal life? It is the relation between the parts of an organic whole. An organism has relations with its environments also. But what happens to an organism if its internal life stagnates or stops functioning altogether? It dies. With its internal life stopped, the organism cannot have any relations with its environments. It is not realised by some of our veterans that an organism must live before it can react upon its environments; that, in other words, what is generally meant by party activity, is conditional upon the internal life of the party. The veterans, in their fanaticism, would kill the party with their wrong idea of party activity. We want to save the party by reminding it that it has a soul, so to say, by making it conscious of its own self, conscious of the fact that it is composed of human beings, and that its first function is to make every member a full-grown individual. If we have 20,000 members, 15,000 of them keeping its internal life pulsating, and the rest engaged in external activity, the party will grow much more rapidly; its external activity will be more effective. Internal party life consists in making every member of the party conscious of our experience, which has determined our new orientation. That is a tremendous task. To accomplish it is the most important party activity of the moment.

We have been developing a new idea of social reconstruction. Our ideology is not a bunch of dogmas. It has developed logically, perhaps, to begin with, in the brains of only a few individuals. But

once it crystallised itself, the entire party must be made conscious of it. That is the function of leadership. It is to make people conscious of what is their unconscious urge. In other words, to educate is the task of leadership. But in this country it is believed that the stupider the following, the greater is the leadership. That curious notion of leadership is determined by the intellectual backwardness of the Indian people. It is not an empty saying that a country gets the leadership it deserves. The political movement of India has no philosophy, but plenty of discipline. This peculiar notion of party has penetrated our party also. Dictatorship has become the ideal of revolutionaries. A party being the instrument for establishing dictatorship, it must be free of internal democracy, if it wants the distinction of being revolutionary. Members of our party must get rid of this obsession. The larger the number of members who imbibe our new ideas, the more untenable will be the position of those who still remain wedded to the old idea of party and its leadership. Therefore, they tremble at the idea of the party having a philosophy.

Our attitude towards the question of power seems to have caused doubts and misgivings to some amongst us. Without political power, no programme of social reconstruction can be carried out. How is the Radical Democratic Party going to capture power? Does not our new orientation evade the all-important question of power? The doubt results from the fact that capture of power has come to be identified with the aim of revolutionary politics. With us, the object of politics is to attain freedom, and power is

the means to that end. Radicalism does not evade this question of power, but places it in the proper context. The Radical Democratic Party does not want to capture power to wield it indefinitely on the plausible pretext of reconstructing society; it proposes such an organisation of democracy as will enable the people as a whole to become the sovereign power and function as such effectively. On the completion of the process, no political party will be able to capture power, on any pretext. The overemphasis on power by all odier theories and practices of revolutionary politics implies negation of freedom; means become the end; perpetuation of dictatorship by the party in power is justified. Apply the "revolutionary" theory of power to practice, and you shall have the following consequence: Possession of power is the condition for freedom; therefore, a revolutionary party must capture power, in behalf of the nation or a class; since power is captured by a party, it does not come in the possession of the entire people or class; it is monopolised by a relatively small group of people; as power is never voluntarily abdicated, freedom for all is impossible. The collective ego—nation, class— is invented to justify this perpetual slavery of the majority.

Therefore we put the idea of freedom so prominently before us. Capture of power by the people is necessary for the attainment of freedom, although the method of capturing power will be different under changed conditions and altered relation of forces. But in our programme of social reorganisation founded on a very clearly defined humanist libertarian philo-

sophy, there is no danger of power being monopolised by the revolutionary party. We propose capture of power not by the party, but by people's committees, a country-wide network of which can embrace the entire people. In our Draft Constitution, we have shown how power can be actually diffused so that every adult member of society can wield it.

Learning from experience, we reject parliamentary democracy as well as dictatorship of any kind; but we are not hanging in the air; we offer a third alternative, which we believe to be better, even if we do not claim that it will be valid for all time. From an analysis of the past, exact deductions can be made, and they can be a reliable guide for our present activities. But propositions about the future must be tentative and 'hypothetical. All possible influences cannot be taken into consideration. Nevertheless, leaving a sufficiently large margin of error, and assuming that no miracles will take place, we can say that things will happen more or less in a certain pattern. The latter part of the Theses is such a prognosis which, though as yet without any empirical sanction, is logically permissible. We visualise the outlines of a new political and economic organisation of society such as will guarantee the greatest measure of freedom to all its members.

I have placed before you a co-ordinated picture of the philosophy of Radicalism; I have also outlined the picture of social re-organisation to be brought about by those inspired by that philosophy. The Theses contain a comprehensive statement of the

principles of a theory and practice of revolutionary politics, formulated on the basis of world-wide experience.

CHAPTER SEVEN

BEYOND COMMUNISM TO NEW HUMANISM*

I have to speak on a document which, on the face of it, is irrelevant to the conference of a political party. The document has been read out, and it has also been distributed in printed form. I presume that many in the audience, except the delegates to the conference, must be wondering why such topics should be discussed in a political gathering. They have kindly attended this conference for three days with the intention of encouraging a young political party which appears to them as saying something new, worth hearing; they may be feeling somewhat disappointed, if not a little critical, and may be thinking like this: we came here to hear what this new party proposes to do, how it approaches the numerous problems which are facing our country and appear to be baffling the old parties and great leaders; but instead of stating its views on these practical things, why does this new party waste our time by airing opinions on abstract questions which do not seem to have any relation to politics.

