

ASIA : CHALLENGE AT DAWN

PERSONALISM VERSUS MARXISM

M. K. HALDAR



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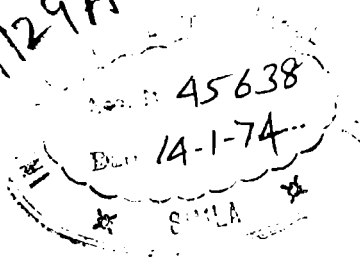
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To
My friends
D—V—L—s

Without whose unfailing affection and care
this book would have appeared with many
more defects.

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PRESIDENT NGO DINH DIEM OF VIETNAM

Introduction

While the air is rank with acrid fumes
of hate

Dulcet words of peace would but
sound like hollow jests :

And so, before I go,

I would send out a call for those

Who are arming themselves, far and
near

To fight the malignant fiend to the
bitter end.¹

In recent times we have been facing possibly an unprecedented crisis in our political, social, economic, cultural and spiritual life. The two world wars, the rise of totalitarianism, and wide-spread apathy to social injustice generated by a sense of helplessness in a social order bafflingly vast and complicated, with the centre of power—political and economic—receding further and further away from the individual have contributed towards the prevailing sense of despair so very typical of the intellectual and aesthetic climate of our times. Like Moliere's *Alceste* we see wherever we turn, "Injustice, greed, deceit, and villainy."

¹ 1. A free translation of a Bengali poem by Rabindranath Tagore on Christmas Day, 1937. Santiniketan.

Like *Itruel* in Voltaire's *Le Monde comme il va*, *Vision de Babouc* we decide not to dream of correcting our social order, and let the world go its own way. We argue: When all is not well, all is possible. We are too ready to accept our plight without even a murmur. In short, we are adrift in a valueless world—a world which we have ourselves created. Man has been atomised and is suffering from an acute anomie. Socialism, Communism, Communitarianism and various other ideologies have been put forward to meet the crisis.

The socialist ideology prescribes an over-all social engineering. It leads practically to an unlimited centralisation of power. It tries to centralise both economic and political powers. It regards the end of private ownership as the end of all maladies. By its over emphasis on the material welfare of man socialism does not make the genuine individual man, assessed in each particular case, the yardstick of assistance from the State, and as a consequence makes very often the weakest suffer. In socialism State aid is intended to be a subsidiary measure to guarantee no more than a minimum level of subsistence. State provisions, in socialism, become more and more the normal way of satisfying human needs. The centre of gravity of society is pushed further and further away from the true, parochial community with its human warmth, and towards the impersonal State and its vast and mechanical institutions and organisations. This leads to an increasing centralisation of decision and responsibility. The conditions of the individual's welfare and way of life become more and more collectivised. Socialism leads to tremendous wastage

through its impersonal State channels. The problems which socialism wants to solve are made even more serious by the concentration of power in the hands of Government which directs and controls the flow of income. De Tocqueville's vision of a tyrannical State tends to become the reality in our times. For he wrote that the State "presses every nation to the point where it becomes nothing more than a herd of frightened beasts of burden whose shepherd is the Government". In a society where everything is controlled by a centralised government, neither the public nor the State shows any understanding of the underlying causes for the dangerous malaise which grips the society and the individual.

In contradistinction to socialism, capitalism, in its classical form, neglected the fact that a healthy community is the one in which the centre of gravity of planning of life and responsibility should lie between the two extremes of the individual and the collective. It thought that both social planning and individual responsibility should be made the concern of the individual only without any direct reference to the community to which the individual belongs. The philosophy of classical capitalism hypostatized the isolated individual. It covertly believed that the individual should pursue his own ends irrespective of the society and the community. The aims of the individual were seldom to be guided by any value. The only motive was profit.

It may be doubted whether such a capitalist society ever existed. Complete *laissez faire* in economic and community life was the ideal at which classical capitalism certainly aimed. But in reality it fell far

short of its ideal. However, the twentieth century capitalism differs from all its past variants. The enormous concentration of capital in great enterprises, the emergence of powerful trade unions, State subsidies for different sectors of the economy, the increasing separation of management and ownership, the elements of 'welfare State,' the introduction of mass production and marketing techniques, and many other features distinguish capitalism of our times from that of the past. Yet we can still discern some family resemblance between the old and the new. Both hold individualistic and egoistic activities of man sacrosanct. Individualistic and egoistic activities can they think give us all that is of value; solidarity and love are idle dreams. Success is the only measure of attainment in life. Both place excessive faith in the efficacy of the impersonal market mechanism rather than on vision, the will and the democratic planning of the people to shape and regulate the life of the society. Capitalism believes that power follows from possession and possession only. It considers 'things' to be more important than men. The principle that capital investment must bring immediate profit guides all production. Since everything is primarily subject to the profit principle, the people are manipulated into the kind of consumption which is often poisonous for the spirit, and sometimes also for the body. Mass advertising techniques control the taste of the people. Art, literature, religion, scientific knowledge—are reduced to the category of commodity. Even charity becomes a matter of habit and something to be publicised for creating and expanding the market. "Work is becoming more repetitive and thoughtless as the planners, the microeconomists, and the scientific

managers strip the worker of his right to think and move freely. Life is being denied; need to control, creativeness, curiosity, and independent thought are being balked, and the result, the inevitable result, is flight . . . , apathy, destructiveness, psychic regression."¹ In short, capitalism is leading man to anonymity.

Asia has recently freed herself from foreign domination. Though neither capitalism nor socialism is native to the Asian soil, the dawn on her horizon is threatened by a mortal clash between capitalism and socialism. But in Asian context controversy between capitalism and socialism is irrelevant. The Asians must shake off their economic dependence and backwardness. And this they can do only if they are able to assimilate modern technological and scientific knowledge. Assimilation of knowledge which the Western people have acquired does not necessarily mean supplantation of the Asian way of life by the Western way of life. In the rapidly evolving world of today, if the Asians persist in their use of out-of-date methods, they will never be able to enjoy an equal status with the West or contribute effectively to the betterment of mankind.

While Asia is trying to find her own way out of the darkness in which she has lived for centuries, a new danger—the danger of Communist subjugation—is threatening to enslave her. The subjugation of China and North Vietnam by the Communists has added to the danger. The aggressive designs of

1. cf. J.J. Gillespie, *Free Expression in Industry, a Social-psychological Study of Work and Leisure*. Pilot Press, (London, 1948).

China have got an additional impetus from the aggressive philosophy of Dialectical Materialism.¹

In the shadow of the threat of Communist world domination a bold experiment to instil courage, determination and hope in the hearts of the Asian people is going on today in the small Republic of Vietnam. "Placed by its geographical position at the outpost of the free world, at the confluence of great currents of thought and on one of the great axes of human migration, Vietnam is continually exposed to multiple dangers which threaten its political stability. Thus the grave problems which we (the Vietnamese) have to solve now are not transitory or accidental phenomena. The risk of relapsing into anarchy and servitude brought about by internal feudalism or foreign imperialism that lies in wait for all newly emancipated people weigh more heavily on our country (Vietnam) than on others, because of our (Vietnam's) geographic position. This is all the more true since Communism which has become established in the North constitutes a continuing latent menace for South Vietnam. Even after reunification, Vietnam, located at the nerve centre between great demographic masses, will remain a sensitive zone subject to instability."² In this sensitive zone the people and the Republic of Vietnam are experimenting with a concept of democracy germane to the Asian soil. Their success will be the success of Asia. And the philosophy of life which is guiding them in their bold experiment to

1. For an authentic account of the aggressive designs of China on a small country like Vietnam see *Aggressions by China* by Dr. Do Vang Ly, Siddhartha Publications, Delhi, 1960.

2. Broadcast Declaration of President Ngo Dinh Diem on October 22, 1955.

find a way out of the crisis in which Asia is living today is known as 'Personalism.'

Though the ideas incorporated in the term 'Personalism' can be found in some of the accounts of ancient Asian and European thought, the term 'Personalism' is of recent origin. It was employed by Renouvier in 1903 to describe his own philosophical ideas. Round about 1930 the researches of a group of thinkers centred round the review *Esprit* and some other allied groups, like *Ordre Nouveau* tried to develop a philosophy of personalism. These groups concerned themselves with the political and spiritual crisis arising out of the economic, political, social and cultural conditions of the 1920s and the 1930s. Laland's *Vocabulaire philosophe* gave place to the term 'Personalism' in its fifth edition published in 1957. But owing to misunderstanding some people identified personalism with egocentricity. Much confusion raged, and is still raging, in the personalist movement of Europe. Some of the personalists in Europe in their utter confusion have even thought that the human person can achieve its fullest glory only in some type of highly centralised social milieu. Others have gone even to the extent of propagating a philosophy of helplessness.

Personalism is not a novelty. It is mainly concerned with man and his universe. It would be surprising if we were to wait till the twentieth century to find out that our primary concern is man himself. As a matter of fact it were the ancient Asian thinkers who, by their emphasis on man and the dignity of man, laid the foundations of personalism. The question of the dignity of man has become more

pressing today as thanks to the rise of different political, economic and social systems we tend to forget our primary concern and duty. Our duty is to humanity. Without this awareness technological achievements and scientific knowledge, two of the highest and proudest achievements of the human spirit, may turn into veritable frankensteins. Asia as yet has not gone through a technological revolution. But the problem is must Asia go through all the painful experiences of the West in order that she may enjoy economic prosperity ?

The abject poverty of the Asian masses calls for immediate redress. All talks of human dignity, human freedom and human progress will be empty sounds if the economic lot of the Asians is not improved immediately. Henry James truly observed that the "association of poverty with progress is the great enigma of our times. It is the central fact from which spring industrial, social and political difficulties that perplex the world, and with which statesmanship and philanthropy and education grapple in vain. From it come the clouds that overhang the future of the most of progressive and self-reliant nations. So long as all the increased wealth which modern progress brings goes but to build up great fortunes, to increase luxury and make sharper the contrast between the House of Have and the House of Want, progress is not real and cannot be permanent."¹

The Asian countries must achieve economic independence and raise the standard of living of the

1. Henry George, *Progress and Poverty*, p. 5. The Hogarth Press Ltd., (London, 1953).

people in order to provide an effective answer to the 'riddle of actual poverty in the midst of potential prosperity. This they cannot do if they lose respect for the human being. Real economic progress is impossible in an atmosphere where there is no respect for the human being.

Personalism recognises that the centre of gravity of economic planning and of economic responsibility lies in the small, genuine community, most of all in the primary, indispensable and most natural of all communities—the family unit.

The structure of the human family is rooted not so much in biology as in the folk ways and mores. This is why the family is to be found in a wide variety of forms corresponding to the variety of cultures. Families perform five main functions : economic, status-conferring, reproductive, socialising and security-giving. The structure of the family changes in accordance with social changes and affects social changes in their turn. The different functions of the family fit into the wider society in various degrees in different developing societies. At no stage of social development does the family lose its efficacy and surrender its functions to the wider society. The main functions of the family continue to be performed by it with various degrees of social co-operation. Because of its roots in the cultural tradition of the land, changes in the family, if fostered by democratic movements, always keep in line with the traditions of the land. The family performs its functions in a more effective and fruitful way in a democratic society. "The family is our most important primary group. In large measure it determines per-

sonality development. If we believe in Democracy we shall seek to promote freedom in and through the family and to help parents build young personalities which will not sabotage Democracy in the larger world through their frustrations and pent-up hostilities. This is the real significance of the family in the modern society."¹

A totalitarian regime is the worst enemy of the family system. It endeavours to take the individual man away from the family and make his loyalty to the State or the Party the supreme criterion of morality. The family and various other intermediary groups between the family and the wider community are all made subservient to the State. Thus the human person is impoverished.

Personalists endeavour to promote the development of the family and of all the small, intermediate communities of various types. They try to promote at the same time group-help within whatever circles still accept free will, a sense of responsibility and human warmth and to avoid the cold impersonality of the so-called mass welfare machines of socialist ideology. Personalism enjoins us to attain an effective economic democracy in which there is harmonious cooperation of capital and labour. The question here is not simply that of juridical equality but of equality which should be applied in daily life. Such a democracy is possible only with the institution of a system of social security, in which every individual is assured of protection against starvation, unemployment, illness and old age irrespective of the class from which he may come.

1. Joseph Kirk Folsom, *The Family and Democratic Society*, p. 251. Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd. (London, 1948.)

Most of the Asian countries are primarily agricultural. Their economy is mainly village-centred. Thanks to diverse cultural and social factors the distinctive character of the organisation of the Asian village life must be recognised if we want to develop democracy in Asia. The failures of Parliamentary system of democracy have been pointed out by many well-meaning critics. Under the present conditions elections are in the main run on the basis of *tactics* alone. Any one who has observed a mass election will testify that ethics which is the essence of democracy is gradually being reduced to *tactics* by the mass election propaganda machines of to-day. Human warmth, which forms the essence of democracy, is gradually being relegated to the background. It is not in vain that Lewis Mumford recommends the building up "of small balanced communities in the open country."

The distinct characteristics of Asian village community were ably brought out by Sir Charles Metcalfe in his *minute of 1830* :

"The village communities are little republics, having nearly everything they can want within themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down ; revolution succeeds revolution...but village communities remain the same...This union of the village communities, each forming a separate little state in itself, has, I conceive, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the peoples of India, through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered, and is in a high degree conducive to their happiness, and to the

enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence. I wish, therefore, that the village constitutions may never be disturbed and I dread everything that has a tendency to break them up."

What was true of India would, by and large, be true of the rest of Asia. Though the village community has contributed to the stability in Asian life, it has at the same time, led Asians to an attitude of mind where they are satisfied by what they already have and resign themselves to the vagaries of fate. Personalism recognises that the village communities could be tremendous experiments in democracy and local self-government. It insists that the 'village republics' which have been desecrated and made barren are in urgent need of being resurrected. It was at least partly for this reason that a new movement for the formation of Agrovilles got started in the Republic of Vietnam with a view to putting the village community on a new footing so that it could bring itself in line with the necessities of modern life and contribute effectively towards the development of functional democracy, for the promotion of local and corporate life.

In carrying out her economic and social programmes Vietnam cannot avoid the compulsions of the unfavourable conditions inherent in all newly developing countries. In addition to the difficulties of under-development, Vietnam has her special problems. The economy of Vietnam was seriously weakened by the partition of the country into two halves—Communist dictatorship in the North, and democracy in the South. These two halves of Vietnam not only differ

in political viewpoints but also in economic programmes. The North possesses high industrial potential while the South is essentially agricultural. Moreover, Communist subversion, which is always latent and very often active, can cause rural exodus, and can, in certain cases, deprive agriculture of a part of its manpower. It can also increase the risk in agricultural loans and present a major obstacle to investment in some rural sectors. Over and above these difficulties, the Republic of Vietnam is faced with the problem of faulty demographic distribution, observable in the congestion of people along the coastal zones, and sparse settlements in the vast swampy delta and extensive highlands. All these problems find their solutions in the programme for agricultural development and in the establishment of Agrovilles, "the planning and execution of which—essentially revolutionary—are motivated by the threefold concern for democratic principles, social justice, and security."¹

An Agroville consists of a number of families. These families work on their own. The Government helps the families to plan the village, build houses, schools, and hospitals and provides them with technical help for reclaiming and developing the land. Every Agroville is, as far as possible, a self-sufficient unit insofar as the necessities of life are concerned and is governed and maintained by the members themselves with assistance from the central Government. The maintenance of law and order is in the hands of the Agroville community.

Rural credit and technological assistance are provided by the Government. Rural credit is more

1. Message of President Ngo Dinh Diem to the National Assembly of the Republic of Vietnam on October, 3, 1960,

concerned with productivity, the net revenue and consequently with the good of the borrower, than with the security of the loan as such. It has thus liberated the farmer from the clutches of usurers and feudal autocrats and has eventually made him a free landowner. 86% of the loans are short-term credits, where no guarantee is demanded of the farmer, fisherman, woodcutter and the handicraftsman. Competence and morality of the borrower are the only guarantees. If one insists too much upon tangible assets while one grants loans, the large estate holders would find themselves in a stronger position to the disadvantage of the poor farmer. The latter would then again have to have recourse to the private usurer, demanding lesser economic guarantees, but much concerned with the possible extension of his economic powers.

The social character of credit has been coupled with certain level of technical and moral education. A vast educational programme has been set afoot. The technical knowledge and help which the Government provides encourage the individual to exploit nature more effectively and to market his produce more rationally. The Agrovilles are working as bulwarks against the usurers. They are the 'living democracies', 'schools for the adults' which aim at the autonomy and independence of the individual. The community progresses on all levels as the individual finds his freedom in his creative activity.

The country's youth took a hand in building the Agrovilles. Thanks to a youth movement, the boys and girls went over to the villages in hundreds and thousands and themselves built the Agrovilles. They

have developed the ramparts of a new society, strong in its own strength and needing, except at the initial stages, no help from the Government. The Agrovilles are bulwarks of democracy.

The Agrovilles should be distinguished from Durkheim's intermediary groups which would regulate the specialised occupational life of modern man.¹ Durkheim's intermediary groups are communal or corporative organisations among peoples working in the same occupation and industry. He advocated this as he thought that men in the same segment of the economy would understand each other's problems better and would respond to them more flexibly and thus be able to establish a viable group life capable of exercising moral control over all the participants on the basis of intimate knowledge. Durkheim thought that "the ideal of human fraternity can be realised only in proportion to the progress of the division of labour."¹ To him division of labour tends to become the "essential condition of social solidarity".

Personalism believes in the division of labour ; but it does not think that the acute anomy from which the present-day society and man are suffering can be cured by accentuating and sharpening the process of division of labour. As a matter of fact Durkheim's scheme would lead the modern man to the extremes of anonymity. Division of labour is a fact accepted by all grades of society in varying degrees. But too much of it leads to anonymity—so forcefully brought home by Chaplin's immortal film, "Modern Times". The Agrovilles are not based on division of labour

1. cf. Emile Durkheim, *Division of Labour* tr. G. Simpson, Free Press, Glencoe, (Illinois, U.S.A. 1947).

alone. Essentially they are cooperatives of an entirely new sort, based on the principles of personalism, where each individual has full rights over whatever he produces by his free creative activities.

The same personalist principles guide the development of commerce and industry in Vietnam. Serious businessmen are encouraged while speculators and parasite intermediaries are being gradually eliminated. The Government takes all possible measures to guide and help the industrial undertakings both economically and technically. At the same time it encourages the industrialists to cast off their slavery to out-of-date techniques and modernise their means of production and distribution mechanisms. A measure of the success of the Republic of Vietnam can be had even from a cursory glance at her statistical tables of production.