That, I must say, is a superficial understanding of politics, which has been the cause of a good deal of confusion, not only in our country, but throughout

* Concluding Speech by M. N. Roy at the Third All-India Conference of the Radical Democratic Party, Bombay, December, 29, 1946.

the contemporary world. Therefore, only an entirely different approach to the political problems can lift the gloom and throw a ray of light on the future of mankind. The civilised world has survived the second world war, but it is still caught in the throes of the most serious crisis of history. The entire modern civilisation is in distress. The cultural and intellectual values, created on the basis of the magnificent achievements of civilised mankind, are seriously threatened. Whoever cherishes those treasures as the precious heritage of humanity, can no longer maintain the attitude of aloofness from the dirty political game, allowing professional politicians to gamble with the future of the world. While they talk about peace, the world is drifting towards yet another war. There is no stability, either political or economic, within sight. On the whole, it is a depressing perspective which should, nevertheless, stimulate calm thinking instead of fomenting the feeling of frustration.

A careful study of psychology as well as of history leads to the conclusion that defeat is not always an unmixed evil. As a matter of fact, defeat inspires thought. Marching from victory to victory, not being confronted with difficulties which appear to be overwhelming, one cultivates the habit of complacency, and that habit inhibits thought. When all our efforts appear to be frustrated, or when the path before us does not seem to be strewn with roses, only then do we begin to think furiously; in such critical moments, the sum total of human knowledge and understanding increases by leaps and bounds, and a new vista of progress for all opens up before humanity. That

perhaps is the brightest side of the present crisis, the silver-lining of the dark clouds.

Statesmen and politicians at the head of Governments and leading nations are trying to reorganise international relations and reconstruct the world in their own way, according to their respective notions and inclinations. None of them is a free agent; each has his preconceived ideas and vested interests. But detached and dispassionate observers have come to the conclusion that this sort of tinkering will not do; a serious disease has overtaken modern civilisation; it requires a radical remedy. They have been thinking seriously and developing new and pregnant ideas which will have to be co-ordinated into a logically consistent system, to show the way out of the crisis.

The ideas which have been incorporated in the Theses adopted by this conference are not new. Nor does the credit for evolving them belong exclusively to the Radical Democratic Party. They represent what is called the spirit of the time. When the civilised world was plunged in the darkness of triumphant Fascism threatening to extinguish the light of liberty which had guided the steps of man ever since the dawn of history, stout-hearted and clear-headed men and women dispersed all over the globe began the search for a way out of the catastrophe. In course of time, their number increased; their thought grew bolder; their ideas took definite shapes. Old ideals had become threadbare; they had lost their appeal; new ones had to be set before civilised mankind. But so long as the entire world remained preoccupied with

the gigantic military conflict, those thinking individuals, scattered in distant parts of the world, could not compare notes, so to say, and work up a new philosophy of life to inspire determined efforts for a radical reconstruction of human society. Happily the war is now over; peace, indeed, is still far away. Nevertheless, one task can now be undertaken, and that will bring the world nearer to peace. Men and women representing the spirit of the time, who have been thinking in isolation, as if ploughing lonely furrows, can now join forces to formulate a new philosophy which will blaze a new trail into the darkness of the future.

In our country also, there were people doing the pioneering work. Already in the beginning of the war, they founded the Radical Democratic Party. It was not just another event in the political field, perhaps to be forgotten in course of time. The founders of the Radical Democratic Party were moved by very deep emotions. They were moved by a great apprehension about the future of mankind. Unfortunately, at that time, their action was not appreciated; it was misunderstood; they were abused, maligned, vilified. They failed in their effort to marshal the Indian people on the side of the forces of progress, when entire humanity was caught in a life and death struggle between progress and reaction. That failure, however, was a blessing in disguise for us. That was not the time to raise larger issues; but it gave us the opportunity to do some hard thinking. 'How could a people, not only the mass of uneducated, backward Indian humanity, but also the small fraction having

the benefit of education and the blessing of an old culture and the inspiration of high ideals—how could even they not see that it was a profound crisis—not a mere struggle for power between British Imperialism and German Fascism, a crisis which had overtaken entire humanity; and that either entire humanity would survive or succumb to that calamity?

Looking around us, trying to find an answer to this question, we discovered—although it was not quite new for us—that the entire political life of our country stood on a very shallow foundation. They talked about independence and freedom, about Socialism and Communism, about classless society and economic reconstruction; but nobody raised such questions as: Why should we sacrifice so much for national independence, or for the abstract ideal of freedom? How would Socialism or Communism create heaven on earth? How would the transfer of the ownership of the means of production from individuals to a National State or class State solve all our problems? Such questions were simply ignored. This superficial view of political and social reconstruction, however, is not a peculiarity of India. It is shared by the people of other countries also. That is why political practice degenerated into a vulgar struggle for power and the movement for social reconstruction suffered defeats after defeats. Having reviewed recent history and learnt the lesson, we came to the conclusion that the above questions should be raised, not only with reference to our country, but to the whole world. We came to realise that, in order to solve the Indian problem, we must place it in the

setting of the greater crisis which had overtaken the entire world. The problem of freedom and social reconstruction of India, as of the rest of the world, will have to be approached from the point of view of a new philosophy of life, which will place politics on the profound foundation of an appreciation of human values. Political practice must be concerned with the requirements of man instead of the fraudulent concept of the nation or a class.

There are so many isms, so many doctrines, so many theories, that one more will not deserve the attention of serious thinking people, unless it is really something new. But, at the same time, there is nothing new under the sun. History is not a succession of standing miracles. Everyday something does not come out of nothing. Anything new is only something emergent. Novelties result from the unfolding of the potentialities in man. The ideas outlined as the Principles of Radical Democracy have been growing in the minds of thinking men and women in other parts of the world also—all who reacted to the greatest crisis of human history in the like manner. We do not claim any patent-right for these ideas; we have only made our modest contribution to their generation, formulation and elaboration. They result from a philosophical interpretation of human history, a revaluation of the permanent values which are the common heritage of mankind. With the revealing light of this reorientation, the civilised world will be able to penetrate the gloom that hangs on it oppressively, and see what the future holds in store for it.

Ever since the days of Plato, the fundamental

problem of politics has been the relation between the State and the individual. All this time, the problem baffled political thinkers to such an extent that modern political philosophy poses the individual as the antithesis of society. If the individual is really the antithesis of society; if social progress is not possible except at the cost of the individuals; if their existence, as individuals, cannot be harmonised in the context of society, then the entire human history has been a failure; there is no future for the world except the picture of a mechanised monstrosity ever engaged in the grim task of self-destruction. A serious view of the present crisis, and the endeavour to find a way out, therefore, must begin with a reconsideration of the fundamental problem of the relation between society and the individual, the individual and the State.

In the modern world, particularly since the middle of the nineteenth century, the individual has completely disappeared, not only from the frankly reactionary political thought, but also from the so-called progressive and liberating political ideologies.

Nazism and Fascism are condemned as totalitarian, because they deny the sovereignty of the individual; they do not give the individual any place in society except as a cog in a vast machinery, and endow this vast machinery with a collective ego. Yesterday, the General Secretary of our party pointed out how Nationalism, by its internal logic, cannot but be totalitarian, because it also postulates a collective ego—the nation. It is a metaphysical concept; yet,

human beings, of flesh and blood, must sacrifice everything to make the nation great and glorious. That is the essence of Nationalism. That is, to sacrifice a reality at the altar of a fiction, of an illusion. The nation could not claim an undivided loyalty unless Nationalism was of the order of monotheistic religion: there can be no other God, and nobody can claim any share in the sacrifice. A country is supposed to be the shrine of the goddess of nation. All the human individuals inhabiting the country cannot have any other loyalty, not even to themselves, than to this abstract concept of nation—the monopolistic, exacting political goddess whose existence cannot be proved. Unless the collectivity servilely accepts this fiction as a truth, the nation cannot exist.

In the prevailing atmosphere of this country, surcharged with the fanaticism of a political religion, few will as yet see the truth of the statement that Nationalism, whether Indian or German or Japanese, by its internal logic, is a totalitarian cult. Very soon it will no longer be a matter of logical deduction from an analysis of the concept of nation; it will be a matter of experience—a pragmatic truth. Indeed, Indian Nationalism is already showing its ugly totalitarian teeth. The doctrine of one country, one party, one leader, is being preached without any opposition. In practice, intolerance runs rampant. One-party government is established in the provinces and the centre. This system is defended on the pretext of unity. On the same pretext, all opposition to nationalist politics is called unpatriotic, betrayal of the nation. India, under the banner of Nationalism, is not only moving

towards totalitarianism, but is well advanced on the way.

Totalitarianism, that is, negation of the concept of freedom, is invading Indian political life from another direction as well. Communism is also a totalitarian cult. If there is no such thing as a nation, apart from the aggregate of individuals composing the people inhabiting a particular country, it is equally arbitrary to assume that a class has an abstract existence over and above and in addition to the individuals composing it. Communism ascribes a collective ego, not even to the entire society, but to a particular class. Eventually, society will be classless on the disappearance or elimination of all classes but one. The ideal is the establishment of such a society and to promote its progress visualised as the evolution of an organism. As an organism, society is, of course, composed of parts; but the parts can have no existence of their own, no history of their own; their function is to serve the purpose of social progress. Individuals, men of flesh and blood, creators of society, are to subordinate themselves to the imaginary and abstract conception of a collective ego. Just as in the case of Nationalism, in the case of Communism also, the subordination of individuals—men and women—without whom neither nation, nor class, nor society is possible, whose existence and creative efforts are the precondition of any form of social or political organisation, lays the theoretical foundation of dictatorship. It is not by accident or perversity that proletarian dictatorship has become the *sine qua non*, the basic article of faith, of Communism. The idea of dictatorship logi-

cally follows from the arbitrary and abstract concept of a collective ego, which is entitled by some mysterious power to demand the subordination of man. Since man is the creator of the social world, any social organisation which denies the sovereignty of the individual cannot be libertarian.

The identification of Communism with dictatorship, be it only for the transition period, is not denied. But the contention that Communism is as totalitarian as Nationalism will be fiercely contested. Because, totalitarianism is negation of liberty. Let us dwell on the point a little longer. It is maintained that all inequalities result from the fact that the economic life of society has all along been dominated by minorities; in other words, because of the private ownership of the means of production. Therefore, the means of production should not be owned privately, but by the State. Then there will be economic equality, and political equality will result automatically. On the face of it, that appears to be very plausible. Early Socialism visualised that picture as the Utopia which would be attained somehow in course of time. Karl Marx ridiculed Utopian Socialism and elaborated the mechanism of social transformation from capitalism to Communism. It won't be an automatic process, although it is predetermined by the internal contradictions of capitalism, and therefore inevitable.

The proletariat captures political power, establishes a State which is supposed to express the collective ego of the class; the ownership of the means of production is transferred from private individuals to that

class. Ownership becomes collective. But does it really happen? Ownership is simply transferred from one class to another class. The capitalist owners constituted the bourgeois class which, according to Marxism, also had a collective ego, So, in that sense, capitalist ownership was also not strictly private, it was also collective ownership. So, the transfer of ownership really makes no change. Yet, they say that the ownership of the means of production is nationalised or socialised, as the case may be. In reality, however, the ownership still remains "private", because it is vested in one class, not the entire society. But that is supposed to be only a transition stage. Gradually, all other classes will disappear; there will be only one class; society will be coincident or coterminous with the State, and therefore State ownership will mean social ownership. That appears still more plausible. Therefore, Marxism was hailed as progressive and liberating; and as such it captivated the imagination of an increasing section of humanity for more than a century.