The economic plan of the Republic of Vietnam is not power oriented. President Diem made this point abundantly clear in his speech on the reopening of the Dong Cam Dam in Tuy-Hoa on September 17, 1955. He declared: "When I speak of industrialisation, don't think, dear compatriots, that our country must have big industries, as in the case of evolved powers. It is not necessarily so. Let us be realistic and let us not forget that industries established in our country are mostly destined to interior markets. Let us not, for the time being, think of exports, and let us seek first to manufacture products for the local consumption....Our purpose is to work in a way so that in near future, there will not be in the country dirty slums and badly fed and clothed people and so that our compatriots can enjoy facilities of modern life: running water, electricity supply, clothes, books, newspapers...."

"It is understood that outside the light industry, we will not neglect some big enterprises capable of transforming the economic potential of the country.... The Government...aims at one objective : the independence of the country and the happiness of the people... In short, the policy of the Government is based upon present needs; it neglects theoretical speculations."

Personalism does not believe that left alone, or given the power to legislate and govern himself the individual human being will bring in a state of affairs where cut-throat competition and ruthless self-aggrandisement through means fair or foul will be the order of the day. A man who owns property just for the sake and pleasure of owning it is an aberration of the capitalist society. Every individual human being desires life, health and well-being for himself, his family, his relations and his friends. Work performed under a rational acceptance of the principle of division of labour is more productive than his isolated, Cruso-like labour. Ricardo's law of association amply proves that when the weak and the strong, the superior and the inferior combine for productive purposes, both sides gain. It follows that every individual can attain his end more easily and more fully by social cooperation than by isolated work or class conflicts and class antagonisms. The individual would not be better off as a freebooter in an imaginary state of isolation. But can he grow if he loses all his individuality in the collective mass? His achievements are both social and private. He must reap the benefit of his honest labour which he does in cooperation with others. His dignity will be impaired if he is to sacrifice all that he has because some one says that such sacrifice is good.

Sacrifice is an ethical act. Commandeered act is far from being ethical.

Personalism holds that there is nothing bad in private property as such. As a matter of fact the institution of private property has contributed much towards the progress of society and has saved man from being just a cog in the vast social machine. The personalist views private property to be necessary for the development of the human being. But private property is understood by him in the context of social reality in which the individual lives. Man's rights to take and possess cannot be exclusive; they must be bounded by the equal rights of others as reflected in the law of a democratic country. Personalism recognises that man's actions, his endeavours to earn and save for his family, for his own self and for his society must be guided by morality. Economic development without moral adventure is an empty and brutish concept. The abolition of private property can be justified neither by economic reasons nor by moral exhortations. Attempts to abolish private property can be made only through totalitarian means. Such attempts may give us short term economic gains in particular sectors at the cost of moral degradation and enslavement of man. Even here it is doubtful whether genuine economic development can be achieved through totalitarian means. This is especially so in regard to agriculture.

Dr. Sigmund Fraüendorfer puts a significant question: "...Would the fundamental change of transforming a free independent small-holder into a bondsman serving the bureaucracy of a totalitarian State really lead to genuine progress?" And he

continues: "We believe, on the contrary, that the preservation of property rights and individual management of our peasants is a fundamental requisite for the maintenance of....civilisation.

"The...peasant farm is more than just a business unit, it is a source of biological and cultural values which are essential for our civilisation which, without them, would be doomed to disintegration and breakdown. It is true that the arguments in favour of maintaining a healthy and thriving peasant population for reasons of preserving the biological and racial basis of the various nations have lost their persuasiveness in consequence of the well exaggerated totalitarian ideologies. But the essential truth that agriculture is not only the backbone of the national economy, but a very important reservoir for the most vital biological and cultural forces of a nation, was confirmed long before totalitarian leaders began to speak about 'Blut and Boden' and 'ruralizzazione'.

"How, then, we have to ask, is...peasantry to be rescued from the double attack from...capitalism and collectivism? The answer is cooperation in the true conservative sense of combining individual forces without prejudicing individual property and individual freedom, and as a second important factor *rural education*."¹ What is true of agriculture is also true, with minor and necessary adjustments, of all other sectors of economic life.

Personalism tries to inculcate the spirit of responsible cooperation at all levels among the

¹ Dr. Sigmund V. Frauendorfer, *Relief Measures in Favour of Low-Income Farmers in Europe*, pp. 46-47, The Indian Society of Agricultural Economics, (Bombay, 1951).

individuals of a community. It does not want to subordinate the individual to the community in such a way that art is reduced to the repetition of tribal designs, literature becomes the repetition of tribal songs, religion the repetition of tribal rights and all human activity is guided and commandeered.

Personalist approach to politics should be distinguished from a recent trend in political thought. The classical methods of democratic government have already evinced a number of defects which have rendered the very concept of classical democracy ineffective. Power has receded further and further away from the individual whose dignity and well-being is the primary concern of democracy. Democracy is caught on the horns of a dilemma. If the Government is in the hands of the few, (as it must be when the modern democracies have become vast and intricate), it will tyrannise the many; if it is in the hands of the many, chaos, and anarchy may result. Some of the friendly critics are alarmed at the spectre of the rise of the mass man and also at the sense of despair under which the individual, the ordinary, average man, suffers. They suggest 'direct democracy', 'communitarian life', 'party-less politics', etc. as solutions to the problem. Such programmes have been recently advocated in India by men like M.N. Roy, J. P. Narain, and others.

The powers a government must possess in order to repress violence and preserve order, cannot be executed without being administered by men, in whom, like others, the individual will for self-preservation is very often stronger than any other desire.

Hence the powers vested in them to prevent injustice and oppression may, if left without check, be converted by them into instruments of tyranny. When we elect heads of States, party leaders, prime ministers, etc. we expect them to be efficient in carrying out a trust, an impersonal generalised responsibility. The power of preventing or arresting the action of the Government characterises the rights of the citizens of a democracy. But in a formal democracy this right has tended to become only a formal right. We easily lose sight of the substance for the form. Democracy secures rights; it neither bestows nor restricts them. These rights cannot be fully enjoyed by most people due to the operation of many socio-historical factors. We are told that this is true even of the most advanced democracies of the world. The people themselves have come to doubt that they can wield power or exercise their sovereignty. The only purpose of politics tends to be that of capture of power. The most powerful States may have the most powerless citizens under democracy degenerating into demagoguery. The individual from whom all power emanates becomes a listless shadow of his true vocation which is nothing short of fulfilment of his potentiality. Hence a radical solution is suggested for bringing power back to the individual in whom alone power in the ultimate analysis should reside. If human freedom is not to be sacrificed in the scramble for power, if human dignity and individuality are not to be sacrificed at the altar of party politics and centralised government, man must explore the possibility of political practice without the interpolation of political parties and mass propaganda machines between the people and the sovereign power.

Even if we accept the major part of such criticism the solution given by these critics is far from being satisfactory. Under 'direct democracy' the individual shall have to sacrifice more of his private rights than he does under the existing systems of democracies. The evils of excessive centralisation, of consequent corruption, and of absolutism can be resisted, in the context of present-day world, only by a vast community which is based on a consistent similarity of characters, interests, and opinions of its members. In such vast communities alone can those who govern be restrained by the influence of divided 'patriotism'. The defects of the present-day democratic practice where the elements of organisation and the capacity for government have been lost cannot be rectified by a process of decentralisation in all spheres of life. The danger of tyranny will be worsened if the man who executes the powers of Government lives in close proximity to the ordinary citizen. Totalitarian tyranny is perpetrated through the innumerable 'party cadres' who live in close proximity to the citizens. The ordinary citizen will, then, never get time for free thought and activity. The self-governed communities tend to become instruments of tyranny if they are not under the restrictive influences of a bigger community which alone is capable of thwarting the tyrannical tendencies of the small community. We have travelled far from tribal life and tribal tyranny. Totalitarianism desires to introduce tribal tyranny on a vaster and more ruthless scale. Power to the small communities will increase the possibility of tribal tyranny being resurrected.

If the individual has no power to control a centralised State machine, the result will be tyranny. He will

be ruled by a policy in whose making he had no say. Democracy safeguards the rights of the individual by preventing the excesses of distance and intimacy between those who direct the society and the individual members of the society. One of the reasons why the institution of political party has evolved through the ages is that it helps the people to organise themselves on the broad basis of opinions and programmes and resist the tyrannies inherent in excesses of distance and too much proximity.

Democracy protects diversity, as diversity preserves democracy. Diversity in a democracy is a firm barrier against the intrusion of the Government beyond a certain sphere whose boundaries are always very roughly defined. Universal suffrage, secret ballot, freedom of press, freedom of speech and association, etc. are some of the rights which safeguard the interest of the individual in a democracy. They safeguard the individual from the corruptions which very often follow from the possession of power. Democracy prevents any one interest, or combination of interests, from using the powers of Government for the purpose of self-aggrandisement or group-aggrandisement.

Personalism recognises that social and political order are not incompatible with freedom, economic and social and political responsibilities. A democracy must help the individual by putting a stop to the corroding influences of concentration of capital and power in the hands of the few. Everyone must be given the power to do what he likes and the right of being able to do what he ought to. Such a state of affairs cannot be achieved by a fiat of revolution which brings to power

only a group of people who cannot do so through the ballot box. Democracy tends to diversity, not to uniformity ; to harmony, not to unanimity. It aims not at an arbitrary change, but a careful respect for the existing conditions of cultural life ; and because it respects the cultural heritage of the people, it does not aspire after a mythically ideal future. Personalism recognises the evils of excessive centralisation as well as those of extreme decentralisation.

Democracy must provide guarantees against serenity which may flourish under the shadow of a single authority. It must balance interests, multiply associations, and give to the citizens the restrained support of a combined opinion. Democracy promotes independence by providing scope for forming definite groups of public opinion, by making possible the rise of great sources and centres of public opinion, and by fostering the notions of duty derived from a respect for the human being.

A representative democracy is the institution through which diversity and harmony in a State are not only preserved but also enhanced. Representative democracy is not an established situation. It provides scope for the rational use of the instruments of social control. Party-politics is essential for democracy. Party-less politics cannot eliminate politics. It can only eliminate the diversity of political parties. The result will be the tyranny of a monolithic party and the identification of the State with the Party.

The failure of capitalism and socialism, in recent times, in opening up new and fruitful vistas for the future adventures of the human spirit has led some

thinkers to advocate a 'going back' to the original state of social development. Both capitalism and socialism have failed to use the achievements of science, technology and other branches of human knowledge for furthering the cause of human happiness. They have given rise to highly centralised machines of administration, production and distribution. The results are slums, automatons, mass propaganda machines and a consequent degradation of the human spirit. Faced with such a crisis some thinkers argue that we must get back to the simple life of the village community of an imagined, and at times forgotten, past and eschew all that science and technology have bestowed upon us. Instead of taking the present crisis as a problem to be solved, they advocate an evasion of the problem altogether by promoting atavism as the only solution. Like all utopian dreams, it tends to strengthen indirectly the hands of those who want to enslave man.

Scientific, technological, cultural and social developments are among the greatest achievements of the human spirit. To think that we cannot cope with the evils that 'dry' technocracy, scientism and politics are bringing in amounts to an admission of our helplessness before the forces released by human knowledge and ingenuity. The achievements of the creative spirit of man are in urgent need of being utilised for furthering the future creative adventures of man. Attempts to solve the problems of overcentralisation, technocracy, concentration of capital, etc. are not idle dreams. The town and the industry can be transformed organically in the closest possible alliance with technological and scientific developments and cities and industries can

be made of an aggregate of so many smaller units. Indeed, many countries are already showing significant progress in this direction. Politics, economics and education can be infused with greater human consideration and warmth. Personalism insists that science and technology do not contradict human dignity; as a matter of fact they enhance human dignity if used properly. Man can get all the benefits from the achievements of his creative activities. This hope is guiding the economic and cultural development programmes in the Republic of Vietnam.

The economic, political and social policy of personalism follows logically from the personalist concept of man. Man exists as an individual; but he does so only in a society. The essential thing, among all those which helped human being to emerge from Nature—notwithstanding their partial helplessness to assert their superiority due to physical weakness as compared with many other animals—was that they banded together for protection, for the purposes of gathering food, for biological continuity and for the expression of their creative spirit in a way that no other group of animals could follow. Though 'social order' can be discerned in different levels of living beings, in all social orders except that of man there is hardly any improvisation, hardly any scope for free regard for others. In short, there is no person-to-person relationship. The social world of human beings, composed of members who are at once mutually dependent and independent differs radically from all other possibly similar undertakings on the part of other animals.

The human community is not founded on mere

instinctual life. Neither the pleasure principle nor the instinct of self-preservation can provide a necessary and sufficient foundation for the human community. From the beginning and thereafter to an increasing degree the individual human being faced other individual human beings as more or less independent *entities* and communicated with them as such. Specific creations of the creative spirit of man have always conferred independence on beings of his kind. Wherever genuine human community has grown up, man has tried to confer more independence on beings of his kind through specific social and individual creations. Thus the true and only basis of the human community lies in the consciousness of freedom and in the idea of law which is inseparably connected with that consciousness.

Freedom does not mean arbitrariness. It is rather the overcoming and elimination of arbitrariness. A free individual submits himself to a strict and inviolable law which he erects for himself. The genuine and true character of freedom is determined not by renunciation of and release from this law but by free consent to it. Freedom is not a condition, it is a duty. The source of values resides in the freedom of man. Personalism eschews solipsism because the human person which transcends its empirical embodiment and chooses to be universal is for it the genuine and authentic reality. It recognises that human particularity is only a moment of the totality in which it must surpass itself. But the universal does not lie outside the particular. This is why in a genuine human community, despite all the difficulties and conflicts, the individual human being feels himself at home, approved and

affirmed in his functional independence and responsibility. The crux of the political and social problems does not lie in the emancipation and liberation of the individual human being in the sense of release from the form and order of the society; it lies, rather, in finding out and giving birth to a social organisation that not only provides protection to every individual with the whole concerted power of the political organisation but also opens possibilities for the individual to unite himself with all others. In so doing the individual, as a matter of fact, will obey only himself. Only through such an act the individual human being can become *an individual* in the higher sense—*an autonomous individual*. The individual human being learns the idea of an autonomous individual only because he is a member of a society—a member of a family.

The human being is a free, creative, loving and integrating existence. The human spirit continuously aspires for freedom. He is in constant strife with those elements in him which tend to subjugate him to natural and social determinations alone. His very existence depends on social and natural determinations. His freedom is embedded in the struggle that he wages against his limitations, and his achievements find their fulfilment only when they are translated into the tangible order of natural and social determinations. Only he who does not desire to achieve such ends as life, health, truth, beauty, goodness and wellbeing for himself, his friends, and those he loves prefers misery, sickness, untruth, bondage and suffering and may not communicate to others his own achievements. Such will be the philosophy of the most radical ascetic

who prefers to keep everything to himself. But it is doubtful if there have been such men. Even St. Aegidius, the most radical advocate of asceticism, was not altogether consistent. He recommended birds and fishes as models for men. Even the possibility of the initial experience of the individual of his own self would not have been there if there were no social communications. The individual enters his own experience as a self only in so far as he first becomes an object to himself. He can become an object to himself only by taking the attitudes of other individuals towards himself within a social framework. Communication is a necessity for the individual's awareness of his own self.

The human person is manifest to us in the form of a continuing, embodied and intentional agent, who displaces, or is displaced by, the things around him. The sceptic may say that he is sure of his existence, the doubting subject, i.e. he is sure about the existence of his own self. But he is not sure about the existence of other selves. That was possibly the first dream of Descartes. "But if the sceptical formula is interpreted to mean—'I cannot doubt that I exist, but I cannot be sure, in the same way and to the same degree, that I am not the only existing thing in the world'—that statement, taken as a whole, becomes unintelligible. When I refer to myself as doing something and as active, even if the activity is only that of directed thought, I make contrast between that which I myself do and that which happens to me, a contrast that I would not understand unless something external to myself does sometimes impinge upon me."¹ The

1. Stuart Hampshire, *Thought and Action*, pp. 86-89, Chatto and Windus, (London, 1959).

assurance of the existence of the human person and his knowledge of other things apart from his own self, develop as he recognises meanings and intentions which are not his own. He learns to think about his own actions only because he is in communication with others. Personalism does not assert the existence of human beings in an inhuman society.

The individual human being could never have found expression, and could never have come into existence, without a social environment. The individual develops by virtue of processes of individual and social experiences and activities. The individual human being has arisen in the social process. But from it alone it would be irrational to conclude that the individual is nothing but an automaton to be directed by the impersonal social forces. The individual, in his turn, can change his environments within certain limitations. This he can do only because in one dimension he transcends the limitations of social and natural determinations: This is his spiritual dimension. But very often he forgets his spiritual dimension and falls an easy prey to false theories and professions. He forgets that the kingdom of heaven lies within him. A false belief and a false faith take him away from the destiny of his spirit. He surrenders himself to miseries and in turn brings misery to his fellow beings.

Personalism does not deny the material existence. It places the human person in the centre of the philosophical picture. Its primary concern is with a discussion and development of those potentialities in man which differentiate him from inorganic nature

and mere organisms. The fault of most of our philosophies lies in the fact that in them we find an attempt to understand the human person in terms of natural phenomena. The subject matter of philosophy and the subject matter of science have criss-crossed. But in this jumble we have often forgotten that the analytical method which is so successful in unravelling the mysteries of nature may not be so efficacious in unravelling the mysteries of the human person—the subject matter of philosophy which alone guides us through the *realm of values*. The scientific question of reality and the philosophical question of reality differ radically. Analytical answers to philosophical questions are far from being clear and fruitful. Philosophy can only be descriptive. How can one analytically prove the ultimate mystery—the mystery of creation? Here the human mind can get *clarity* only through a descriptive philosophy.

With regard to scientific questions, when we say that we *know* them to be true we can imagine the circumstances on the basis of which we are able to say that the statement may not be true or even false. But with the philosophical questions we cannot imagine any circumstance where their answers would turn out to be false. The task of philosophy is not to turn towards the past, towards the whole enacted history of the world and to show how the different factors are fused in a higher unity, and to mediate and mediate. To the philosopher the world history has not concluded. "The disappearance of historical naturalism . . . entails the . . . conclusion that the activity by which man builds his own constantly changing world is a free activity. There are no forces other than this

activity which control it or modify it or compel it to behave in this way or in that, to build one kind of world rather than another."¹ If we think that world history has concluded, there is no choice. Human freedom loses all its significance. A philosophy which views history under the category of necessity is unable to provide any significance to our experiences of values; it has the disposition to bring everything to a standstill. It demands that one should act 'necessarily', which is a contradiction.

The human person has a certain independence and a capacity for shaping his own destiny by adhesion to a system of freely chosen values, assimilated and lived by his own responsible activity and by a constant interior development. All determination of the powers of the human person, any theoretical picture of the nature and interdependence of human capabilities and characteristics, must be provisional and descriptive. He contains endless multiplicity, in as much as he has a history, in which he acknowledges identity with himself. This history is variegated and plexiform in its nature. In this history the human person stands in relation to other individuals of the race and to the race as a whole.