But the State still remains; and the State, according to Marxism, is the instrument of a class in power. When there will be no class, when the State will be coterminous with society as a whole, the State will cease to be an instrument of power; that is to say, it will disappear, having no function to perform. There was a fallacy in this wishful thinking. It was to assume that a very highly industrialised society need not be politically organised. Let it be remembered that, whatever function it may perform, under different circumstances, essentially the

State is the political organisation of society. Therefore, the Marxian Utopia of the State withering away under Communism can never be reached. And if freedom of the individual is possible only in that Utopia, man can never be free. That negation of freedom is logically inherent in the Communist theoretical system. It seems that Marx himself and the early Marxist theoreticians did not think out their thought to the logical consequences. Marx was a humanist, and he formulated his philosophy as a philosophy of freedom. However, if the theory, with all its apostolic fervour and idealistic excellence, remained so very fallacious, it could not convince thinking people. Therefore, something more was added to it; a collective ego was assumed. Society was to be reorganised to promote collective social progress. Communism lost its original merit of a Utopia. A libertarian philosophy provided sanction for the negation of the concept of freedom by denying the very existence of men and women as individuals.

The crucial question is: What is the relation between society and the individual? What is society as a whole? Is it something over and above the human beings composing it? In order to build a communist society, we must all sacrifice; everybody must work for- it. Social progress is necessary; otherwise mankind cannot move forward. But what does all that mean? The individual should be sacrificed for a collective ego. Political thought has gone from one fallacious doctrine to another fallacious doctrine, because of the failure to reconcile the individual with society. There was a time when it could not be

helped. Nobody knew from where the individual came, how society was formed and evolved. Then, naturally, things were imagined. But in our time, we are no longer groping in the dark, not to that extent, at any rate. We need not set up political theories on metaphysical assumptions. Biology and anthropology have acquired enough empirical knowledge to trace the descent and evolution of man. We find that society is the creation of individuals. The individual comes first; he is prior to society; society is the means for attaining an end, which is freedom and progress of the individual. But the end has been forgotten. A false conception of the place of man in society is the cause of the wrong juxtaposition of end and means; the divorce of ethics from political practice and social engineering. That, in its turn, is the cause of the present crisis. Unless we can go to the root of this crisis, we cannot overcome it.

We shall have to begin from man. The doctrine is preached with an air of superiority that the individual is an abstract concept; it is argued that, just as in physics the atom has been found to be an abstraction, just so the individual is the non-existing social atom. The corollary to this doctrine must be that society was created, by some super-human force, as a group, and not by men. But, curiously enough, the collectivists also maintain that man is the maker of his world. So, after all, it is admitted that society is the creation of man. Why did man create society? And how? He did it in course of his struggle for existence. Coming out of the background of biological evolution, the human species start their struggle as

individuals. In course of time, they realised that, together, they could carry on the struggle for existence more successfully. That was the origin of society.

And what was the essence of the struggle for existence? It was the urge for freedom. If our ancestors, the primitive human beings, did not struggle against the wild forces of nature, they would be crushed by their environment. They wanted to be free from the forces which tried to kill them. That urge for freedom, which is a continuation of the biological struggle for existence, is the basic incentive of human progress. Thanks to that urge, mankind organised itself into primitive society with the object of carrying on the struggle for existence more effectively, and on a higher level. Is it rational to say that the instrument which man created to attain freedom should ultimately deprive him of his freedom? The entire history of mankind would then appear to be a contradiction. It is indeed a fact that society did forge chains of slavery for man; in our time, man created the machine and was enslaved by it. But the urge for freedom could not be throttled. Man struggled for freedom through the ages. He is still struggling. He has a long history. Only if we understand this, can we understand history.

Therefore, the central idea of the document presented here is that political philosophy must start from the basic idea, that the individual is prior to society, and that freedom can be enjoyed only by individuals. A political philosophy which cannot guarantee indivi-

dual freedom, or cannot think of freedom in that sense, is bound to be misleading.

The next question is: How is it possible for an individual to be free in a society which is centralised and supposed to be the creation of a collectivity? Neither capitalist free enterprise nor parliamentary democracy could solve the problem, although liberalism started with the noble ideal of individual liberty. Socialism or Communism also does not seem to be leading us towards that goal. On the contrary, it rejects the very notion of individual freedom. So, what is the way out? We shall have to think of something new; of an alternative political organisation of society, which will reconcile individual freedom with economic reconstruction on the basis of the abolition of the private ownership of the means of production.

The Draft Constitution of Free India, which the Radical Democratic Party placed before the country two years ago, tries to outline the structure of such a State. The basic idea is *organised democracy*. In Parliamentary democracy, based on atomised individuals, the sovereign individual has nothing more to do in the political organisation of society than to cast a piece of paper in a box every three or four years. The result is concentration of power in the hands of a minority, and the consequent negation of freedom in practice. The antithesis of that type of formal democracy was the Marxian political philosophy and practice. Marxism postulated dictatorship of- the proletariat as the transition to a higher form of demo-

cracy. Democracy is also the Marxist ideal; the dictatorship of the proletariat is only to be a transition stage to a higher form of democracy. And how will it be higher? It will be different from parliamentary democracy; but what is the measure of its being higher? In parliamentary democracy, power nominally belongs to the entire people. But in practice the individual is divested of all power; the individual is helpless in parliamentary democracy. Socialism will establish a higher form of democracy if it guarantees that under it this defect will be removed. But if socialism is associated with a form of society which makes freedom of the individual impossible, it will be no better than parliamentary democracy.

Shall we then say that democracy is impossible, and declare that the history of mankind for the last 300 or 400 years was a mistake? Such a reaction was represented by Fascism. Fascism proclaimed that democracy was no good and offered dictatorship as the alternative. What then is the difference between Fascism and Communism?

Apparently, fascist dictatorship is more democratic than the communist dictatorship, because its collective ego is the whole nation. Apparently; because, if the nation is at all a democratic concept, then why should there be a national dictatorship? The nation need not dictate itself ! The fact, however, is that Fascism, as the highest form of Nationalism, does establish a dictatorial State, which claims to incorporate the collective ego of the nation. Nevertheless, formally, in so far as it claims to represent the entire

nation, Fascism is a higher form of democracy than proletarian dictatorship, which admittedly claims to represent only one class. Because of this apparent distinction, when the fascism also revolted against parliamentary democracy, they captured the imagination of large masses of people in a much shorter time than the Communists.

That is a very tragic fact, which has to be taken into consideration by those who want to find a solution of the crisis of our time. No use shutting our eyes. The Communist manifesto was issued about a hundred years ago. Seventy-five years thereafter a revolution on its pattern took place in one country. As a reaction to that revolution developed Fascism, and within ten years, Fascism swept the whole of Europe. The people followed the Fascists and not the Communists. That is a fact which cannot simply be explained by saying that the Social Democrats were treacherous cowards, so on and so forth. The fact must set us thinking, and if we do think, we must realise that not only parliamentary democracy was a failure, but the Marxist theory of democracy was fallacious, dangerously so. Therefore it did not have a sufficiently strong appeal for the people.

A political theory in our time cannot be based on metaphysical assumptions. It has to be based on scientific knowledge and backed up by a scientific philosophy. An effort in that direction is made in our Theses. The logical corollary to the theory that history is economically determined is that the individual is a fiction. And the strange part of this essentially teleo-

logical theory of history is its deduction from materialist philosophy. If everything is determined economically, how can you make a revolution at all? Events will follow, one after another; man has nothing to do with them. He is a mere marionette in the hand of the economic Providence. But recognition of the sovereignty of man is inherent in the very idea of revolution. Capitalism breaks down and Socialism grows in its place. How that happens is very difficult to explain by economic determinism. Therefore, having expounded the materialist conception of history, Marx had to deviate from economic determinism in order to make revolution possible. He admitted the sovereignty of man in the causal process of history. He said capitalism might decay, but unless the proletariat rose in revolt and overthrew the bourgeoisie from power, capitalism could exist for ever.

So, again, man is the creator of society. But how long will man create one form of society after another in order to pull it down? The solution of this perennial problem depends on the realisation that there are other factors than the economic to determine the development of society. There we tread on philosophical grounds. Even when trying to find a political solution of social and political problems, we have to go into some fundamental philosophical questions. We shall have to compose the conflict between Materialism and Idealism.

As soon as it is admitted that man creates society, idealism comes in—not the idealism which denies the reality of the material world, but in the sense of re-

cognising the autonomous role of ideas. How can man create society? How does man get the idea of making a revolution, of changing the world? In order to reply these questions, we shall have to trace the dynamics of ideas. Man's ideas, man's thinking process, has something to do with history. Man's brain is also a means of production; it produces ideas, which are the most iconoclastic of commodities. So long as we refuse to allot ideas a very important place in the process of social evolution, we are bound to relapse in theology. A pure economic determinism leads to the doctrine of predestination. Shaw once pointed out that economic determinism was only another name for the good old Providential Will. Once we stand on that declining plane, good-bye to freedom, collective as well as individual. The march of events being predetermined, either by a Divine Providence or inexorable economic laws, man can have no control on them, cannot change them. His struggle for existence cannot be successful; and human life will then be the greatest tragedy on earth.

The vicious circle is broken when we ask a fundamental question: How was the original means of production created? Who created it? The creation of the original means of production can be imagined as the first ape breaking a branch off a tree to prolong his arm with it and plucking fruits with its help without having to climb to the top of the tree. That was the greatest step in the struggle for existence. The first means of production was created. But the creation took place in the monkey's brain, out of his urge to be free of the necessity of growing longer

arms which would have had to grow longer and longer in the course of millions of years. That first act of creation of the social world, that creation of the first means of production, was neither of super-human origin, nor was it economically determined. To place the origin of human activity, of the beginning of social life, beyond the point where the process of economic determinism commences, is not giving priority to ideas of super-natural, metaphysical origin. By doing so, materialist philosophy is freed of dogmatism; the origin of ideas is scientifically explained by tracing it in pre-human biological impulses; ideas are given the proper place in the scheme of Materialism; and a comprehensive, self-contained philosophy is evolved. At the same time, economic determinism is not rejected; it comes into operation after the origin of society. The origin of society has to be explained before the laws of social evolution can be traced. From his first appearance on earth, man was not an economic being; even to-day, the "economic man" is a fiction. The origin of the human species was physically determined. Economic determinism should not be confounded with physical determinism. The one operates on the finite, but unbounded universal scale; the other is limited to the world of social man; and even there it is subject to other factors of equal importance. We free economic determinism from its ideological or fatalistic connotation by tracing it to the universal scheme of physical determinism.

The first non-biological, extra-organic, means of production was created by the ancestor of man in continuation of the struggle for existence, which was the

basic impulse of the pre-human biological evolution. The development of the biological organ, the brain, preceded that event, which was not a mere accident; it was an at least partially premeditated act. The creation of the first extra-organic means of production was a deed done by an animal with highly developed brain, capable of thought. An idea preceded the creation of the first means of production. As the process of economic determinism cannot be traced beyond the stage at which the foundation of economic life was just being laid, the origin of ideas is to be discovered outside that process. Indeed, an idea in the brain of the ancestor of man made the eventual beginning of the process possible.