As an individual existence the human person is essentially dipolar. The term 'polarity' has been used in the history of thought in more senses than one. Polarity has been taken to mean a complementary relation, a relation of opposition, a relation of contrariety, etc. The polarity of body and mind to be observed in the

1. R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, p. 315. Oxford University Press, (London, 1946).

individual human being is not so simple a polarity as that of the magnet. The mind has the potency to control the present by its vision of the future, the actual by the possible. The power to control the future by the present and the possible by the actual characterises the body. The mind is essentially cumulative. The body is also, in a certain sense, cumulative. The mind, however, does not only know the past and the present but also has a glimpse of the future. The body only reacts to the present and retains the past in certain measures. It appears that there is a relation of asymmetry between body and mind. But there is also cooperation between the two. The polarity of the mind and body is a cooperation of asymmetrical opposites. Each of the asymmetrical opposites contributes something to the total being of the human person. The biological sciences have taught us that in living organisms not only is the whole dependent on its parts but also the parts are dependent upon the whole. Both the mind and the body are subservient to the whole *entity* which they constitute. Though the functions of the two poles of the human person are roughly distinguishable, they are not separable. We cannot say where the mental pole ends and the physical pole begins. However simple the treatment of the mind-body problem be made, the polarity of the two remains as a stubborn fact. The mind-body problem can never be solved if mind is taken as an emanation from the body or if the body is taken as a figment of imagination. The union of the two asymmetrical opposites in the human person is the ultimate mystery. The human person who thinks and acts escapes all categorisation. No society or institution can fully control the individual, unique configurations of

experiences which are often far more efficacious in giving direction to personality than all the carefully planned systems which the parents, the school, the church, and the society may prescribe for the individual. It is here that we are in touch with a spiritual existence—the mystical.

One experiences the mystical as a form of emotional experience in contradistinction to ordinary fact-finding experience. The mystical is not only inexpressible but also ineffable. Such a mystical feeling makes us conscious of the fact that even if all possible questions of science are answered, the problem of life will still remain a riddle to be solved. It is with such a mystical vision that we enter the *realm* of values. There is an extra-scientific area which includes the values.

Personalism affirms the ultimate mystery of the human person. It is only through grace and beatific vision that the ultimate mystery is revealed to us. At our best we can attempt a description of that ultimate mystery. We cannot solve it. This is the vision of the ancient thinkers and of all those who have been seriously concerned with the problem of man and have refused to explain the human person in terms of economic, social and natural forces alone. From such a vision they declared that the human person is supreme and autonomous; from such a vision followed their respect for the dignity and freedom of the human person. This mystical affirmation, this beatific vision is an end-in-itself. This mystical affirmation of the human person has saved mankind again and again from savagery and barbarism generated by an excessive concern for 'material welfare'.

Every person is an end-in-himself. The person who is an end is not an abstract but a concrete person standing in reciprocal relations with his surroundings, the conditions of life, the natural and social order. He is not only an individual but also a social and civic person. As a matter of fact, he cannot set himself as an end to himself if he is not a civic and social individual. He has his own self as a task for an activity wherewith as this or that definite personality he takes a hand in the affairs of social life. He not only cultivates others but also is influenced by others. He constantly passes from one stage to another. From the purely personal life he transcends into civic life, and from thence he returns to the personal—but this time enriched and fulfilled. It is only in and through such sojourns that the human person who is essentially creative attains a fuller existence. This is how the human person finds within himself a concretion of the universal—a dialectical unison of particularity and universality. This is the teleology that the human person has within him. He cannot transform himself into the universal if he does not already have the universal as a potentiality. If the universal were extraneous to the human person, he could attain universality only by divesting himself of his whole concretion.

Duty is the universal which is required of the human being. If we assume that duty is something extraneous to the human person, the distinction between good and evil will disappear. For if the human person himself does not have the universal, he could come only into an abstract relationship with himself. The distinction between good and evil is not

commensurable with an abstract relationship. Dialectical unison of particularity and universality forbids the human person from surrendering himself to tyranny under spacious rationalisations, based primarily on a new fear of the State. The mystical dimension of the human person saves him from plunging into a new defeatism so characteristic of our times. The human person contains a rich and active concretion of values and existence. Hence a philosophy of despair is repugnant to it. One's own personality is the Archimedean point from where one can lift the world.

Personalism is a message of hope. The human spirit is essentially ethical. The true destiny of the human person is to achieve the glory of universalising himself and to realise the God within his own self. He is not a mere stranger resting in the wayside inn of this earth on his voyage of existence ; he lives in a world whose life is bound up with his own life. The reality of this world is personal. The significance of the human person does not lie in the severance of relationship with what we call nature, social order and the civic life. Freedom of relationship and perfectness of realisation confer significance to the human person. The function of philosophy is not to elaborate a fixed way through which the human person should travel in order to realise his full potentiality. Philosophy should not try to enslave man in a form of omniscient theology. The function of philosophy is to describe and guide the human person through the different paths which he may follow to realise the kingdom of heaven that lies within his own self.

Personalism recognises that there may be innumerable ways of realising the potentialities of the

human person. But there are a set of ways about which its views are definite. Wherever there is an attempt to curtail human freedom and to degrade the spirit of man through enslavement, the personalist stands steadfast against all such attempts. His conception of the human person is essentially ethical; hence he gives the highest value to freedom. Freedom to him is not a means to an end. It is the precondition of all goal-seeking activities of man. The goals are not human goals if they are not valuational. The hydra-headed evil of materialistic philosophy endeavours to reduce freedom only to mere means.

The most powerful arguments against the reality of human freedom, in recent times, are to be found in the writings of Marx and the Marxists on the one hand and in some interpretations of the work of Freud and his followers on the other. We shall be concerned with Marxism in the text of the present book. Freudianism suggests that most of our actions are motivated by unconscious wishes and desires. A neurotic is one who constantly does what his unconscious mind dictates. He consciously pursues ends which are not the ends which he really wants to pursue. Because he does not know what he is doing, it can be said that when he is acting he is really being guided by forces beyond his control and recognition. The psychoanalyst makes him conscious of his unconscious motivations and helps him to escape from his obsessions. Freud's discovery that the neurotic personality has not lost totally his contact with reality is significant. He, moreover, has made it clear to us that the workings of the unconscious mind are not to be confined to a clearly marked range of abnormal behaviour only. The workings of the unconscious mind are manifest in a wide range of our behaviour, usually called normal.

It has been thought by some Freudians that the above discovery of Freud is a challenge to the concept of human freedom. A free individual is responsible for his actions. If the individual does not know what he is doing, he cannot be held responsible for his actions. Moreover, there must be a wide range of choice in the horizon of his personal existence out of which he should prefer to actualise one. If our actions are guided by unconscious motivations, the question of free choice does not arise. But such an interpretation of Freud's theory confuses between the discovery of a range of facts with a proposal for the redefinition of mental concepts. Doubtless, Freud said that the unconscious mind is more important than the conscious mind. He even compared the relation of the unconscious and conscious mind with the submerged and visible portions of an iceberg. But that does not reduce our concept of freedom to a mere tossable triviality. Even if we accept Freud's findings, we find that we are less free than we imagine we are. For we shall find that we are less self-conscious than we had previously supposed. But that will not make the concept of freedom an empty sound.

Moreover, when we call an action 'irrational', our assertion is usually based on an evaluation scale of values. Whenever I say that irrationality has played a role in Mr. X's actions, what I mean to say is that Mr. X has behaved in a way which I do not consider to be correct. If I were not conscious of others, I would not have passed judgments on Mr. X's actions. A human being cannot act if he does not seek an end and strive after a goal. 'Seeking an end' and 'striving after a goal' are not 'irrational activities'. The expression

'one acts irrationally' is a meaningless expression if we desire to convey anything more than our disapproval.

In recent times there has been another attempt to explain away the concept of human freedom. The instinct sociology of McDougall, Vierkandt, and others has tried to explain human want, and consequently human action, by correlating with it a particular impulse, instinct, propensity, feeling, etc. The innate propensities are frequently found in pairs of opposites. Thus pitted against the 'instinct to be helped' there is an 'instinct to fight'; there is a 'communicative instinct' against the 'instinct of secretiveness', and so on and so forth. Since nothing can be said about how the strength of these opposing instincts is to be measured or felt, one cannot understand how human action can be explained. Instinct psychology has only given us a duplicate list of human actions. We are reminded of the fact that McDougall started with a list of nine instincts and ended with an indefinite number of instincts. Attempts to explain human action in terms of unconscious processes, have all thrown light on the understanding of the human being. But their insistence on reducing the human person to a mere bundle of instincts or their attempt to make the human person nothing more than a mere battle-ground for the belligerent super-ego, the Id and the ego have led them to forget that the human person defies all attempts to categorise.

It has already been pointed out that the human person is a dialectical unison of particularity and universality. This is the reason why the human person is the source of all values. Truthfulness, inclination

towards friendship and love, justice, usefulness in society, courage, power to appreciate and create beauty—all have their source not in self-aggrandisement of the human person but in his attempt to universalise himself. The criteria by which men in different ages and cultures have in detail distinguished the values have varied widely. Yet men of all societies and cultures have come to universal standards, or else, a Jesus Christ and a Buddha could not attract the admiration of thinking people everywhere. Throughout history men have seen the vision of a life which avoided the oppressions of mere experience, and which gave them some sense of the ineffably real. They have the vision of a personality more real than the phosphorescence of the animal moods. Men have paid their obeisance to those who could bear the thin air of the Empyrean and find in the tenser glories of thought and contemplation a fulfilment of the warmer activities of their too, too solid flesh.

The experience of value is not an isolated element in the human person. It has its intimate connection with social experience and positive knowledge. The weakness of empiricist philosophy lies in the fact that it detaches values from other domains and discusses them as such. The empiricists think that the domain of value is only contingently related with other domains. Values to them are nothing but expressions of feelings. They cannot be restrained by any conceptual necessity. They forget that it is only in and through a transcendental argument that we can show the relationship between the values and the empirical world of facts. Kant said a profound truth about values when he advised us to act in accordance with a law

valid for rational agents. "So act as if you were always through your maxim a law-making member in a universal kingdom of ends." And further, "Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law." Progress in moral insight is neither mechanical nor a result of intellectual ratiocination alone. Through progressive enlightenment men form an attitude of mind which enables them to discriminate between one practical principle and another and, in the end, arrive at a harmony in accordance with the transcendental principle of morality. Discussions on the subjectivity or objectivity of values are, by themselves, far from being satisfying. Subjective theory of value leads us to moral anarchy by its insistence on the particularity of moral endeavours. And the objective theory of value produces *zealots* by fixing unchanging ends for human action and of social policy.

The doctrine that morality is entirely social, that all duty consists in promoting the good of *others* in general, fails to explain the value and moral worth of intellectual integrity, the love of truth and such other human qualities which are intrinsically valuational. Aristotle was basically right when he said that: "If...there is some end of the things we do, which we desire for its own sake (everything else being desired for the sake of this), and if we do not choose everything for something else (for at that rate the process would be empty and vain), clearly this must be the good and the chief good. Will not the knowledge of it, then, have a great influence on life? Shall we not, be more likely to hit upon what is right? If so, we must try, in

outline at least, to determine what is, and of which of the sciences or capacities it is the object."¹ And the object of such a quest is nothing short of the Divine Nature. Faith in what Aristotle called 'the chief good' confers measures of goodness to our actions. It is this faith which is movingly expressed in the fifth chapter of *Second Corinthians*: "I know that if this earthly tent of mine is taken down, I get a home from God, made of no human hands, eternal in the heavens. It makes me sigh indeed, this yearning to be under cover of my heavenly habitation, since I am sure that once so covered, I shall not be 'naked' at the hour of death. I do sigh within this tent of mine with heavy anxiety—not that I want to be stripped, no; but to be under cover of the other, to have my mortal element absorbed by life." This ceaseless yearning of the human soul for the final consummation of its love and action is an experience which confers value on our actions. But this faith in the Supreme Good must be distinguished from blind faith. Genuine faith arises out of the human situation and lends significance to the otherwise limiting questions which arise inopportunately in our minds. The example of Dmitri's dream in Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov* shows us how stubborn such questions can be :

"He was driving somewhere in the steppes....Not far off was a village; he could see the black huts, and half the huts were burnt down; there were only the charred beams sticking up. As they drove in, there were only peasant women drawn up along the road....

1. Aristotle: *Ethica Nichomachea*, The Works of Aristotle Vol. IX. Book 1.2. tr. Under the Editorship of W.D. Ross. Oxford University Press, (London. 1915.)

" 'Why are they crying ? Why are they crying ?', Mitya asked, as they dashed gaily by.

" 'It's the babe', answered the driver, 'the babe weeping.'

" 'But why is it weeping ?' Mitya persisted stupidly, 'why are its little arms bare ? Why don't they wrap it up ?'

" 'The babe's cold, its little clothes are frozen and don't warm it.'

" 'But why is it ? Why ?' foolish Mitya still persisted.

" 'Why, they're poor people, burnt out. They've no bread. They're begging because they have been burnt out.'

" 'No, no,' Mitya, as it were, still did not understand. 'Tell me why...those poor mothers stand there ? Why are people poor ? Why is the babe poor ? Why is the steppe barren ? Why don't they hug each other and kiss ? Why don't they sing songs of joy ? Why are they so dark from black misery ? Why don't they feed the babe ?')

"And he felt that, though his questions were unreasonable and senseless, yet he wanted to ask that ; and he had to ask it just in that way. And he felt that a passion of pity, such as he had never known before, was rising in his heart, that he wanted to cry, that he wanted to do something for them all, so that the babe should weep no more, so that the dark-faced, dried-up mother should not weep, that no one should shed tears from that moment....

"I've had a good dream, gentlemen, he said in a strange voice, with a new light, as of joy, in his face."¹

The importance of such questions is profound for human life. Despite the uncertainties in regard to our future we give moral worth to a person who acts in accordance with the dictates of a satisfying faith. Faith in the Supreme worth of our moral actions sustains us and makes life worth living. Faith is the centre of understanding which transforms a man's outward experience into the malleable material of his inner life and enables him to attain possession of his inner world which includes his experience of the outer world. It enables the individual to relate moral forces which he has apprehended, with the refractory, centrifugal, chaotic forces which manifest themselves sometimes as materialist progress and sometimes as power politics.

Pascal rightly points out that "It is the heart which is conscious of God, not the reason. This is faith—God evident to the heart and not to the reason....Faith is within the heart, and makes us say not 'Scio', but 'Credo'."² The ethical doctrines can give us reason for choosing the right course; but faith helps us to put our heart into it. Reason only tabulates and compares results. "She does not determine directly what is good, but works, as in all the sciences, upon given data, recording the determination not...of the outer but of the inner

1. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Brothers Karamazov* translated by Constance Garnet, p.p., 536-538 William Heinemann Ltd., (London, 1959.)

2. Quoted by Stephen Edelston Toulmin in his *An Examination of The Place of Reason in Ethics* p. 202, Cambridge University Press, (London, 1958.) from *Les Pensees de Pascal, disposees suivant l'ordre du cahier autographique*, ed. G. Michaut, Fribourg, 1896, No. 13, p. 11, and No. 58, p. 25 ; tr. Rawlings, in *Selected Thoughts* (The Scott Library), VIII, p. 10 and XXXIV, p. 20.

sense, noticing what kinds of activity satisfy, and to what degree, the expanding nature of this soul that seeks Good, and deducing therefrom, so far as may be, temporary rules of conduct based upon that unique and central experience which is the root and foundation of the whole. Temporary rules, I say, because, by the nature of the case, they can have in them nothing absolute and final, inasmuch as they are mere deductions from a process which is always developing and transforming itself. Systems of morals, maxims and of conduct are so many landmarks left to show the route by which the soul is marching; casts, as it were, of her features at various stages of her growth, but never the record of her perfect countenance. And that is why the current morality, the positive institutions and laws.....are in truth invaluable records of experience, and he is rash who attacks them without understanding; and yet, in a sense, they are only to be understood in order to be superseded, because the experience they resume is not final, but partial and incomplete."¹

Faith which gives significance to our very existence and raises purely abstract rational knowledge to the status of concrete knowledge has been recognised by the Asian thinkers from time immemorial. They have called such faith by various names. But all of them, almost without exception, have recognised that the essentials of human reality elude rational comprehension. But from this they have not argued that rational knowledge is useless. It is of value only when it is enlightened by an act of faith, which is blessedness. That which we can communicate is of various

1. G. Lowes Dickinson, *The Meaning of Good: A Dialogue* pp. 83—84. J.M. Dent & Co., (London. 1907). Fourth edition.

grades of concreteness. But communicability is limited by the *propria propria* of the knower. The real essence of the knower cannot be sundered from that which can be communicated. Self-knowledge, qualified knowledge of the things that supposedly limit the powers of the self, becomes knowledge of the Real.

Personalism does not endeavour to entice assent by consecrating the actual. It does not make the empirical the ultimate arbiter of truth and thereby exclude the eternal values. Neither does it try to justify the deficiencies of the empirical world by "drawing up a memorandum in favour of the Almighty". It does not involve itself in a whirlpool of mere illusions and idle values, bearing no essential relation to the empirical world. It rises above the empirical world so that a clearer and more extensive view of the actual may be had. Personalism does not feed itself on dreams and illusions. It tries to rescue humanity from being entirely immersed in the *unfinished* empirical world. It is with this spirit that personalism looks at the empirical world and discovers the real source of the progressive embodiment of values which is blessedness. It recognises that the real nature of the human person cannot be understood apart from the contemplation of the Divine Nature which is the source of the eternal values filtering through our moral, intellectual and aesthetic experiences. That is why we can show the cinders of our spirit through the ashes of our chance. We discover the impress of the signet of the Divine Nature on many a passing moment.

In ancient Asia human person was the centre of all social and individual activities. The mystical 'I' was

recognised by the ancient Asian thinkers as the highest Good, Beauty, Truth and Existence. Unfortunately, in Asia, the visions of the ancient seers have been debased and have often provided, in recent times, justification for apathy and moral cowardice. To hide behind the lofty visions of the ancient thinkers in order to follow one's lustful desires or to seek the company of the dissolute is a kind of hypocrisy worse than that of the Pharisees.

The chief concern of the human person is to hunt the souls to their burrows. It not only loves others but also endures them. And what it admires in others is always the same marvel; not amazing virtue nor extraordinary austerity, nor great theological, philosophical or scientific knowledge, but a certain blessedness, fruit of that spiritual lucidity which is the grace of graces and "the inenarrable godhead of delight".

Personalism recognises that excessive economic exploitation and political anarchy are possibly the chief maladies of our times. Owing to excessive economic exploitation and subjugation to economic necessities, freedom, independence and personality are, in the case of the majority of men, unrealised potentialities. To personalism freedom without the recognition of economic and social justice is an idle dream. But social and economic justice cannot be realised without an atmosphere of freedom. It is naive to expect economic and social justice in an atmosphere where freedom is denied.