We trace the origin of ideas into the context of the pre-human biological evolution. Biological evolution, in its turn, takes place in the context of physical nature. Thus, our ideas, the ideas to which we must concede a sovereign independent role, if we are to interpret history without teleology, rise out of the background of physical nature. By doing that, we do not leave the ground of Materialism, to fall into the morass of metaphysical Idealism. On the contrary, by doing that, we solve one of the baffling problems of philosophy, the problem of dualism. There is no contradiction between the living and the non-living world. We reduce everything to one unitary background.

That is the fundamental philosophical principle of Radicalism. To recapitulate, human history is determined, but there is not one sole determining

factor; ideas as well as economic forces are to be taken into account. The dynamics of ideas and the dialectics of economic development are parallel processes, both growing out of the original urge of man for freedom; in course of time, both the processes influence each other; and only when we can formulate a social theory and a political philosophy, taking into account the double process originating from the self-same source, can we reconstruct society without denying the sovereignty of the individual. If we make man only an automation, a robot, a small wheel in the gigantic social machinery, the purpose of social reconstruction will be defeated; instead of building up a commonwealth of free men, we shall construct a stream-lined prison house where physical amenities may kill the soul of the inmates; or an electrified stable for well-fed, contented pigs. Of course, it is true that, if every single wheel is given the freedom to fly away, the machine will break down. There is a way out of that dilemma. We should regard man as the archetype of society; we should know that the potentiality of evolving the entire social pattern is inherent in every human being. Thereupon it will be clear to see that man's place in society need not be that of a mere cog in the wheel; that he can discharge his social responsibility without surrendering his individual liberty; that a free community can be composed only of free men; that otherwise freedom is a fraud. Man can take his place in a highly complex modern social organisation, necessarily centralised, as a sovereign individual who comes into a community with the object of unfolding his potentialities with collective efforts. Since the impulse leading to the creation of

society is the urge for freedom, felt individually by the higher biological organism called man, the social responsibility of individuals need not be obligatory. Under normal conditions, it is bound to be discharged voluntarily; because the preservation and evolution of society are necessary for enabling each of its members to unfold his or her potentialities. The concept of individual freedom, therefore, is not incompatible with social responsibility.

Once we come to that philosophical conclusion, it becomes easy to formulate a political theory which rejects parliamentary democracy as well as avoids the risk involved in trying to improve on it by experimenting with dictatorship as a means to a higher form of democracy. The alternative is organised democracy. The individual should not be left alone; the atomised individual cannot exercise any function either in the economic or the political organisation of society. Therefore, we propose that the units of a really democratic State should be not single helpless individuals, but small groups, which we call People's Committees. They will be small replicas of the State composed of them. Being small, they cannot crush the individual. On the other hand, in a small corporate unit, the potentialities of man can have greater freedom to develop. These units will constitute the pyramidal structure of the State. I hope you have read our Draft Constitution. If not, I hope you will do so now. Because, in that context, you will understand our Theses better.

Another cardinal feature of Radical Democracy is

the insistence on power remaining vested in the people. The State machinery is to be so constructed as to enable the people, operating through the local republics, to wield sovereign power from day to day. There shall be no delegation of power, which practice negates democracy. To what incredible extent this practice goes, often imperceptibly ! The nationalists have acclaimed the so-called Objectives Resolution moved the other day by Pandit Nehru in the Constituent Assembly. The object is to declare India an Independent Sovereign Republic. A careful reading of the text, however, exposes the emptiness of the declaration; indeed, the danger involved in it. The fundamental principle of democracy is that sovereignty belongs to the people. Our Constituent Assembly has made the declaration that sovereignty is derived from the people. That is a dangerous departure from the generally accepted principle of democracy. In the independent sovereign republic of nationalist India, the delegation of power will be permanent. The State derives sovereignty from the people. The connotation of this basic premise of the Constitution is that sovereignty does not belong to the people to be delegated, from time to time, to the administrators of the State. The State simply derives sovereignty; it is not delegated by the people, who are thus deprived of the only act of sovereignty. In the absence of any instance of its voluntary transfer by the people, future constitutional lawyers will easily argue that sovereignty never belonged to the people. The source or origin is not necessarily the owner. Ownership of a right is established by its exercise. Sovereignty is derived by the State; it was never delegated by the people, who

therefore never established their ownership of it. Formal delegation of power also means that the people are deprived of it for all practical purposes. But the logical implication of the formal declaration that sovereignty belongs to the people is that the people may or may not delegate it; and even after delegation, they are entitled to take it back, rising in revolt for that purpose. Therefore, the sacred right of revolt was declared as a democratic right. Departing from the traditionally democratic principle that sovereignty belongs to the people, and beginning from its derivation by the State, the Constitution of the independent sovereign republic of India will abolish the sacred right of revolt, and legalise dictatorship—the people will be deprived of sovereignty, once and for all. They will soon be forgotten, except as the mystic source of power of the National State.

In Radical Democracy, there will be no transfer of power, nor delegation of power. Power belongs to the sovereign people, and will always remain in their hands. Delegation of power to a small minority necessarily means abdication of power. Power is delegated to a minority; the minority, possessed of the power taken away from the people, creates a machinery to wield power and entrenches itself behind that machinery. There was a time when the usurpers of power could be removed from that position by armed insurrection, as in the time of the French Revolution and again of the Russian Revolution. But since then, the minority, which derives its power from the people, has become so very powerful that no insurrection on the part of the people can ever succeed. That is

another experience of history since the Russian Revolution, and we have to take notice of that fact, if we

want to expound a realistic theory of revolution, and a practical programme of political practice. If there is no new way of revolution, the ideal of freedom has to be abandoned; the people cannot be free; democracy is not possible.