The unusual emphasis that has been put on the economic functions of man during the past few centuries has given rise to an unprecedented anomic

normlessness in our times. Economic development is not to be despised. But is there no other way to economic development except that of anomic normlessness? This is the question which personalism seeks to answer in its social and economic programmes. The remedy for anomic normlessness is not to be found in the establishment of new modes of social interactions alone. Institutional changes, most certainly, can take us a long way to the cure of the anomy from which we are suffering; even then it is not sufficient to save us from the moral anarchy towards which we are drifting. The words of Dostoevsky's the Grand Inquisitor are constant reminders of one of the major problems of our times. " 'Feed men, and then ask of them virtue!' that's what they'll write on the banner, which they will raise against Thee, and with which they will destroy Thy temple."¹ But we forget that "without a stable conception of the object of life, man would not consent to go on living, and would rather destroy himself than remain on earth, though he had bread in abundance."²

Universality 'expresses' itself in human society in various forms. Of these forms the religious and the economic expressions are universal as processes in society. They become concrete in different forms in different lands. Modern parliamentary democracy in the West is mainly the product of the economic expression of universality. In Asia the situation has been different. Here the political structure has been mainly influenced by the religious expression of universality. Personalism tries to bring the two forms of expression

1. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, p. 260.

2. *Ibid.* p. 261.

in line with each other. There need be no contradiction between the attitude of religion and the expression of economic universality. The democratic attitude of mind is essentially a religious attitude. But religious attitude of mind in Asia has been mostly institutionalised in cults, sometimes specialised almost to the last degree, forgetting that religious attitude of mind inevitably leads the individual to identify himself with the other. Personalism endeavours to rescue this religious attitude of mind without creating a new form of bigotry. Religious attitude expresses itself through the development of the internal strength of man, a strength which in no sense he borrows from others, a strength which is an efflorescence of his spirit, a natural unfoldment achieved through a course of intensive self-discipline. Mahatma Gandhi gave a classic expression to this religious attitude of mind. "Let me explain", writes Mahatma Gandhi, "what I mean by religion It is the religion which transcends Hinduism, which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which ever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker, and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself."¹

An Asian's identification with others has not been only through trading operation. In religious attitude he got into the immediate inner attitude of the other individuals. The individual Asian identified himself with the other insofar as he was

1. 'Neither a Saint nor a Politician', *Young India*. Ahmedabad 12 May, 1920.

assisting him, helping him, saving his soul, and aiding him in this world. The Asians have been more concerned with the salvation of the individual. There have been wars, intrigues and cruelties in Asia. But the Asians have never believed in the moral worth of a life which is too stubbornly attached to this mortal frame of ours. They have always placed the moral man higher than the kings and the lords. The moral idea always issues forth from mystical experiences, from the conviction that man is eternal, that he is more than an earth-born animal, that he is united to the other worlds and to eternity.

The economic and religious expressions of universality are mutually complementary when the economic expression gets its light from the religious expression and the religious expressions produce social values. If we want to carry on the economic programmes successfully, we will have to come into closer and closer relationship with the other individuals, identify ourselves with the others not only in the particular matters of exchanges, but also find out what the others want. In short we shall have to identify ourselves more and more with others. The socialist ideology and capitalistic humanism enjoin us to accelerate this process of economic identification with others. Both the ideologies, in their extreme forms, go to the extent of reducing everything to a theory of business only.

In a personalist society the individual will carry on social functions intelligently and realise himself through what he does. The importance of the human person is obtained through the performance of social functions, through fulfilment of duties. In this realisation of one's own self one does not

have to have someone else inferior to him. The personalist desires others to fulfil their functions as well. He may feel that he is more able than his neighbour who cannot do the job he is doing but he always regrets his inability and incapacity. Personalism visualises a state of affairs "when the economic problem will take the back seat where it belongs, and the arena of the heart and head will be occupied, or reoccupied, by our real problem—the problem of life and of human relations, of creations and behaviour and religion."¹

To the Asian's recently liberated from foreign domination, but faced with the threat of another domination, more ruthless and more thorough than the previous one, quibblings with formal democracy alone do not have much significance. As a matter of fact Asians have always been suspicious of mere forms. Political thinking in Asia has a religious orientation.

The Asians have always valued the human person as the highest form of existence, more in practice than in theory.

The main concern of personalists in Asia is to rescue the religious attitude of the Asian people from the disrepute into which it has fallen at this juncture of history. Religious attitude must not mean economic and political apathy. As a matter of fact it enjoins rejection of servility in any form.

In Vietnam, civic life was governed by the civic virtues of "Than" and "Tin." "Than" means intellectual

1. J. M. Keynes, *Essays in Persuasion*, (Preface) p. vii. Macmillan and Co. Ltd., (London, 1931).

honesty, morality, acute consciousness and clear vision of the compass of one's duties towards the Creator, towards oneself as well as towards the country and one's fellowmen. "Tin" signifies sincere and courageous practice of all these duties, no matter how grievous the consequences of such practices are. Personalists in Vietnam are working to revitalise this profound and acute sense of the entirety of one's responsibilities, the constant and sincere practice of one's obligations to create thereby a climate of individual and social confidence necessary to the life and development of the human being.

To think Western methods of democratic government as exclusive avenues to the achievement and enhancement of human dignity is naive. He who thinks so confines human ingenuity to a strait-jacket and suffers from the fallacies inherent in all historicistic thought. He neglects the difference in outlook of the different peoples of the world, and pays scant respect to the fact that Asian life has not been dominated by what the West calls 'Government by law' alone. The Confucian maxim, 'Government by virtue' has been held by the Asians to be more important than 'Government by law'. 'Virtue' is the significance of law. Without virtue, law is blind though without law virtue too may be barren. Personalism recognises that the fundamental principle of the life of the person is that growth must proceed through responses from without. The influences from outside must be freely accepted and ordered in accordance with a scale of value by the individual human being. Passion for freedom a man must bring with him to this life: but democratic

restraint of that passion for freedom is the last best lesson that he learns. The unremitting pursuit of genuine freedom involves a constant resistance to the seductions of easy but premature unifications, with their inevitable train of mere negations.

Personalism stands uncompromisingly for democracy. "During the 18th and 19th centuries constitutions were drawn up which established political regimes, later known as political democracies, in which individualism and economic liberalism were advocated as proper formulas to emancipate man and to lead mankind towards happiness.

"While this system in its application brought relative freedom to a minority of its citizens at the same time it lessened the effectiveness of the State, which became impotent to defend collective interests and to solve problems.

"The events preceding the two world wars revealed these weaknesses more than ever before and in certain States led to the birth of fascism, which aims at a concentration of powers and a personal dictatorship.

"On the same pretext of organising power effectively and achieving social justice, another reaction has been manifested in the form of Communism and the so-called popular democracies. At the cost of restrictions on and the sacrifice of individual liberties, these systems have merely imposed party dictatorships.

"Even in the regimes of political democracy which were faithful to the traditional concept of

democracy, an important current of ideas has for a number of years led thinkers and jurists to revise the basic notions of modern democracies, as well as their methods and structures.

"Most of the democratic States have endeavoured, either through constitutional changes or legislative enactment, to modify their political institutions in important respects. Although they have been diverse, these transformations of public law which aim at reconciling the demands of collective discipline and social justice with those of individual liberty reveal a personalistic tendency. In addition to the negative liberties of a political nature, it is recognised that the human person has positive freedom, and a number of freedoms of an economic and social nature. At the same time the State, organised on a more democratic basis, is given wider, more stable and more effective grant of power to bring positive assistance to the citizen against massive dangers of materialist civilisation, and to guarantee to him the right to live and exercise his liberties."¹

Democracy is essentially a way of life. Certainly we are to learn science and technology from the West. But enlightenment we, the Asians, must find out ourselves, or, else we may fall for social attitudes such as contained, for instance, in the saying *Chacun pour soi Dieu pour tous* or *Après moi, le deluge*. The personalists have faith in the people and in the Asian's hope that he will be able to develop in fulness, in perfect radiance and illumination.

Vietnam, or for that matter the Afro-Asian countries, need not mechanically accept Western

1. Message of President Ngo Dinh Diem to the National Assembly, 17th August, 1956.

methods for achieving the essentials of democracy. That would amount to a denial of their tradition and the great ideals for which their countless heroes have laid their lives. The political philosophy of personalism which is guiding the destiny of Vietnam is an unceasing effort to find the right political means for assuring to all citizens the right of free development and of maximum initiative, responsibility and spiritual life. Democracy is the political framework which guarantees to the individual the scope of fulfilling his own destiny or becoming an *autonomous individual*. In pursuance of these ideas the President of the infant Republic of Vietnam solemnly declared on 17th April, 1958:

1. Vietnam is an independent Republic, one and indivisible.

2. Citizens are born free and are equal before the law. The State should assure them equal conditions for the exercise of their rights and accomplishment of their duties. It owes aid and protection to the family so that harmonious family life can develop. Citizens have the right to a secure and peaceful life, to justly remunerated work, to sufficient individual property to assure a dignified and free life, to democratic freedom and to the full development of their personalities.

They have the duty of developing the national heritage for the common Good and for universal peace, of safeguarding freedom and democracy, of defending the Nation and the Republic against all those who seek to destroy the foundation of common life and the Constitution.

3. Sovereignty belongs to the people.

The elected National Assembly is vested with legislative competence. The President of the Republic, also elected by universal, direct and secret ballot is vested with executive competence. The family vote is admitted, and the voting rights and eligibility of women is recognised. The separation of powers should be clear and the responsibility of the different organs of the State well defined, and their activities well coordinated to assure a maximum of stability and efficiency. A High Court of Justice will be established to decide cases of high treason.

4. The judiciary should be independent in order to make an efficacious contribution to the defence of the Republic, of order, of freedom and of democracy.

5. A Supreme Court should be organised for the control of the constitutionality of laws.

6. Economic forces should associate in the exercise of power in the form of a National Economic Council composed of representatives of union and professional groups and which will present suggestions and opinions on bills of economic interest.

The Republic of Vietnam has raised the hope that Afro-Asians can resist totalitarian tyranny and improve their conditions in a system of democratic government indigenous to the genius and tradition of their countries. The Afro-Asians must revitalise the slowly ebbing values of their life, go back to the creative springs of originality and bring in a quick pace of transition in their countries without the accompaniment of dislocations involving wide-spread unhappiness and incursions of disvalues. They must co-ordinate their various activities and contribute to the betterment of the complex pattern of community life. But this cannot be done in bondage. Human actions gain effectiveness and the power necessary for its perfection only in freedom. Freedom implies the practicability of purpose.

January 3, 1961

M. K. Haldar

With the best compliments
of the Consulate General of the Republic of Vietnam
on the inauguration of the second term of
President Ngo Dinh Diem
(April 29, 1961)



MAHATMA GANDHI, 1947

After a pencil sketch by R. N. Chakravarti

CHAPTER I

Independent Countries of Asia

"What makes the destiny of Asia so tragic, when she has freed herself from oppression and is hardly ready to deal with difficult problems arising from the post-colonial state of anarchy is the necessity for her to fight a new, another, system of oppression, so much more serious and dangerous."—President Ngo Dinh Diem.

WITH the discovery of the sea route from Europe to the East in 1498 new possibilities for mercantile and other activities were opened to the people of Europe. Thousands either went out or were sent out to colonize foreign regions. Others found in the eastern countries a fertile field for business. By the end of the 19th century almost the whole of Asia, Africa, and Australia went under Europe's rule. European expansionism in the new continent was only stopped or retarded by the American War of Independence. The continent of South America became the battleground of the European desperadoes and adventurers. But U.S.A.'s success put a stop to European expansionism even there.

Australia was a thinly populated continent with a people whose level of civilisation was far below

that of the expansionist English people. The British had an easy sail in Australia. Soon Australia could be converted into a colony. But the situation was different in the case of Africa and Asia. Both of these continents could boast of cultures which if not older than European would at least claim the same antiquity as the latter. And it is here that Europe's expansion faced real opposition. But Asian culture by the time European expansionism became a positive danger to her had already lost its vitality. Asia fell an easy prey. Europe found that its exported capital felt safest where it held State power. Hobbes' dictum that "the name of Tyranny signifies nothing more nor less than the name of Sovereignty," that "toleration of a professed hatred to Tyranny, is a Toleration of hatred to Commonwealth in general..." was practised fully and scrupulously. But this in turn accentuated the subject peoples' struggle for freedom.

Asia's struggle for freedom started simultaneously with her subjugation. Japan, in 1905, showed that the Asians could also hit back and hit back effectively. Increasing contact with the West made the Asians more conscious of the politics of the West. National consciousness and national pride were reborn.

The Russian revolution initially opened new hopes for them. But soon the nationalist forces of Asia could see the hollowness of the Russian revolution. As a matter of fact the Russian revolution scarcely had any influence over the nationalist movements in Asia. Asian struggle for national liberation was going on independently. The last World War opened new possibilities

for the nationalists of Asia. Thanks to the goodwill of the European people and the nationalist struggle in the different countries of Asia there is hardly any country in Asia which is not independent to-day. Thus Burma, India, Malaya, Ceylon, Pakistan, Indonesia, and the Republic of Vietnam have earned their independence after the last world war.

During the struggle for national independence the nationalists of Asia could see the dangers of another type of expansionism. Communism was trying to join and exploit the national struggle for liberation for its own purpose. The history of the struggle for national liberation in different countries shows that Communism has always tried to utilise struggles for national liberation for the purpose of establishing itself in the minds of the people and establishing its own *veracity* irrespective of the fact whether such moves enhanced the national cause or not. Even to-day when the nations are free, Communism is trying to extend its claws over the free nations by all possible subterfuges. All possible pleas are being utilised for the enhancement of Communism in the recently freed countries. Internal subversion with external help has become the main strategy of Communism in these countries. While the nationalists think in terms of power to the Asians, the Communists think in terms of, and prepare for, power to the Communists. Communism even pretends to stand for national *unity*; but unity has no significance if it does not enhance the cause for which Communism stands.

Communism thrives in a vacuum—cultural, political and economic. At present the main appeal of

Communism to the Asian masses is the technical effectiveness attributed to it. The common man in Asia is dazzled by the *economic claims* of the Communist world. The State-controlled and State-owned Press of the Communist countries, with the help of their supporters in the democratic countries, is trying to create the impression that the only way to achieve technical advance is to accept Communism.

Communism by itself may be good. It visualises a land of milk and honey where everybody will be happy. If Communism is reduced only to the above, what then is the difference between Communism and any other *ism*? In our zeal to find out the common denominator between Communism and the humanitarian philosophies we often forget that the common denominator is also the wildest common denominator.

Communism is based on a sociology and a system of philosophy neither of which may stand the test of scrutiny. The essence of Marxist sociology can be found in Marx's *Critique of Political Economy* and in the *Communist Manifesto*. These two contain the basic notions of the economic interpretation of history and the Marxist theory of class-struggle and class hatred.

Summarizing the results of his analysis of social development and social structure, Marx says: "In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material power of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic

structures of society—the real foundation, on which rise legal and political structures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness." Again, "It is not consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness." From this Marx goes on to observe that with the development of society the material forces of production come into conflict with the existing relations of production, and soon these relations become obstacles in the way of further development in the modes of production. This leads to social revolution. This is the genesis of class-struggle, and "the history of all hitherto existing societies," says Marx, "is the history of class-struggle."

To postulate that "the mode of production determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life" is to accept an anthropomorphic conception of causation. Marx claims to have found the ultimate cause of all social change. Such a search for the ultimate anthropomorphic cause led the Christian theologians to the causal proof of the existence of God. In modern theories of causation, cause is not taken as the prime producing agent. In contemporary natural sciences, the concept of functional relations is being substituted for the metaphysical notion of cause; modern science holds that associated phenomena are bound by functional relations. This has led modern scientists to treat any 'factor' as a variable and to find out to what extent and with what other phenomena it is correlated. But instead of trying to determine the functional correlations between different factors of society, Marx tried to produce an omnibus cause for all factors—actual or possible.

It is possible that Marx meant to say that the importance of the economic factor in determining social phenomena is far greater than that of any other factor. But nowhere has he (or his followers) indicated either the means of measuring these other factors or the indices of their comparative effectiveness. Contemporary sociologists like Espinas, Durkheim, Huvelin, Sorokin and Veblen have shown that the mode of production and the whole of economic life are separable from religion, magic, science and other phenomena. The adequacy of the Marxist sociological theory can thus be disputed.

But a more fundamental objection relates to the logical structure of the Marxist explanation of social behaviour. If the economic factor were the prime mover of society, how could we explain the dynamics of the economic factor itself, unless we endowed the economic factor with mystical properties? L. Petrajitzky and R. Stammler rightly held that the factual pre-conditions of economic relationship were law and social order; because without them the very fact of social inter-relations would be meaningless; without them there could not be any 'mode of production.'

Expressions like "the economic factor", "forces and relations of production" and "economic basis" abound in the Marxist jargon without any determination of their precise meaning. The official interpretation given to such expressions is that of Engels. By these expressions Engels means "the general conditions of production" which include geographical environment, natural resources, extraction, fashioning, transportation, trade, mechanism of distribution, etc. If we took such

an indefinite number of factors as a cause and tried to explain something by means of them, the task would be hopeless ; it would be impossible to arrive at any clear and definite correlation. One would be confronted with statements whose indefiniteness will not permit one either to prove or disprove them. It is also possible that one may at times be presented with fantastic correlations. "In this way", says Labriola, "the simpletons might reduce the whole of history to commercial arithmetic ; and, finally, a new authentic interpretation of Dante might give us the *Divine Comedy* illustrated with the process of manufacturing pieces of cloth, which the wily Florentine merchants sold for their great profit."

Marx's conception of class is equally vague and indefinite. In the *Communist Manifesto* this term is taken in the broadest sense—caste, occupational group, estate or order, guild and political ranks, all are included in it. In the *Poverty of Philosophy* and in the first volume of *Capital* it is used in a narrower sense, distinguishing social class from occupational group, order, etc. In the third volume of *Capital* Marx begins an analysis of social classes but leaves it unfinished. In these circumstances, it is impossible to get any definite and clear conception of the classes. The Marxist theory of social class, as well as the usual terms like "proletariat" and "bourgeoisie" remain largely undefined.

Even if we accept these vague and ambiguous concepts, it cannot be said that the history of mankind has been the history of class struggle. Investigations by eminent sociologists like Kropotkin have shown

that progress in human society has been due more to co-operation than to antagonism between man and man. As Tarde said: "Since the beginning of history, classes and armies could have struggled with one another endlessly; and yet, this could not have created either geometry, mechanics, or chemistry, without which it would be impossible for man to subdue nature and make progress in industry or military art."

Together with the theory of class struggle, the Marxist believes in a sort of historical determinism. This belief gives him the sense of self-righteousness and the confidence that he is always right as he is with the onward march of history. As, according to Marxists, social existence determines human consciousness and as social existence is dependent on the modes of production, the relations of production are indispensable to and independent of human will. The forces of production are developing *sua sponte*, and the law of this development is the dialectical law.

Hegel regarded the Dialectics as the description of the development of Mind or Spirit and held that human intelligence can only recognise and give account of this development *ex post facto*. "One word more," says Hegel, "about giving instructions as to what the world ought to be. Philosophy in any case always comes on the scene too late to give it. As the thought of the world it appears only when actuality is already there cut and dried, after its processes of formation have already completed—the owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling dusk." Marx transformed the Dialectic from a theory of the development of Spirit to a theory of the development of

society and attempted to show that capitalism had to give way to Communism. It was not an empirical truth but an apodictic certainty. Capitalism must necessarily be overthrown by a revolution.

This dogmatic assertion of Marx reminds us of the prophetic warning which Proudhon sounded in a letter to Marx. "Let us," wrote Proudhon to Marx, "if you wish, look together for the laws of society, the manner in which they are realized, but after we have cleared all these *a priori* dogmatism, let us not, for God's sake think of tangling people up in doctrines in our turn. Let us not fall into the contradiction of your countryman Martin Luther who, after having overthrown the catholic theology, immediately set about founding a protestant theology of his own amid excommunications and anathemas. . .because we stand in the van of a new movement let us not make ourselves the protagonists of a new intolerance, let us not act as apostles of a new religion, even if it be a religion of logic, a religion of reason." But Proudhon did not live to see the full significance of his letter to Marx whom, in an entry in his diary, he described as "the tape-worm of socialism."

Marx does not predict the revolution empirically; it must happen because the dialectic requires that it should happen. Paraphrasing Bossuet we may state: "Men are agitatingly acting, while, in fact, they are led by God". The Marxist would probably prefer to put "History" in place of "God". This fatalistic interpretation—this apocalyptic eschatological belief—is inseparable from Marxist sociology. And it makes Marx's theory of social dynamics not a scientific theory

of the development of human society but a variety of beliefs in a millenium. It provides us with the most startling instance of how an abstract system of statements can lead intelligent people sometimes to act in a way as if the abstract statements were scientific propositions regarding matters of fact.

Marx's excessive preoccupation with the working class has led some economists to question his credentials as a serious scientific economist. Some philosophers, on the other hand, relegate him to the category of pure economists because of his preoccupation with the economic analysis of society. Marxists think that these two, taken together, indicate Marx's position adequately. "Marx was a great economist, his position involved moral considerations, and he devoted himself to the cause of the working class." Marxists believe that there are moral principles in terms of which the class struggle can be evaluated and also that these moral principles lie within it and not over and above it. According to them, there are different kinds of moral ideals and theories. There are the old moral ideals and theories which have outlived their day. Then there are the new moral ideals and theories which serve the cause of the advanced forces of society. Their significance depends on the extent to which they reflect the needs of developing the "conditions of material life of society", which in the final analysis determine the physiognomy of society, its ideas, views, political institutions etc. And the chief force in the development of society, the force which determines the character of the social system or the social physiognomy, is, according to Marxists, the method of procuring means necessary for physical existence, the mode of

producing material goods—food, clothing, houses, fuel, instruments of production etc.

The Marxist discerns these main types of production-relations in history : Primitive, Communal, Slave, Feudal, Capitalist and Communist. He believes that the present-day capitalist relations of production have ceased to correspond to the state of productive forces of society and have come into irreconcilable contradiction with them. This, for them, means that "capitalism is pregnant with revolution, whose mission is to replace the existing capitalist ownership of the means of production by socialist ownership." Whatever will usher in such a revolution is good. Marx prophesies that the proletariat with its political supremacy will have to wrest "all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organised as the ruling class ; and to increase the total productive forces as rapidly as possible." "The proletariat," says Marx, "during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled by the force of circumstances, to organise itself as a class . . . by means of a revolution it makes itself the ruling class, and as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of productions." Whether we choose it or not, the proletariat is bound to assert its supremacy. This will be the culmination of economic betterment of society. And since a society which is economically better is also morally superior, the individual who works for an economically better society is *ipso facto* the moral individual. What is good is to contribute to the economic betterment of the society and, inevitably, to be with the winning side.

A demand for a change in economic relations is a

demand for the transfer of economic and political power from one class to another. The moral justification for such a demand lies in the claim of the proletariat to be better suited to control and administer the productive forces in the interests of society, which are identified with their own interests. Morality, according to Lenin, "is entirely subordinate to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat."

In asking the proletariat masses to "steal what has been stolen and kill and eliminate the exploiters," the Marxist is fulfilling what has already been ordained. On the one hand socialism will emerge out of the dialectical historical necessity, and on the other, we should strive for it. This again is a compulsion imposed on man by the dialectical upsurge of society.

There is an interesting parallel between Marxism and Calvinism. Both hold that one cannot choose on which side one should be. For Calvin, God decides in the very beginning whether a creature is to be damned or saved. The world is governed by brute necessity, where all factors have been predetermined by God. Yet man, rather Calvinism, has a role. It can evoke God's grace for one who joins its fold. For Marx socialism will come out of historical necessity. Whether we choose it or not, the ultimate victory will come to the proletariat and we should try to enhance the process of that victory by being with the winning side, by being a member of the party of the proletariat. Only then can we expect to attain salvation in the socialist heaven. It is of course possible to defy the all-powerful dialectical necessity of history. But we can defy it only in such measures as history is willing that we

should. Thus, human endeavour, human opposition, human support, is valuable in enhancing the historical process. Although there is scope for the human will, any independent assertion of that will also turn out to be historically determined. We are reminded of Chesterton's story in which all revolutionaries were agents of the police.

L. Ilyichov, one of the top theoreticians of the Communist world writes after the 'Great October Socialist Revolution' "...Class struggle was extended. . . . to the sphere of Inter-State relations."¹ And further, "...*The only choice is*: either the bourgeois or the socialists ideology," wrote Lenin, "There is no middle course (for humanity has not created a 'third' ideology, and moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or above-class ideology). Hence, to belittle the socialist ideology *in any way, to turn away from it in the slightest degree* means to strengthen bourgeois ideology." To be with the inevitable law of history is to be moral. And the Communist Party is the only party to which the inevitable law of history has been revealed. (The following story from the Peking Magazine, *Chinese Women*, is a characteristic expression of Marxist morality. When an unidentified woman wrote to the magazine asking what she should do about her husband who had revealed "rightist tendencies" even though he was faithful to her, the editors on behalf of the regime wrote back saying, "Denounce him. . . . In a socialist state, love between a husband and wife is bound up with their enthusiasm and affection for the enterprises of socialism. If Mrs. X did not denounce her husband, she

1. World Marxist Review, Vol. 2. No. II p. 10.

would be depriving their love of the political basis on which it was founded. Thus there would be no happiness in their home life"! "Every Party member... should have", declared Liu Shao-Chi, "only the Party and the Party's interests uppermost in his mind and not considerations of a personal nature." And further, "The Marxist principle is that personal interests must be subordinated to Party interests..."¹ The following extract from a letter from the son of Hu-Shih, the well-known Chinese thinker, literary critic, writer and politician, reflects the typical Communist attitude. "Until my father returns to the people, he will always remain a public enemy of the people and my enemy. Today, in my determination to rebel against my own class, I feel it important to draw a demarcation line between my father and myself. In order that I should be vigilant enough not to let sentiments gain the upper hand, I must establish close relations with the working and farming classes."²

A high degree of technical effectiveness is easy to achieve when a group of people, ruthless in their beliefs and actions, are at the head of a state. In the Communist countries a considerably high degree of technical effectiveness has been achieved within a comparatively short time. But this alone does not justify Communism. Hitler reconstructed Germany and shook the world with his weapons in less than a decade. The technical reconstruction of Germany after the first world war did not take a long time. Hitler achieved it in a shorter time than that taken by Soviet

1. *How to be a good Communist*. Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1952.

2. Hu-Shih-tu, English translation of the letter published in *Hongkong Standard*. September 24, 1950.

Russia. Yet even a Communist does not feel enthusiastic about Hitlerism. President Diem of the Republic of Vietnam recognises that "...the technical effectiveness represented by 'Communism exercises a great temptation to the Asian masses, impatient to do away with their technical backwardness and thirsty for social justice."¹ But, he rightly points out, "...the technique presented by Communism is, for once, bereft of the spirit which formed it and may in the long run justify it. Indeed technical progress and the development of teaching which we see prevailing in Communist countries aims uniquely at industrialisation and propaganda. The persecution of the academic people which is raging at present in the country of the 'Hundred Flowers' exposes the fundamental lack of culture and systematic ignorance of the Communist leaders of all that lies outside Marxism. In fact, in these countries, national cultures are relegated to the domain of folklore, little capable of modifying the vision of the external world, once and for all set by historical dialectics."² They are working in accordance with the dictum of Lenin: "The Marxian doctrine is omnipotent because it is true." And "The Communists, in keeping with their ideology, the most humane of all ideologies, are anxious that doomed capitalism should cause the least possible injury to mankind, should leave as few ruins as possible after it has passed on."³ The cleaning up process has started in the countries under the Communists. The result is a ruthless suppression of all opposing views, mass executions without trial, forced labour camps, and ceaseless

1. Address delivered at Seoul University, September 21, 1957.

2. Ibid.

3. World Marxist Review. Vol. 2. No. II, p. 16.

falsification of facts and history to maintain the leaders in power.

The way through which the technical effectiveness of the Communist countries is achieved and maintained is confirmed not only by the reports of Communist atrocities published from time to time in the democratic press ; a measure of the terror regime established by the Communists is to be found in the periodical denunciations of the Communist leaders themselves. "Terror accomplishes its work of dehumanisation through the total integration of the population into collectives, then depriving them of the psychological means of direct communication in spite of—or rather because of—the tremendous communication apparatus to which they are exposed. The individual under terrorist conditions is never alone and always alone. He becomes numb and rigid not only in relation to his neighbour but also in relation to himself, fear robs him of power of spontaneous emotional or mental reaction. Thinking becomes a stupid crime; it endangers life."¹

The terrorists of the olden days had their conflicts and somehow or other these conflicts found their coherence in their personal focus. The most frightening feature of modern atrocities is the lack of such personal focus in which conflicting faculties can still cohere. There is a categorical difference between a Caesar Borgia and a Stalin or a Mao Tse-tung. Even sympathetic writers like Sidney and Beatrice Webb write : "The sum of human suffering involved is beyond all computation."² Secret police, witch-hunting, excom-

1. *Terror's Atomisation of Man* by Leo Lowenthal. *Commentary* I. No. 3, January, 1946.

2. *Soviet Communism*. p. 567.

munications, anathemas, shooting without trial are the order of the day in a Communist country. "There is something ghastly in its (GPU's) inveterate secretiveness, even down to the detail of making nearly all its arrests in the dead of night. The public hears nothing until a brief notice in the newspapers, (State-sponsored, State-managed and State-controlled) informs it that a death sentence has been carried out."¹ Sidney and Beatrice Webb wrote their book a long time ago. Conditions have changed. The ruthlessness of the Communist regime has shown no sign of waning; it has been further accelerated.

Subject to various types of external compulsions which try to disintegrate him and reduce him to a *mere object*, the individual in the circumstances sometimes develops and maintains in his lonely personality an independent human criterion and adheres to it firmly as a matter of human dignity. For the majority of the people, however, such fortresses of values no longer exist. A systematic and ruthless propaganda of dialectical materialism, a terroristic regime always threatening the individual with secret trial and death or slaving in the slave labour camps, make the individual a mere cog in the social milieu. He loses all his individuality. He is taught to betray his dear and near ones for the sake of the party, for the sake of the good of entire humanity. There is a total denial and reversal of all values which tradition has bequeathed to us. The tormented individual derives, so to say, a second consciousness beyond his individual self. Often this second consciousness derives as a refuge for tormented individual consciousness;

1. Ibid. pp. 581-582

institutionalized cultural values, organisational and administrative institutions of a *systematised* social life. The sadistic and masochistic drives are simultaneously present in the totalitarian character. Sadism aims at unrestricted power over other individuals more or less mixed with destructiveness, while masochism aims at dissolving oneself in an overwhelmingly strong and menacing power and participating in its strength and glory. Both these trends are based upon the inability of the isolated individual to stand alone and his craving for a symbiotic relationship that overcomes this isolation and loneliness.

The Communist party wants the individual to sacrifice himself at the altar of dialectical materialism. Such self-sacrifice is proclaimed to be the highest virtue. This call for sacrifice easily catches the imagination of many people due to its "idealistic" character. The sacrifice which Communism demands finds the fulfilment of life in its very negation—the complete obliteration of the individuality of the self and its total surrender to a higher power.

The threat of Communist totalitarianism is not only political and military but also a challenge to our morals and spirit. That is why the Communist parties are not political parties, in the democratic sense of the word. They are integral parts of an international conspiracy out to subvert everything that is held sacred by man and to include the whole world in the Moscow-Peking Empire. In this light, the free world and those who value freedom face the following dangers: (1) The military power of the Moscow-Peking Axis; (2) Communist subversion within the

non-Communist countries; and (3) the economic backwardness of the under-developed countries.

Thanks to wishful thinking there is an illusion that the Communist world is divided between the leadership of Khrushchev and that of Mao Tse-tung. Such a view is completely oblivious of Communist philosophy and also of the fact that one of the clauses of the Constitution of People's China declares the eternal and unbreakable friendship between the U.S.S.R. and People's China. The Moscow declaration of the Communist and Workers' Parties of November 1957 as well as of December 1960 said that the foreign policy of a Communist State must always consider the interests of other Communist States. At a time when the Chinese Communists were committing aggression on Indian territories and when Khrushchev declared the whole *episode* to be a case of *misunderstanding* and created the illusion of a rift between Communist China and Russia, the Peiping magazine *Friendship* (Issue No. 8) published statements by various leading Chinese Communists on the Twenty-first Party Congress. Sino-Soviet friendship was stressed at every step as the basis of peace. When Mao-Tse-tung declared that "several hundred millions more will turn to socialism and there will not be much room left in the world for imperialists and the whole structure of imperialism will collapse"¹ in the coming major holocaust, he was expressing his belief in an historical perspective that makes all talk of a breach between Peking and Moscow a palpable nonsense.

The Communists' *offensive* for peace and anti-imperialism is part of their scheme for the domination of the whole world. Any person of importance in a free

1. cf. *Let A Hundred Flowers Bloom*,

country who is not a henchman of the Communists is bound to be a henchman of Imperialism, unprogressive and reactionary. Even Pandit Nehru was described by them to be "a running dog of Whitehall and a lackey of Wall Street".¹ "The struggle of the Soviet Union for peace", writes Prof. Rapaport, "is organically connected with the struggle for increasing the influence, autonomy and independence of the socialist State...and with the elimination of any threat to its security."² V.I. Lisovsky, a Soviet legal authority, wrote in 1955: "The traditional bourgeois concept of neutrality defines the status of a nonparticipant State in a war regardless of the character of the war. The Soviet Union has always come to the aid of nations which have become the object of aggression and are struggling for the independence of their fatherland. This means an identical attitude towards an aggressor and his victims is impossible. When a State carries on a just war, it must receive support and help." And what war can be more just than *the war for the liberation of the people*? Even neutrality is to be pursued with a view to enhancing the *cause*. The Communist theoreticians write: "Neutrality is not a protracted and permanent condition but only a stage in which the aggressive forces are limited in their influence on a given country so that it becomes possible for that country to transfer gradually from the war camp of capitalism to the peaceful camp of socialism." Thus "The policy of neutrality...becomes part of the general struggle of the progressive forces of neutrality."³ The Communists follow in letter and

1. cf. *Captured in Tibet* by Robert Ford.

2. *Essence of Modern International Law* published in Moscow, 1940.

3. Quoted by Wolfgang Hopker, *Europaishes Niemandslans*, Dusseldorf-Koln, 1956, pp. 20-21.

spirit what Lenin wrote in his *One Step Backward and Two Steps Forward*. The policy is to *withdraw* when the enemy is strong and strike when the enemy is weak. Communists' "sound and fury", their truculence and *unexpected* intransigence, their propaganda against "expansionists" and "interventionists" and their tirades against "imperialist intrigues" in the free world and for everything wrong in the Communist world are all parts of a composite pattern—a "blind" or "red herring" across the trail, while the subjugation or flattening-up of Eastern European countries, Tibet, North Vietnam, North Korea and all people already under their control is going on 'silently' and ruthlessly all the time. Hobbes' prophesy is proving to be a reality. "Warre consisteth in Battel only or the act of fighting; but in a tract of time wherein the will to contend by Battel is sufficiently known; and therefore," wrote Hobbes, "the notion of Time is to be considereth in the nature of Warre as it is in the nature of weather. For, as the nature of Foule Weather lyeth not in a showre or two of rain but in an inclination thereto of many days together; so the nature of warre consisteth not in actual fighting; but in the known disposition thereto, during all the time there is no assurance to the contrary."¹ Not only there is a disposition to fight but also there is a constant preparation for war and there is an endeavour to keep war going through the fightings by *proxy* that are taking place in countries like Vietnam, Laos and the Congo. Ruthless suppression of Hungary, supply of arms and ammunition and military personnel to help the Communists of Vietnam, rape of Tibet, aggression on Indian territories, and maintenance of a worldwide network of Communist

1. Thomas Hobbes—*Leviathan*—Chapter XIII.

propagandists, out to subvert the different free governments are all parts of the so-called peace *policy* of the Communists.

The Communists have opened another *front* to delude the freedom-loving people of the world. We hear that Communism and the free world can co-exist. Co-existence is neither a doctrine nor a desire of some politicians. It is first and foremost a *fact*. The possibility of a settlement between totalitarianism and democracy seems to be impossible. Nor can one talk of "balance of power" in the present context. That expression was coined on the hypothesis of a prolonged war between powerful nations. With the discovery of weapons of speedy mass destruction, the question of a prolonged war may not arise. But there is every reason to think that totalitarianism would strike if it found the democratic world divided and weak.

The goal of Communism is world-domination. The threat comes from a world-wide organisation with its supporters who out of a *fear of freedom*¹ have surrendered their individuality and freedom at the altar of dialectical materialism and who are eager to subvert the governments of different free countries and thus to drag the rest of humanity into bondage. The strident belligerence, the intentional abuse and vituperation which the democratic world are treated to daily by Communist propaganda for spurring *internal revolts* in the free world are a constant reminder to the world.