We do not take that pessimistic view. We say, democracy is possible, freedom is not an unattainable ideal, provided that democrats, fighters for freedom, revolutionaries, would not think in terms of one class of people capturing power through armed insurrection and establishing its dictatorship with the object of suppressing all others, including the liberty of the individuals composing itself. All sensible people, irrespective of the classes they may belong to by birth, can conceivably unite in the pursuit of the original human ideal of freedom. We must only realise the limited operation or economic determinism in human relations, particularly when the relations are amongst intelligent rational men conscious of the essence of their humanness. Freedom cannot be conceived except as individual freedom.

We, in this country, have been talking so much about imperialist exploitation and oppression. There are many things in our country which are not good. But look around the world, and you will see many countries where there is even less freedom than in India. Japan was free as a nation; but the Japanese people were not free. The same thing might happen to us. The threat to freedom may come from another

direction. It is a logical possibility, and has also been empirically proved, that the proletariat may capture power in a country, and yet the proletarians may not be freed, not to mention the country as a whole. When the proletariat captures power and its dictatorship is established, the class delegates power to an organised, wilful minority which call itself the party. In the name of the class, the party becomes the new ruler; the proletarian State becomes its vested interest. Therefore, the State does not wither away as visualised in the scheme of the proletarian revolution. And the State being admittedly a dictatorship, that oppressive form of minority rule becomes permanent.

To avoid that a revolution should thus defeat its end, not purposefully, but by the logic of a wrong political theory, we propose that the object of political practice must be the assertion of the right of the individual to be free. There arises the basic question: What is freedom? We do not beg this question. The term freedom must be given a concrete meaning; it must have some connotation in terms of the experience of every human being. Even the pre-Marxist political philosophers, the liberals who believed in individualism, did not put a concrete content into the concept. Therefore, present-day collectivists dismiss it as a mere abstraction.

We put a concrete content into the concept of freedom. We derive the concrete meaning of freedom from a review of the entire process of biological evolution. The struggle for freedom is a continuation of the biological struggle for existence on the

higher level of intelligence and emotion. In other words, freedom is the progressive removal of all restrictions on the unfolding of human potentialities. Otherwise, time-honoured declarations, made ceremoniously in critical moments of history, such as, man is born free, freedom is my birthright, are mere banalities. Unless it is realised, not simply postulated, but seen in the light of scientific knowledge, that man has in himself infinite potentialities of development, the ideal of freedom cannot be attainable. Once that is realised, we have a standard for measuring freedom. The freedom of a society is to be measured, can be measured, only by the amount of freedom actually enjoyed by its individual members: to what extent are they in a position to unfold their potentialities? There are countries, powerful and independent, but where the people are in chains, even though the chains may be of gold. Therefore, in order that mankind may not be deluded by false ideas any longer, we must have a standard to measure progress. If the position of the individual in a particular social organisation to-day was no better than at any time in the past, what reason have we got to say that the twentieth century is more progressive? Simply because the twentieth century followed the nineteenth, it is not necessarily more progressive. Progress is not merely a succession of events in time. Progress consists of the significance of the succession of events. We can measure progress, judge the significance of any change in time, only by one standard—the position of the individual: to what extent the change has helped the men and women of the time unfold their individual potentialities—to be better, more developed,

more articulate human beings; how far they have advanced in the quest for freedom and search for truth? Judged by that standard, one may doubt whether our time marks progress beyond the past, because the future is so dark and depressing; there is a danger of relapse in human progress.

We do not say anything new when we demand that man must be the measure of everything. One of the founders of philosophy, Protagoras, said that already more than 2500 years ago. Yet, mankind seems to have forgotten its soul. The same liberating principle was repeated by Karl Marx, who is to-day honoured as the prophet of proletarian dictatorship, the advocates of which fanatically demand sacrifice of the individual at the altar of an imaginary collective ego. Karl Marx said: "Man is the root of mankind". That was even more explicit than what Protagoras had demanded as the criterion of all values. Karl Marx could improve upon the ancient sage, because he had greater scientific knowledge at his disposal. What does the principle mean? First comes man, then mankind; the individual is antecedent to society, which is the means for the unfolding of his potentialities in continuation of the process of pre-human biological evolution. The end should not be sacrificed for the means; the position of the individual is the measure of social progress. That is the philosophical essence of Marxism, the collectivist interpretation of which has become a form of totalitarianism.

But we do not want a Utopia. We only say that after one revolution man may be freer than be-

fore by several percents only; the next revolution improves his position by some more percents. Otherwise, freedom becomes a metaphysical conception. The disregard for individual freedom, the only measure of progress persuades many cynical thinkers of our time to ridicule the very idea of progress. They deny that there is any progress if history is only a sequence of events in time. In reply, we shall have to point' out the significance of the sequence of events, and the significance can be judged only by the change in the position of the individual brought about by certain events. If social progress, measured by technological development and the consequent increase of the productivity of human labour, means further effacement of the individual, intellectual regimentation and standardisation of human creativeness, then that is progress on the reverse gear. The redeeming feature of civilisation is that it creates material conditions which bring the ideal of freedom within reach. In civilised society, provided that it is equitably organised on the basis of a liberating philosophy, the individual has the greatest chance to unfold his potentialities. Civilisation is capable of setting individual men and women free, place there on the road to freedom at any rate; therefore, it is progressive. It depends on the civilised men and women whether they will be able to avail of the opportunity, which, created by men in bondage heralds the end of that bondage.