Subjugation of China by the Communists has made the whole of Asia an immediate haunting ground for them. Communist subjugation has changed the

1. cf. *Fear of Freedom* by Erich Fromm.

character of Chinese expansionism. "The agrarian despotism of the old society, which, at most, was semi-managerial, combines total power with unlimited social and intellectual control. The industrial despotism of the fully developed and totally managerial apparatus society combines total political power with total social and intellectual control".¹ The agropespotic masters of China in the olden days were at worst semi-managerial. The Communist regime spreads operational authority over all sectors of production and distribution and develops a totalitarian State where even human ingenuity is controlled by the State to an extent never equalled by a hydraulic society of the past. In the outlying areas of conquest and domination, the Communist State develops a pattern of *total colonialism* incomparably more repressive and reprehensive than any other form of colonialism. China's expansionist designs have been accelerated by Communism. Nay, its whole character has changed.

Pursuit of unrestricted power is the motive force behind industrialisation in Communist countries. The aim of Communist industrialisation is not to create a "free society of free men" but to bring more and more power to the Communist Party for the purpose of enslaving the whole of humanity. In a Communist State it is extremely difficult to ascertain whether certain institutions are or are not instruments of power as all institutions are controlled by the Communist Party whose chief aim is to usurp unlimited power. "At present", wrote Lenin, "we are exercising our main influence on the international revolution with our

1. Karl A. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism* (New Haven: Yale University Press. 1957). p. 440.

economic policy...."¹ (By *revolution*, the Communists mean extension of their own power.) K.C. Ostrvityanov, Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences, U.S.S.R. declared that following the future success of building of Communism, "the Soviet rouble will begin to appear on the world markets and gradually push out the dollar." Further, "The final elimination of trade relations based on money" will then take place. And there can be only rouble on this earth when *the revolution* has become finally victorious.

The revolution cannot be brought through peaceful means. Lenin in his *Imperialism—the Highest Stage of Capitalism* reproaches Kautsky for speaking of the inevitable fall of capitalism. Lenin writes that the truth is that capitalism will not fall of itself; it has to be overthrown. The same determination can be read even in the Communist promise to lead the world into a land of Canaan, if they come to power. In a recent article published in the Chinese Communist Party's Journal, *Red Flag*, Communist faith in war is reaffirmed. The Party members are asked to remember Lenin's dictum: to repudiate civil war or to forget about it, would mean sinking into extreme opportunism and renouncing the socialist revolution. Communist messianism and worship of power become identical. Consequently the Communist State regulates the life of the individual in accordance with its power interests. What has followed is the rise of a group of technocrats and extreme bureaucratisation of society. Politics has become immoral and only success decides whether an act is moral or not. War, subversion, murder, loot and slavery are moral so long as they

1. *Collected Works*, Moscow, 3rd Edition, 1936. XXVI, pp. 410-11

enhance the *cause*. Bismarck was censured by all civilised men half a century ago for having said that the great problems of history must be solved by blood and iron. Now a large group of quasi-intellectuals find moral excellence in the dictatorial regime prepared to shed much more blood than Bismarck ever did. The narrow horizon of 'bourgeois legality' as Marx had dubbed the democratic systems, is abandoned; and in its place the unrestrained violence and reusurpation are extolled. On April 22, 1960, the Chinese Communist Party called on the socialist bloc to "master more and more of such new techniques as atomic weapons and rocketry" as it [believed that through war the 'Imperialist' system would come to an end. Nothing but military superiority could enslave the free world.

Communist escatology defines everything to suit its purpose. Communism demands that the individual must put the party first and everything else afterwards. That is why even when Prime Minister Nehru said to a Press Conference, "Chinese troops are already in possession of small pockets of Indian territory on the border", the Indian Communists declared and eulogised the *noble intentions* of the Chinese Communists. Possibly this was a reciprocation of the *noble intentions* expressed by Mao Tse-tung on October 19, 1949 in reply to the greetings from the Communist Party of India. "I firmly believe", wrote Mao Tse-tung, "that, relying on the brave Communist Party of India and the unity and struggle of all Indian patriots, India will certainly not remain long under the yoke of Imperialism and its collaborators. Like free China, a free India will one day emerge in the Socialist People's

Democratic life." Once an individual puts the party first and conscience afterwards, he moves straight into the mood which makes for totalitarianism.

Thanks to the growing solidarity of the freedom loving people, the Communists are reluctant, in the context of present-day history, to go into a headlong clash with the democratic world. Lenin asked them not to forget the immense possibilities of civil war and subversion. The economic development of the Communist countries are achieved at the cost of untold human suffering and is geared to their philosophy of aggrandisement and subversion.

The economic backwardness of the under-developed countries is taken as an effective weapon to unleash their propaganda machinery for subversive activities to thwart, subvert and ultimately to capture the government of the underdeveloped countries. President Diem emphatically states that the under-developed countries must work for their economic development. There is no sense in talking only of high moral and spiritual values when millions are starving. To an empty stomach everything besides food appears bitter.

Morality must be reconciled with secular affairs. President Diem cannot think of politics divorced from morality. Morality is the sole impartial criterion of men and things, and the only one on which honest minds can be made to agree. Ethics cannot be denominational. In President Diem's mind the two—liberty and morality—are inseparable. The essence of democracy is to esteem the rights of others as one's own. The old notions of civil liberty and of social order, to

quote Lord Acton, "did not benefit the masses of the people. Wealth increased, without relieving their wants. The progress of knowledge left them in abject ignorance. Religion flourished, but failed to reach them. Society, whose laws were made by the upper class alone, announced that the best thing for the poor is not to be born, and the next best, to die in childhood, and suffered them to live in misery and crime and pain."¹ President Diem advocates a social order where real freedom and economic responsibility are not incompatible. The State must help the individual by putting a stop to the corroding influence of concentration of capital and power in a few hands. Everyone must be given the power of doing what he likes and the right of being able to do what he ought to. Such a state of affairs cannot be achieved by revolution which brings to power only a group of people who cannot do so through the ballot box. A Communist revolution puts the Communist Party in possession of unlimited power. "The possession of unlimited power corrodes the conscience, hardens the heart, and confounds the understanding". Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

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1. *Essays in Freedom and Power.*

CHAPTER II

Planning and Freedom

INCREASING belief in the efficacy of planning as a means of economic development of the underdeveloped regions characterises all economic theories on the underdeveloped countries. It is now generally believed that *laissez faire* capitalism with its ancillary of democratic institutions provides necessarily a slow and even painful mechanism of economic change.

In Western European countries, where industrial capitalism had its most natural growth, the process of economic development was slow and spread over centuries. The weakness of capitalism in those countries was revealed in periods of war and national emergency. That *laissez faire* capitalism has become anachronistic was further revealed by the serious economic maladies to which it led. Unemployment, monopolistic exploitation of labour and the like made *laissez faire* economics suspect. The extreme critics of such an economic system even detected a cleavage of spirit between capitalism and labour in its institutional framework. This so-called class conflict, even in its embryonic stage, is fraught with the dangerous consequences of strikes and lock-outs and the loss of industrial production.

It is possible to pin down the functional deficiencies of a planless economy to the peculiar and erratic nature of *private investment*.¹ The volume of private investment—a thing of crucial importance in a capitalist economy—is determined by, to borrow the highly technical Keynesian terminology, the marginal efficiency of capital and the long-term rate of interest. Keynes treated the long-term rate of interest as somewhat sticky in nature and concentrated on the marginal efficiency of private investment.

The marginal efficiency of capital which has been defined as the rate of discount that brings into equilibrium the present value of the prospective yield of a capital asset with its replacement cost is, however, in actual practice not determined by strictly economic considerations alone but by the behaviour of speculators in Stock-Exchange markets. The marginal efficiency of capital is a complex of economic, political, social and psychological factors. It is therefore bound to be volatile and highly fluctuating. It follows that private investment in a *laissez faire* capitalist economy is erratic and uncertain due to the fluctuating nature of marginal efficiency of capital.

In a *free* capitalist economy, based on a policy of economic *laissez faire*, private investment alone cannot be depended upon to bring about a fast and steady rate of economic development. The weight of contemporary economic arguments, in their most theoretical and abstract forms, is directed against the functional efficiency of an unplanned economy.

«It is true that socialist economy provides an alternative to the deficiencies of capitalism. In a socialist

1. cf. *General Theory* by J.M. Keynes. Chapter XII.

economy, economic welfare is attained through the conscious operation of a master central plan. But a socialist system leads to denial of economic freedom and political liberty to individuals. Wilhelm Roepke rightly observes that it is "hardly a forgivable naivete to believe that State can be all-powerful in the economic sphere without also being autocratic in the political domain and *vice versa*.... It therefore makes no sense to reject collectivism politically, if one does not at the same time propose a decidedly non-socialist solution of the problems of economic and social reform. If we are not in earnest with this relentless logic, we have vainly gone through a unique and costly historical experience." The logic of centralised and all-embracing planning in a State leads inevitably to the establishment and perpetuation of a tyrannical rule. The party which launches such planning will always be in mid-stream and plead that it is wise not to change horses in mid-stream.

Poor leadership, conservative management, backward technology and inadequate investment characterise the economy of the underdeveloped countries. To-day nowhere is the State an *idle* spectator to the sufferings and welfare of its citizens. Either it works for power interests or it works for welfare interests. Without the help of the State even welfare measures are becoming impossible. In an underdeveloped country, especially, the State must come forward to give a lead to the people and to provide the necessary initiative. It is hoped that a welfare State, wedded to a policy of liberal public control and regulation of industries and even public ownership of industries through the means of a democratic plan, may provide a universal panacea for economic evils.

Pragmatically speaking, economic planning is a method of State intervention in industries to provide a corrective to the uncertain and irregular private investment. The basic object behind any economic plan is to justify State intervention in the process of economic development. State intervention may, broadly speaking, be of three types. Even in a pure, so-called *laissez faire* economy, historically speaking, a certain degree of State regulation and control of industries was inevitable. This type of State intervention is to be found, especially, in the history of economic development of Great Britain. When a particular industry or a group of industries faces operational difficulties, an investigation committee or an enquiry commission, quite frequently a royal commission, is appointed to investigate and make recommendations to the Government. These recommendations or some of them are followed up and adopted in the form of a bill, passed by Parliament to give powers to the Government to enforce certain decisions. Such is State intervention in its simplest form ; and it is not incompatible with a planless economy. Therefore, economic planning, it may be argued, leads to a more radical type of State intervention than is envisaged in the type of Government intervention described. It either means public ownership of all the means of production or it means existence of public ownership of the means of production along with private ownership.

Liquidation of the private sector is the object of Communist revolution which wants to implement a comprehensive economic plan to direct all economic activities. This is the "collectivist economic planning" of Roepke. A collectivist economic plan cannot

be implemented without totalitarian dictatorship. Even though it may bring about a so-called fast and rapid rate of economic development, measured from the point of view of power, it entails an immense loss of human values. In the long run even economic development is retarded. The human being must be goaded to work for the plan. For this purpose a huge administrative and coercive machinery is needed. The energies of such a plan tend to be exhausted in the pursuit of power and are hardly directed towards welfare. Socialism was identified with total planning. In the major trend of early socialist thinking "the ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange was the sole criterion of whether a community was a capitalist or a socialist one. They identified socialism with public ownership..."¹

The critics of socialist thinking pointed out its evils even when the idea of socialism was mooted. But the socialists themselves took a long time to realise their mistakes. In a recent International Socialist Conference in Holland, the European Socialist parties evinced a consciousness which shows that the European socialist parties are gradually giving up their earlier concepts. To quote a few examples: The Dutch Labour Party declared in November, 1959 that "ownership of the means of production should be made subservient to the well-being of the nation....It is desirable for different forms of public-owned and privately-owned production to exist side by side...." The same trend of thought may be discerned in the programmes of the Swiss Social Democratic Party, the Austrian Socialist Party, the German Social Democratic Party and the British Labour Party. The socialist

1. *Keeping Left* (New Statesman Pamphlet, 1950) pp. 27-28

parties outside Europe have also not remained unaffected. The C.P.F. in Canada is committed to mixed economy, the Labour Parties of Australia and New Zealand are now completely empirical about State ownership. The British Labour Party recognises "that under increasingly professional managements, large firms are as a whole serving the nation well. Moreover, we (the Labour Party) recognise that no organisation, public or private, can operate effectively if it is subjected to persistent interventions from above. We have, therefore, no intention of intervening in the management of any firm which is doing a good job."¹ Yet the socialist parties are retaining their label. This reminds us of what Von Mises wrote in 1932 in the Preface to the second German edition of his book, *Socialism*: "My own definition of socialism, as a policy which aims at constructing a society in which the means of production are socialized, is in agreement with all that scientists have written on the subject. I submit that one must be historically blind not to see that this and nothing else is what has stood for Socialism for the past hundred years, and that it is in this sense that the great socialist movement was and is socialistic. But why quarrel over the wording of it! A man may call a cat a dog and the sun the moon if it pleases him. But such a reversal of the usual terminology, which everyone understands, does no good and only creates misunderstanding." To call a *system of mixed economy* 'a socialist economy' or 'a socialist pattern of society' will lead us to terminological confusion more so because of the predilections of the intellectuals, especially of the underdeveloped countries.

1. *The British General Election of 1955*, pp. 48-49.

Theoretical considerations apart, mixed economy is both a logical and historical necessity. Nowhere in the world did there ever exist a *pure capitalist economy*. The only difficulty of a mixed economic system which is based on a partial or comprehensive economic planning is the operational problem of its stability. The Marxists think that mixed economy plays a dynamic role in the transition from capitalism to socialism. In Lenin's social philosophy, mixed economy was looked upon as essentially unstable in nature. Lenin's new economic policy was based on the concept of mixed economy.¹ But the transition from mixed economy to socialism in Soviet Russia could not take place without ruthless State intervention. In the Marxist lexicon transition is always effected through coercion; and coercion is justified as it brings about the *desired* transition.

A powerful group of English and American economists, who are directly influenced by Keynes' thought, however, holds that the existence of a powerful public sector should not necessarily be incompatible with the continuance of the private sector. In this connection a reference may be made to the popular Keynesian idea of compensatory movement in public investment as a method of stabilising investment.

Keynes starts with the basic argument that private enterprise is expected to be uncertain and erratic. To borrow a famous Pigouvian phrase, where there is a "wave of business pessimism", private investment has a tendency to fall; and where there is a "wave of business optimism", private investment is up. Keynes

1. cf *Soviet Economic Development* by Maurice Dobb.

suggests a movement in public investment to offset or to compensate fluctuations in the volume of private enterprise. His idea is that a regular compensatory movement in public investment would stabilize the total level of economic activity and employment in a country.

Operationally, the Keynesian system presupposes the existence of sufficiently large volumes of public investment and the existence of certain regulative powers for the State to control the behaviour of erratic private enterprise. There are powerful theoretical reasons for supposing that the Keynesian practice of compensatory movement in public enterprise may create excessive operational frictions and ultimately jeopardise and undermine the basic features of a mixed economic system.

The Keynesian idea of mixed economy is based on the tacit argument that regulative power in the hands of the State may adequately control the irregular and even anti-social behaviour of the private sector. For instance, it is thought that State welfare legislation for minimum wages, maximum profits, fixation of working hours and working days, etc., may keep the private sector in its proper place and thus avoid exploitation. But it may be argued that if the various restrictions imposed by the State on the private sector compel the private sector to go out of operation altogether or, at least, to restrict its magnitude substantially, the result may not be happy. In such an eventuality, clearly, there are two possibilities. The State adheres to the welfare legislation in spite of the rapid contraction of the private sector. Logically this will lead to socialism. Excessive encroachment of the State

on private life and enterprise can be resisted if the different democratic institutions and interest groups are activated and only if they have a say in policy-making by the State. The State itself may not think of not going the whole hog with its welfare legislations. In that case however the State will not be fulfilling its own mission—the welfare of the people. Thus Keynesian mixed economy is caught between two alternatives—that of unbridled power to the State or the restriction of State activities to certain spheres. If the State takes the monopoly of welfare legislations, it is bound to become coercive. After all, it is a difficult proposition to determine the total welfare of total mankind at any time.

Mixed economy rests on a macro-economic approach. In its purely classical exposition it obliterates the fact of sectorial and regional maladjustments. The Keynesian idea seems to be that the fall in private investment may be countered by an equivalent expansion in public investment without any possible serious repercussion upon the economy. But this is plainly impossible. If depression hits private enterprise in a particular group of industries, the expansion of public investment may develop that group of industries only and no other. If depression hits private investment in any particular region of private investment, the expansion of public investment in some other region may not bring about necessary economic relief. A philosophy of co-existence of a powerful public sector with a private sector may create several operational difficulties because of occupational and regional immobilities. Only in a world of perfect economic fluidity and flexibility can a mixed economy operate in

the ideal way. But a perfect state of economic fluidity and flexibility can only be attained under totalitarianism when 'mixed economy' loses all its significance. In spite of its *theoretical* and *philosophical* shortcomings, the Keynesian type of mixed economy remains the fundamental model of democratic economic planning. It is extremely important to note that almost without a single exception the underdeveloped regions of the world are trying to bring about economic development through conscious economic planning based on the Keynesian model which *prima facie* offers a way out of the extremes of either *laissez faire* or totalitarianism. The antithesis between private and public enterprise based on the notion that one leads to domination and the other to salvation is too crude to be fruitful. If *laissez faire* is individualism let loose, Communism is collectivism unbridled. The Communist collectivism as a remedy for *laissez faire* is no better than the disease. Complete collectivisation of property leads to a concentration and monopoly of power in the hands of the State. Every economic activity is subject to the will of the government. Countervailing forces must be there to offset the power of each major section or element in the market. They must occupy key points of the economy in order to exercise internal restraint on particular market situations.

The idea of democratic planning presupposes the existence of a State wedded to democratic values. In the underdeveloped regions, in particular, the State cannot remain an idle spectator of the sub-human conditions of life. This is especially so in the Asian countries where the modern man has lost his contacts with the vital currents of his ancient heritage. Without

planning it would be impossible to develop the economically backward regions. But a plan must take into account the traditional values of the land.

The economic relations in the underdeveloped countries continue to be old ones and the 'haves' seldom come out to improve the lot of the unfortunate. The administrative machinery is lax. And above all there is wide-spread illiteracy. The task of the leaders of the underdeveloped regions is a difficult one. A new society is being born out of the old one. The leaders are to ensure the healthy birth and nurture of this new society. Totalitarianism thrives under economic and cultural backwardness and calculatedly takes advantage of the impatience of the people to better their lot. The people of Vietnam know how necessary it is to develop their country. They also know that this must be done under democratic planning. A plan which has no respect for the human being is brutish.

Even democratic planning has however a tendency to develop a highly centralised authority for both taking and enforcing policy decisions. Consequently there may develop an attitude of excessive intolerance towards established and existing social and economic institutions. The zeal to catch up with the more developed countries of the West may lead to an over-emphasis on the development of heavy industries. Despite this, the existence of a highly centralised authority in the underdeveloped regions of the world may be justified and necessary on the grounds of ignorance of the masses and general attitude of apathy and psychological inertia of the people towards development plans. In the absence of a feeling of

buoyancy and exhilaration of the people, it may be argued that the government is forced to carry through its economic plans with the help of a centralised, efficient administrative machinery. Such a government will naturally face opposition from the conservatives who want to cling to the old and anachronistic economic and social institutions which need to be changed if any development programme is to be gone through. The people may desperately cling to such outdated socio-economic institutions. It is the sacred duty of the government to intervene in order to expedite the rate of economic development. However this type of justification for State intervention and intolerance requires to be operated with caution.

At a certain stage the forces of economic growth come into conflict with existing ideas and institutions. But the real problem is whether the administration, represented as it may be in the planning authority, should be allowed to impose its own welfare decisions upon the community at large. Indeed, there is a genuine danger that in the absence of a proper resistance the unlimited authority of a bureaucracy, put in sole charge of planning, may develop totalitarian traits and try to threaten basic democratic values like economic freedom and political liberty. The importance of establishing a *proper* planning authority cannot, therefore, be lightly set aside. The planning body has to tackle problems of vital importance and far-reaching consequences. Therefore, if an error of judgment is committed by the central planning authority, it will have its wide repercussions over the entire economic system and a deviation from the optimum is bound to

occur. Pigou is justified in strongly advocating the view that the success of an economic plan depends fundamentally and finally upon the skill and efficiency, the honesty and probity of the functioning of the planning body and its subordinate agencies. Whether these public officials will be honest is a social and political problem.

There are, however, reasons to believe that no bureaucracy can altogether be above the group and class interests. Even in a parliamentary democracy, the tendency of some particular group to perpetuate its control over the legislature can be discerned. In its own self-interest the bureaucracy takes sides with one vested interest or another.

Max Weber clearly pointed such germane frictions in a rational-legal State. In his classic terminology, a conflict between a 'formal rationality' and a 'substantive rationality' creates a condition of continuous instability in a bureaucratic form of government. 'Formal rationality' refers to a tendency towards formal adherence to rules and regulations; and 'substantive rationality' refers to an absolute social end of justice. Max Weber thinks that a bureaucracy pays too much attention to the former and ignores the latter.¹ Thus the decisions of a bureaucracy need not necessarily be identical with the welfare decisions of the society as a whole. In any case, it would not be wrong to hold that "except in a world of supermen many lapses may occur." The leaders of Vietnam are fully conscious of their fallibility. That is why they do not believe in total planning. Human beings are free not

1. *Theory of Social and Economic Organisation* by Max Weber, Introduction by Talcott Parsons.

because they are perfect but because they are limited and hence can aspire to gain perfection. Here the Asian conception of 'perfection' would be of great help to the Asian leaders and people. 'Perfection' in Asia has never meant unlimited power. This does not mean that the Asians have despised material welfare. But even material welfare has been looked upon by the Asians as a manifestation of the adventures of the human spirit. Asia has always refused to identify the spiritual with the material. It is this aspect of Asian culture which, if properly developed and nourished, would open a valuable line of cultural development. Asia is impatient to catch up with the West. This impatience may obliterate the basic tenets of Asian culture. The result of such an obliteration would be the painful experience through which many countries have already gone and are still going.

The above brings us to an objectionable tendency in most of the plans devised for the underdeveloped regions. In many of these plans there is an over-emphasis on heavy industries. The idea behind this policy is not difficult to explain. In text books of economics, economic growth is defined in terms of rise in *per capita* national income (real).¹ The rate of economic development is identified with the rate of growth of income *per capita*.

In the background of such a conception of economic development it is easy to justify a rapid growth of heavy industries. The heavy capital goods industries

1. This seems to be one of the most accepted definitions of economic growth. The reader may refer to the standard books by W.A. Lewis, *Theory of Economic Growth* and by Paul Baran, *Political Economy of Growth*.

have a capacity to generate income quickly—at any rate faster than the income generation capacity of other sectors like agriculture or consumers' goods industries. Therefore, in order to attain a rapid economic development, the growth of heavy industries is regarded as not only desirable but also necessary.

Implicitly—maybe, even unconsciously—the stress on heavy industries serves another purpose. The power and strength of a nation can be measured in terms of its industrial capacity to produce heavy capital goods. A power-oriented economic plan finds it necessary to expedite the growth of heavy and capital goods industries. A nation has, however, to choose between power and welfare. This choice is important because, given the supply of limited resources, it may become necessary to sacrifice one ideal for the attainment of the other. The choice involves value judgments. Till the Asian countries achieve a particular level of economic growth, it would be disastrous to introduce indiscriminate industrialisation for the sake of industrialisation only.

The underdeveloped regions adopt planning basically as a means to improve the standard of living of the people. This assumption may be taken as somewhat axiomatic if the plan is not ostensibly power-oriented. For the Republic of Vietnam the problem of defence is especially important. As a matter of fact the Republic of Vietnam is in a state of constant pressure from the Communist North. In spite of this, the leaders of the Republic of Vietnam know it too well that the most effective means of combating Communist subversion and Communist aggrandisement is to develop the standard of living of the people. Economic develop-

ment in the Republic of Vietnam is welfare-oriented rather than power-oriented.

An over emphasis on the growth of heavy industries in the underdeveloped countries creates a lopsided economic development and undermines the concept of balanced economic growth. In no case should the development of industries take place at the expense of the primary sector—the sector on which maximum number of people live. The Government's efforts should be continually directed at the erection of a democratic structure. This cannot be done by neglecting the people.

In pursuance of this policy the Republic of Vietnam has set an example to all the underdeveloped countries. It has already advanced much towards the attainment of its goal. The measure of its success can be had from the message that President Diem sent to the National Assembly of the Republic of Vietnam on 5th October, 1959, though economic progress by itself is not the criterion to judge the progress made by a people. Measures for educational and other developments are no less important. President Diem in his Message said: "In order to promote social justice and also to ensure an absolute minimum for a population living in a zone of great instability, as well as to increase the purchasing power of the rural masses, we have directed our main effort towards the agricultural sector." Vietnam is primarily an agricultural country. Thanks to the efforts of the people and the Government of the Republic of Vietnam and thanks to the technical social measure favouring small ownership and farming on a rational and community basis, the Vietnamese people could increase their rice

production in 1959 by 250,000 tons. "The land reform in its first stage has enabled 112,000 farm families to succeed 1,200 former big owners, in spite of the opposition of the reactionaries and of Communist sabotage.

"The creation of land development centres has for its part wrested 48,000 hectares from the forest and waste lands for the benefit of over 25,000 landless families.

"Thanks to the Rural Credit system which has enabled the farmer to borrow more than 1,200 million piastres from the beginning of 1958 to the end of September 1959, the small farmers can consolidate their ownership and improve the yield of their crops through the use of chemical fertilizers and mechanical equipment. At present, Vietnam possesses one of the largest stocks of farm equipment in all South-East Asia. The Department of Agriculture, for its part, has sold the peasants over 50,000 tons of chemical fertilizers at low prices.

"The steady repayment of the loans has reached the highest percentage recorded in any underdeveloped country, thus ensuring the success and continuity of the scheme, in spite of Communist opposition. Parallel to the effort of the Rural Credit, Community Development and the System of Farmers' Associations contribute to the improvement or the establishment of the rural substructure (canals, local roads, small dams...) and the installation of new pumping stations, rice-mills etc., and the rationalisation and diversification of crops.

"In the last instance, the Government has been concerned with the replanting of the rubber plantations

which are too old or were damaged during the war. A new sum of 200 million piastres has been earmarked to encourage those who agree to replant at least 5% of their plantations. At the same time a programme of extension of the total rubber acreage by the technical service of the Land Development Commissariat has been drawn up. Together these projects aim both at increasing the rubber acreage and its yield.

"In addition to rubber, other industrial crops such as keenaf and ramee have been strongly encouraged. The production of keenaf which is used in the making of ricebags, already reaches 3,000 tons and satisfies in a large measure our internal needs. As regards ramee which is used in the making of fishing nets and which can be used in the future in the weaving of various fabrics in the proportion of 50%, its output reaches 600 tons this year as against 80 last year.

"Cotton itself is being experimented with in the regions of Cheo Reo, Tuy An, Phan Thiet, and so far the results have been satisfactory.

"Handicraft, which complements agriculture, has made remarkable progress as to quality and quantity. The development of weaving on a handicraft basis has made it possible to reduce our textile imports from 48 million dollars in 1958 to 40 million in 1959. We expect to bring this figure further down to 25 million in 1960.

"Thus the results achieved in the agricultural sector have made it possible to satisfy in a large measure the essential needs of an underdeveloped population and to furnish it with the basic human conditions

indispensable to a strenuous and sustained effort in the domain of industrialisation.

"In this domain, the difficulties inherent in an underdeveloped country, such as the shortage of capital and qualified personnel, to which should be added the national and social concern of preserving the economic independence of the country and of minimizing the sacrifices of the present generation, have been partly counterbalanced by the aid of friendly countries and the efforts of our technicians.

"As in the agricultural sector, the industrial programme aims at exploiting our natural resources with a view to reducing our new industries and developing the substructure and the means of communications.

"Thus, in regard to the textile industry, a spinning mill with 10,000 spindles is in production now. Another one with 20,000 spindles is under construction in Saigon, and still another with the same capacity is planned for Tourane. The execution of this programme will enable us to meet 40% of our needs.

"With respect to the sugar industry, the Hiep Hoa mill produces 9,000 tons this year, that is 1/7 of local consumption. It is expected to produce 15,000 tons in two years. Three other mills have been planned. Together, these mills will satisfy all our needs and permit the saving of 4 million dollars per year.

"Likewise, two paper mills have been planned with a capacity of 18,000 tons per year or 70% of our needs, and with a saving of 2 million dollars per year.

"With regard to wood, a saw-mill at Tan Mai (Bien Hoa province) produces timber with a capacity of 2,000 cubic meters per month. To this mill will be attached a wall panel factory using saw dust with a yearly capacity of 3,000 tons. The saving in foreign exchange will be about 500,000 dollars per year.

"As regards cement, the Long The Factory is equipped to produce 20,000 tons per year. We are planning to build another factory at Ha Tien, with a capacity of 200,000 tons. The production of these factories will be sufficient to cover our needs and will result in saving in foreign exchange of about 3 million dollars per year.

"A glassworks is under construction, with a capacity of 15,000 tons per year ; thus an exportable surplus will be available and will represent a saving in foreign exchange of approximately 2 million dollars per year.

"All of the above is but a beginning. Yet, in addition to the immediate and direct benefits of our economy, these factories will have a 'multiple effect' ; around them allied industries will grow. When all these factories come into operation we shall be able to reduce the volume of our imports progressively and save foreign exchange which we shall invest in other basic industrial projects.

"The recent restoration of the Vietnamese railway, the building of new main roads, such as the Saigon-Bien Hoa highway and those which link up the Highlands and the coastal area of Central Vietnam and especially the dense network of land and water crossways and secondary roads with the purpose of opening

up vast areas of economic development breaks the age-old isolation of the remote provinces. All these achievements and plans taken together demonstrate our determination to erect a solid foundation for our emerging national economy.

"It is for the same purpose that we pursue the development of the Nong Son coal mine to which we shall attach a power plant with a capacity of 33,000 KW. We hope that the Japanese-Vietnamese reparations convention will at last permit the building of the very important Da Nhim hydro-electric complex.

"Parallel to the economic effort, we have made remarkable social progress. In the educational field, the campaign against illiteracy launched in July 1956, is entering the final phase. The country had 2 million illiterates in 1956. 1,500,000 have now learned how to read and write. We can reasonably expect illiteracy to be completely wiped out in 1960.

"In the field of labour, the introduction of the system of collective contracts has contributed to the improvement of relations between workers and employers. The number of social conflicts has decreased by one-third compared with last year, and the number of work days lost as a result of strikes has fallen by one-half. On the internal and private plane, the training of the trade union cadres is seriously pursued in several centres, thanks to the collaboration of the international labour organisations."

The equipment of hospitals in Vietnam has also been increased and modernised.

I have quoted at length from President Diem's *Message* to bring into relief the progress made by the Republic of Vietnam in the economic field and also to show how the decline of economic individualism and rejection of *laissez faire* do not by themselves make a case for a power-oriented despotic society. Rapid introduction of a technological society with a structure of planning superimposed on an underdeveloped country hastens the process of differentiation between the masses and the *experts*. The *expert* develops a morality of his own and justifies it by saying that the masses do not know what is good for them (masses). The individual is not considered to be the source of all values and the ground of his self-realisation. To the expert, the individual human being is merely a given datum. The primary concern of the leaders of the Republic of Vietnam is to bring relief to the people. In a country which is primarily agricultural, they have very wisely concentrated their efforts on agricultural developments. Industries will grow and are growing not at the cost of agriculture but for the purpose of giving immediate and necessary relief to the Vietnamese people. This was absolutely necessary for a country under constant threat from totalitarianism. In spite of the fact that its average citizen is anti-totalitarian, the Republic of Vietnam would not be able to stabilise itself in the hearts of the people if it failed to satisfy their immediate needs. Owing to its policy of bringing immediate relief to the people through agricultural development the Republic of Vietnam did not have to inflict suffering on the people with the hope that some day they would be able to live a happy life.

A very important phenomenon in Vietnamese

policy today is the government's willingness to help the industrialists, agriculturists, business men, and small producers to undertake development projects. Financial assistance is given by the government to assist the capital development projects or production programmes of commercial companies or agriculturists. The government does not normally give away the taxpayer's money to private shareholders in the form of subsidy, but insists on the State receiving ordinary shares in respect of its investment. If the venture succeeds, it will bring increased profits in which the tax-payers are fully entitled to share. If it fails the taxpayer will be in no worse position. The equity shares carry voting rights and therefore certain measure of control. These rights have recently been explained by Sir Frank Morgan, Chairman of the Prudential Assurance Company. "We are longterm investors and normally expect to continue to hold our investments, looking for a steady and, we hope, expanding income.... We do not regard it as proper to us as shareholders to interfere in the day-to-day management of the companies in which we have taken an interest. There are, however, certain broad issues of policy on which we feel shareholders have a right to be consulted."¹ Such a programme should be distinguished from that of the British Labour Party as stipulated in their book, *Industry and Society, Labour's Policy on Future Public Ownership*, London, 1957. The Labour Party suggests that the State should acquire equity stocks of large companies in order that it may participate in the high earnings and capital gains accruing to such stocks. More profit should come to the State in future than at

1. Quoted by Douglas Jay : *Public Capital and Enterprise*, No. 28, p. 14. Fabian Journal (London. July 1959).

present. As shareholders, the State "would of necessity be involved with the whole complex process by which wealth is maximised. The State would appropriate for itself—as the managerial elite has done in another way—the motives and behaviour pattern of a propertied class. It seems now almost unnecessary to say that this pattern can only serve to ramify and stabilise the forms of wealth and power in our society."¹ But the State should not acquire wealth for the mere pleasure of acquiring it or in order to prevent it from falling into private hands. The aim of democracy is to help the individual to realise his potentialities. This obviously cannot be done by tying him more securely with the State machine. A democratic State must know when to intervene, when to help and when to withdraw. In Vietnam the State helps the producers by buying shares of companies or farms. And it holds the shares so long as it is necessary to help the farm to come up and stand on its own legs. The private investors can invest under conditions of security and freedom. Flexibility, initiative, enterprise, adventurousness and the desire to experiment, which private enterprise, at its best, shows are kept alive and encouraged. The centre of gravity of a democratic plan lies, as far as possible, between the two extremes of the individual and the State. Personalism recognises the family as the primary, indispensable and most natural of all communities. It seeks to promote the development of all small intermediate communities. It further encourages "group help" and a sense of responsibility and human warmth which avoid the cold impersonality of the modern mass welfare techniques.

¹ I. 'The Insiders'. *Universities and Left Review*. p. 32 (London, Winter 1958).

The political philosophy of President Ngo Dinh Diem recognises the equality of man. The term 'equality' as applied to human affairs has three meanings—equality before law, equality of opportunity, and equality of income and wealth. The general principle of equality before law is not likely to be in question in a democratic society. In Vietnam this has been guaranteed by the separation of the judiciary from the executive. This equality in the eyes of law cannot be expected in the Communist countries where men are first executed and then found guilty, where secret trial and confinement and execution without a public trial are the rule.

Equality of opportunity has its own limitations. In the ultimate analysis opportunities are conditioned by the institution of family. Unlike the Communist philosophy where there is conscious effort to replace the family by the commune, a philosophy which has respect for the human being holds that the institution of family is not only necessary but also desirable for the development of the human person. In Communist countries there is effort to reach what they call 'the ideal equality' resulting in the sombre and sordid reality of all opportunities being controlled and guided by the Communist Party.

From the above it does not follow that personalist philosophy stands for unbridled self-aggrandisement. In that case it would only be anarchism. The aim of the personalist philosophy is to reduce progressively social injustice without prejudice to human values. The main social injustice under which the underdeveloped regions are mostly suffering is that there are millions

of people who are living in abject poverty and ignorance while there are a few who are getting almost everything. Economic inequality has been carried to the extreme. The problem of the underdeveloped countries is to make the gap between the haves and the have-nots narrower. This cannot be done by a ruthless process of so-called equalisation through nationalisation of all sectors of life as the institutional framework. Prof. Lionel Robins rightly suggests : "The things which men of goodwill on both sides deplore are better dealt with by attacks on particular abuses and by particular remedies for particular deficiencies, than by overall solutions which, however laudable, the intentions behind them, would have the effect of clamping society into a straitjacket in which just those virtues which we most seek to foster would have the least chance of survival."¹ Personalism recognises that a vast majority of social institutions have just 'grown' as a result of human actions of the past without being guided by any pre-conceived notions and also that many of these institutions are worth preserving. Personalism does not believe in redesigning the society as a whole. The personalist knows how little he knows. He knows that men learn only from mistakes. Accordingly he makes his way, step by step, and is always on the look out for unwanted consequences of his actions. In contradistinction to this approach of the personalist, the Communist wants to rebuild the whole society in accordance with a definite plan or blueprint. As a result there is a conscious effort to remodel human beings through institutional means. Karl Mannheim rightly characterised the problem of the totalitarian State when he wrote : "The political problem...is to

1. *Crossbow*. Vol. 1. No. 1. Bow Group, (London. 1957).

organise human impulses in such a way that they will direct their energy to the right strategic points, and steer the total process of development in the *desired* direction."¹ (Italics mine). The Republic of Vietnam eschews overall social engineering. The tremendous strides that the young Republic has already made are a testimony to its policy.

A policy of liberal credit to those who require finance to stabilise and increase their production has helped indigenous producers to produce more. Up to 1955, most Vietnamese tradesmen acted only as middlemen between foreign wholesale dealers and the consumers. "They were only trying to make big money", said President Diem, "even if they had to break laws. Regrettable excesses were committed and eventually our tradesmen were incapable of competing with foreign commercial firms." He further stressed: "The essential conditions of commercial success are good organisation and perfect knowledge of market."