We have prepared a Draft Constitution which is summarised in the concluding parts of the Theses. It is a picture of the political organisation of society visualised by the philosophy of Radicalism. But it also

takes note of the fact that, unless a larger and larger number of people will be inspired by those ideas, the picture will never come to life. Consequently, we are building a political party, which will be composed of the pioneers of those ideas, and will blaze a new trail of social reconstruction. Having evolved a new political theory, based on a revaluation of old values and scientific knowledge, we must have a political party in order to practise that political theory. Just as man is the archetype of society in general, the Radical Democratic Party is the archetype of the Radical Democratic Society, in which there will be no contradiction between collective responsibility and individual liberty; social obligations will be voluntarily undertaken and discharged, in quest of individual freedom, by unfolding his or her potentialities; that is to say, by asserting individuality, each member of society will increase his social utility and thus contribute to the sum total of collective well-being and progress. Social emancipation will be the conquest of free individuals, an aggregate of freedom actually earned and enjoyed by them individually. The Radical Democratic Party will be composed of free men and women, not of men and women who are prepared to surrender their freedom in order to be regimented in an army claiming to fight for freedom. We shall by our example show that men and women who aspire to set the world free, can free themselves spiritually, to begin with. If freedom is still made conditional upon an economic reorganisation of society, then let us give up the wild-goose chase. Because, the old method of revolution is no longer practicable; in future, society will become more equitable and just in proportion as the number

of men and women equipped with the virtues of justice and equity will increase. The Radical Democratic Party will be the rallying ground of such men and women, and as such the replica of the future society of free men and women.

The Radical Democratic Party appears before the bewildered and misled world as the standard-bearer of a new political doctrine and a new political practice. Having struck out a new path for civilised mankind out of the profoundest crisis of its history, we shall have to explain the message, which represents the spirit of the time, at greater length throughout the country, so that a larger and larger number of people will be attracted and inspired by it and join the Radical Democratic Party. A Radical Democratic movement will grow, and only then the depressing atmosphere of our country can be changed. A brighter perspective of the future is required not only by the Indian people; the entire civilised mankind is looking out for it. The philosophy of Radicalism and the principles of Radical Democracy will open up a brighter future not only for India, but before the peoples in other parts of the world also. Therefore we say that our philosophy is cosmopolitan Humanism; we say that the Indians cannot be free if the French or the Germans or the Russians remain enslaved. Our ideal can be realised only in a World State, in a Universal Brotherhood of Man, in a cooperative commonwealth embracing the whole human race. We are of the opinion that a solution of the world crisis cannot be found within the boundaries of National States. We have seen that Socialism estab-

lished only one more National State. When we had only one kind of National States, we had wars. When we shall have two kinds of them, we shall be moving headlong towards the destruction of civilisation and of humanity as a whole.

Therefore, capitalist as well as socialist Nationalism, in other words, the sacrifice of the individual at the altar of any collective ego, must go. A free society must be a brotherhood of free individuals, based on the sovereignty of the individual. That is our message. For some time, ours may have been a voice in the wilderness. But to-day it is getting a larger and larger audience. It can no longer be suppressed, nor neglected. It is the voice of resurgent humanity; the powerful voice of Prometheus unbound. While we are raising it here in India, the same voice is reaching us from the farthest parts of the civilised world. The time-spirit is creating a new world fraternity of ideas and is opening before mankind a new vista of freedom and progress.

APPENDIX

RADICAL DEMOCRACY

The basic philosophical and political principles of the movement represented by the Radical Democratic Party were being developed over a period of the last twenty-five years.. As a result of experience gathered during that time, it is now possible to give them a concrete formulation. The programme and political practice of the party follow from these fundamental principles. If in the present complex political situation the party is to function effectively so as to achieve its cherished goal, these principles, which were implicit in the movement for Radical Democracy, should be explicitly formulated for the guidance of party members and the information of all. The question was discussed in the All-India Political Camp which was organised by the party in Dehra Dun in May 1946, and the discussions were carried on in the party ranks since then. As a result of those deliberations this Conference of the All-India Radical Democratic Party adopts the following as the fundamental principles of Radical Democracy.

NEW HUMANISM

PRINCIPLES OF RADICAL DEMOCRACY*

Thesis 1

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.

* Theses adopted by the Third All-India Conference of the Radical Democratic Party, held in Bombay, from December 26th to 30th, 1946.

Thesis 2

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

Thesis 3

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.

Thesis 4

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. 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

Thesis 5

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 incentive.

Thesis 6

IDEATION is a physiological process resulting from I 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. ('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 7

FOR creating a new world of Freedom, revolution must go beyond an economic reorganisation 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.

Thesis 8

COMMUNISM or Socialism may conceivably be 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 the 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.

Thesis 9

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.

Thesis 10

STATE ownership and planned economy do not by themselves end 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

Thesis 11

DICTATORSHIP tends to 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.

Thesis 12

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 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.

Thesis 13

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 slaveholder. 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.

Thesis 14

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 be coincident with the entire society, and consequently the State will be, under a standing democratic control:

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. Revolutions presupposes 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.

Thesis 17

RADICAL DEMOCRACY presupposes economic reorganisation 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 reorganisation, 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.

Thesis 16

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 widespread 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.

Thesis 18

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 adult 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.

Thesis 19

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 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 coterminous with the entire society.

Thesis 20

IN the last analysis, education of the citizen is the condition for such a reorganisation 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.

Thesis 21

RADICALISM integrates science into social organisation and reconciles individuality with collective life; it gives to freedom a moral-intellectual as well as a 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 programme of social revolution in our time.

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Thesis 22

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.