"Business on a familial level would be obviously unable to compete with organised companies, with numerous branches and agencies. Therefore, we advise our tradesmen to group into powerful companies instead of remaining in their current isolation." People in the same segment of the economy will understand each other's problems well enough to respond to them flexibly. The possibility of the establishment of a viable group life which will exercise effective control over all the participants on the basis of intimate knowledge will be opened. In Vietnam such cooperative organisations have functioned in the past.

1. Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society*, p. 199 Harcourt, Brace and Co. (New York. 1940).

At present there are social needs for which such groups could again be useful. The law of the land is there not only to help the producers and the business men but also to curtail the unscrupulous excesses of the adventurers. The Government and the people of Vietnam are trying to mobilise local talent and energy so that unified commercial markets may develop. The Government is creating and maintaining a tax and fiscal system which diverts resources into modern uses. The State has taken upon itself the responsibility to ensure the building of the required stock of social capital for take-off.

CHAPTER III

Contradictory Attitudes

IN the Asian context the consequences of economic underdevelopment are more tragic than elsewhere. Most Asians, the Asian intellectuals in particular, cherish a stoical resignation, an epicurean indifference and a mystic hope and faith which sap personal energy, suppresses the growth of external life and replaces originality by submission. Indeed the occasional lyricism of the Asians over Asian philosophical thought disperses its substance to the point where the ego is suppressed, imprisoned and sterilised. In this situation the Asian, generally, evinces two opposing attitudes which have obviously been generated by the impact of colonial West on Asia.

One of these two attitudes was that everything Asian was bad and must be eschewed; the other took a rather negative defensive attitude motivated by speculative and sentimental considerations. The Asian intellectual has been only too eager to prove that despite its military, political and economic superiority, the West is culturally and spiritually inferior to Asia. But a culture never remains stagnant. It either surges forward or withdraws itself from the onward march of reality and new vistas for the adventures of the human being. As a matter of fact when a culture recedes it



CONFUCIUS

Portrait at the Temple of
Literature in Vietnam

(by Ma Tuan Ling—
VIII Century)

cuts itself adrift even from the vital current of its own heritage. President Diem is right when he says, "...does not our spiritualism, of which we are so proud, simply conceal a narrow conservation of a form of escapism from concrete responsibility?... Has not Buddhist compassion become a pretext for not practising justice, which must precede all charity? And is not tolerance, which we readily mistake for freedom, the result of paternalistic indulgence?"¹

With some Asian intellectuals it has become almost a fashion to eulogise their ancient heritage. Thanks to Max Weber's analysis in his *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* there is an impression that worldly life was despised and secular activities condemned by Asians of all ages. This view is very popular with most of Asian intellectuals who seldom take the trouble to probe deeper into their history and civilisation, so much so, that the positive, materialistic, secular, energistic and allied institutions and theories of the Asians have often been left completely unnoticed. And this, in spite of the thousand and one wars of Asian history as well as the million instances of sensuality, luxury, corruption and what not prevailing in the Asian societies as of Europe through the ages. We readily neglect the vast corpus of literature bearing on bloodshed, sex life, economic prosperity, domestic bliss, etc., and think that the Asians never thought of this world, never thought of the human being in the concrete and declare that some type of transcendentalism...is the highest and at times the only goal to which the Asians must aspire. A half-hearted mysticism justifying our failure to face life squarely leads us easily to a sphere where the

1. Address delivered at Seoul University, September 21, 1957.

individual human being loses his existence into the mumbo-jumbo of a sham mysticism. The certificates that these half-hearted pseudo-intellectuals get from their fellow-travellers in the West have created a world of make-believe. The Communist intellectuals are adding their own contributions to this pathetic mental and spiritual confusion. They equate culture with folk-art and folk-dances, when Communism wants to put back the cloak of culture. To them truth has been discovered once and for all, and the pattern of culture and civilisation has been set for all time to come by historical dialectics. Against any independent pursuit of knowledge, especially in the field of sociology and the humanities, there is the inevitable reply that the Asian intellectuals must toe the line set by the ancient seers.

Whatever the reason, a sort of *persecution mania* seems to have taken hold of the intellectuals in Asia. The collective will is assumed to be transmitted by some process of osmosis, to the ruling clique, which supposedly govern for the individual's good. We forget that true individuality lies in our power to exercise our judgments to the best of our discretion. We move from the infra-red of collectivism to the ultra-violet of particularism and forget our own individual existence. In the name of the collective we are often prone to sacrifice the individual. In our zeal to bring an omnibus solution of all human problems we hypostatise the collective and forget Henry George's warning. "Social reform not to be secured by noise and shouting ; by complaints and denunciations ; by the formation of parties, or the making of revolutions; but by awakening of thought and progress of ideas. Until there be correct thought, there cannot

be right action ; and when there is correct thought, right action will follow." There cannot be any correct thought where we surrender all our capacity to think to the past or to the Party. The 19th century Indian savant, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, possibly, talked about the intellectual atmosphere of the whole of Asia when he wrote : "The learned Pandits of India think that whatever can be thought in the future and whatever is being thought now has already been thought by our ancient seers." If the *Pandits* of Asia find anything in modern knowledge whose germs they can discover in their ancient books they, instead of appreciating the findings of modern intellect, at once, jump up and say, "Victory to our ancient heritage." The group of thinkers who eulogise the ancient heritage of Asia also despises Western technology and advocates 'village economy' and lives in a make-believe world where life would be simple and thought would be high. They forget that though it is a truism that plain living may produce high thinking yet it is no less true to hold that poor living has a tendency to produce poor thinking. A personalist does not view all things social—past, present, and future—through the mental framework of evolutionism. To him any unitary theory—evolutionary or otherwise—of society and of the changes that occur in society is untenable. He further recognises that every positive change in society has its origin in a specific innovation either achieved by some individuals within the society or borrowed by some individuals from another society. But unlike those who hold the 'biological theory of innovation' and try to explain the stagnation of different societies in a particular stage by the failure of those societies to produce innovators of note, a personalist recognises that it is impossible to

explain in biological terms actual occurrences of innovativeness.¹ Every normal human being is biologically capable of innovation. In actuality, however, very few members of any society are inclined to attempt anything new. Thanks to certain socio-historical conditions, the traditional ideal man in Asia, at least during the past few centuries, is a passive conformist to tradition. The more closely he adheres to traditional forms of conduct, the more closely, he approaches the ideal man in Asia. President Diem recognises that the bold humanitarian heritage of Asia was degraded into a plea for blind conformism. Aestheticism and asceticism became feeble rationalisations of unwillingness or inability to tackle life with zest and self-confidence. The vital current of Asian culture which recognised that the individual was by nature courageous and capable of rising to moral heights dried up because of centuries of foreign domination and social stagnation. Asian philosophers recognised even in the ancient days that man is by nature independent and individually self-reliant; he has great capacity for moral courage as distinct from the simple, brutish ability to endure socially imposed physical hardships and to submit, when occasion demands, to violent death. It is such a man, the man of moral courage and stamina, who has the capacity to be lord and master of all that he surveys. To a personalist the worth of any individual is measured by his accomplishments in this life—by how he fully utilises his capacity. Men exert themselves as a means to the end of achieving a fuller individuality and a fulfilment of their being. Depending upon time, place, and

1. cf. Homer Barnett, *Innovation: The Basis of Cultural Change*: McGraw-Hill Book Co., (New York. 1953).

circumstances, the means may be the taming of the wilderness to the end that future generations may prosper, the achieving of national independence to the end that the people of one's nation may live in freedom, the achieving of high position to the end that—among other things—one's name will be remembered by posterity, or the extension of knowledge and achievements of values to the end that the welfare of man may be improved.

It is essential to the development of any significant number of enterprising men that the channels of communication between men be free and unhampered. Wherever those channels have been monopolised by a single organisation, such as the State, the monopoly has invariably been used to maintain the intellectual and social *status quo*. This end is accomplished by rigorous indoctrination and by the preservation of the body of knowledge and ideas from *contamination*. The intention to keep the main body of human knowledge confined to an esoteric group is the motive-force behind the cry for maintaining the ancient way of life without any change and the contempt with which the conservatives look at modern scientific achievements. The group of conservatives get additional impetus and argument for their withdrawal into a remote past when they find that modern science has not been an unmixed good ; man has often made bad use of the greatest achievements of human knowledge as knowledge very often got divorced from value.

Western technology is showing some disastrous results. Man is being atomised. This has produced two

divergent attitudes in the Western man. Some hold that it is in the nature of man to be sick. They are the people who take self-denigration as their last refuge. They renounce all authority and accept anarchy, taking upon themselves the entire weight and suffering of the sickness which has infested mankind as if it were a burden to be suffered until it destroys them. They are the men to whom, in short, the sickness of the present-day society is not a subject for reprobation, but their own destiny, their own last refuge; and to them their humiliation is a pleasure, and almost an exaltation of their own lack of support. This new cultural experience has left its mark on poetry and art where *self-denigration* in its most visible forms, now deeply suggestive, now bold and pugnacious is vividly portrayed. It is said that the West has got completely sick as it has pursued only rationalism and material wealth and welfare. "The arts, as well as science and technology have enormously extended man's reach; but in the course of and through this extension, they threaten to tear away the basis from which they spring. They are about to destroy the human personality."¹ Such fears are not wholly groundless. Even in the psychosocial sciences such a tendency can be discerned. Sorokin is not completely off the track when he writes: "Prevalent psychosocial science views psychosocial reality as purely sensory phenomena; and adequate knowledge of it as a systematised body of propositions in all its forms—plain observational, clinical, experimental, statistical—assisted by logico-mathematical reasoning, as the only way in which cognition of the total psychosocial reality can be

1. Erich Kahler, *The Tower and the Abyss or the Transformation of man*. Pp. 182-183. Jonathan Cape (London. 1958).

gained."¹ Technological perfection in the West has led most of the Western psychosocial researchers to treat even the individual human being as a robot or as a mere bundle of reflexes—conditioned and otherwise. What has come into being may be characterised in Sorokin's words as "sensate culture". "Scientific methods streamline our thinking; machines and gadgets and typified mass products streamline our daily moves; commercial fashions and functional simplifications streamline attitudes and characters."² Owing to extreme departmentalisation and specialisation of functions the attitude of the average Western man towards democracy has also changed. 'Equality' now means the extinction of individuality. In the West there is a tendency towards more and more extroversion of man and multiform collectivisation.

Even family life has been affected by Western technological revolution. "...Uncertainty as to social position, combined with the possibility or hope of rapid social advance, leads parents in certain social strata to largely unconscious changes in their child-rearing practices. The child is no longer trained to an unquestioned ideal as perhaps his parents were; he is trained to do the 'best possible' in a situation. The decline of specifically defined goals and clear purposes, can easily make the young vulnerable to apathy. This in turn may lead them to interpret the world in such a way as to justify apathy raised to a political style. The young may argue like this: 'No one can do anything in politics anyway, when the point is, 'I cannot imagine myself doing

1. Pitrim A. Sorokin. *Fads and Foibles in Modern Sociology and Related Sciences*. pp. 315-316. Henry Regnery Company: (Chicago, 1956.)

2. Erich Kahler. *The Tower and the Abyss*. p. 29.

anything, in politics or elsewhere.' "1 In short, modern Western civilisation could produce apathetic individuals.²

This is cited by the conservative to prove that the whole of Western civilisation is bad and should be despised. The critics of Western civilisation have unwittingly contributed to the strengthening of the conservative outlook in Asia.

Justification for the negative attitude of defence which some of the Asians showed to their cultural heritage during colonial rule was not impossible. Their main concern was, above all, to prove to themselves and to the victors that brutal military defeat and political and economic subjugation did not imply Asia's cultural inferiority. They went even to the extent of claiming that though the West was prosperous materially, Asia was more civilised, cultured and moral.

As against the attitude of the conservatives of Asia there is the other attitude—the attitude that despises everything Asian. Asia is old. There is nothing worth preserving in the ancient heritage of Asia. Asians must forget everything that has come of their past. They fell an easy prey to Western colonial

1. David Riesman in Collaboration with Revel Denny and Nathan Glazer *The Lonely Crowd*. pp. 3-4, Yale University Press, New Haven. 7th impression. (March, 1956).

2. "The most striking characteristic of the apathetic patient is his visible lack of emotion and drive. At first glance he may seem to be depressed; closer scrutiny, however, reveals lack of affection. He appears slowed up in the psychic and motor responses; he shows an emptiness of expression and mask-like faces....They behave very well in the ward, complying with all the rules and regulations. They rarely complain and make no demands....these patients had no urge to communicate their sufferings and no insight into their condition." Quoted by Riesman, *Ibid.* p. 290 from Ralph Greenson, *The Psychology of Apathy, Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, (New York. 1949).

expansionism as they clung to their outmoded and anachronistic ways of life. If they tried to catch up with the West—and 'catching up with the West' meant accepting the Western way of life—they would be able to resist aggressive and expanding Western colonialism.

These groups of intellectuals also have their supporters in the West. One of these intellectuals went to the length of saying that the Indo-Gangetic plain had proved to be the vampire of all civilisations.¹

In the context of the present-day international situation, it is suggested that Asia must go West all out if she wants to resist the onslaught of the totalitarian juggernaut. In the teeming millions of Asia mainly illiterate, superstitious, poverty-stricken, living in bamboo-built or mud-built villages, haunted by the demons of cholera, famine and pestilence nothing but a symbol of what a disgruntled reviewer has described as "that tremendous bore, the wisdom of the West" is discerned by these intellectuals. A recent writer on Indian affairs has written, to take a typical example, "The Indian tradition of leadership lends itself to authoritarian or status concepts but not readily to the modern Western tradition of party struggle. Communist theory, by its emphasis upon leadership of the whole 'people' and 'duty' as against an emphasis on group interest and individual right has a natural advantage in relation to Asiatic authoritarian traditions in China, Southeast Asia."² It follows by implication, though the

1. cf. Nirad C. Chaudhuri, *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*. Macmillan and Co. (London, 1951)

2. D. Mackenzie Brown, *Traditional Concepts of Indian Leadership*. Article included in *Leadership and Political Institutions in India*, edited by Richard L. Park and Irene Tinker. p. 17. Oxford University Press. Reprinted in India, 1960.

author himself recognises that "At least in India there are signs that religious and democratic values which decry the use of violence and decry ruthless authoritarianism will bring a rejection of these features of communist approach," that if the Asians want to resist communism in Asia, they must give up their traditions and westernise themselves thoroughly.

Whether the tradition of Asia is authoritarian or not can only be determined by a study of her social, philosophical and religious systems. The religious systems of Asia are as much authoritarian as they are anywhere. As a matter of fact all the great religious systems of the world have emanated from Asia. The philosophical systems of Asia have advocated as much authoritarianism as has been done by the western philosophies. There are as many philosophical systems advocating authoritarianism as there are advocating non-authoritarianism. The problem is whether in Asian social attitudes we can discern predominantly authoritarian traits or not. Even if the Asian social attitudes were characterised by their emphasis on respect for authority, that by itself would not call for their rejection. In the final analysis who does not have a respect for authority? As a matter of fact civic order would be impossible if there were no respect for authority.

"On the one hand, an individual holding his position and power by recognised tradition or established situation is an authority with subordinates, rather than a leader with followers; on the other hand, if he is mere agitator appealing to the passing emotions of the mob, he is considered a demagogue, since his followers

are not independent agents, acting of their own free will. True leadership exists only when persons follow an individual from free choice and upon rational grounds rather than by blind hysteria.¹ "True leadership" is a limiting concept as the expressions "free choice" and "rational grounds" acquire significance only with the development of human experience. Moreover, if we define a "true leader" as has been defined above, it will be difficult for us to distinguish between a democratic leader and a totalitarian leader. "Rational grounds" is a very vague expression and "free choice" can be interpreted in any way one likes. The distinction between a "true leader" and a "dictator" can have meaning only when we introduce value considerations in our judgments of leaders. The leader of 1984² who allows "rational free choice to his subjects" is a *true* leader.

The difference between a democratic leader and an authoritarian leader does not consist merely in the sanction which they get from recognised tradition or established situation; it consists in their value attitudes, in their attitudes to the individual. In most of the modern democracies the leader holds his power because of a recognised tradition and an established situation. But that does not make him an authoritarian. The authoritarian has scarcely any respect for recognised traditions as to him recognised tradition is that which suits his purpose.

One fact we must not forget when we discuss traditional Asian way of life. Asian countries are primarily village-centred. Their economy is still

1. Ibid. p. 3.

2. cf. George Orwell *1984*, Secker and Warburg, (London, 1950) New Edition.

primarily agricultural. This is true about Vietnam as well as most of the Asian countries. The village has played three important roles in Vietnam from time immemorial. We have already given a sketch of how the villager participated in politics only when his political existence was questioned. From the point of view of administration, politics and economics the Vietnamese villages have distinctive roles to play.

"For centuries," says President Diem, "Vietnamese social life was based on a federation of villages whose business was conducted by the common people ; in such system there was no room for 'personalities' for any length of time. That system worked smoothly thanks to a strong spiritual unity which was a counterweight to centrifugal tendencies, it also met economic conditions of its time. These conditions have altered. Moral cohesion which was at the base of that extensive decentralisation was strongly shaken by weapons or ideas from the West."¹ Does this imply that President Diem is a revivalist ? He recognises that Asia is passing from one civilisation to another. He is neither a revivalist nor one who would like to supplant Asian Civilisation by Western Civilisation. He declared : "It is obvious that we must not allow fatalism and defeatism to overwhelm us. Neither must we be deluded into adopting seemingly easy solutions which consist in imitating Western methods blindly."² Asia must not copy the West. Things copied can never be fully assimilated into the body politic of a country with a different civilisation.

1. Speech delivered at the Parliamentary Luncheon. Canberra, September 3, 1957.

2. Speech delivered before the National Press Club. Washington, D.C., May 10, 1957.

The technical knowledge of the West is not however an exclusive property of the West. It belongs to humanity. Advance in science shows an immanent tendency "towards an unlimited and almost automatic extension of technical knowledge." Turgot observes that in science a chain of interdependent truths is formed, and that in it men have only to recognise all the steps they have made to pile truths on truths. And it refuses to accept all esoteric confinement. This aspect of modern technology makes it detached from the soil of its origin and flourish in other climates.

The dangers of an uncritical and indiscriminate acceptance of modern Western technology are always there. The dangers of the haste with which Japan industrialised herself are too obvious to be mentioned. An authority on Japan's economic development and history observes: "In Japan. . . rapid changes in the technical equipment and the economic organisation or society were achieved as the result of deliberate policy of the ruling classes. . . ." These changes were imposed on people who adhered to ancient morals. The result for a long time was a strange union between hurried advance in technology and imperialist nationalism.

President Diem on the contrary seeks a real renaissance in Asia. He is convinced that this would be the only answer to the totalitarians and the aculturists. ". . . It is necessary for the Asian intellectual to go back to the authentic sources of Asian thought. At the same time, we must draw inspiration from the permanent values of Western culture to provide statesmen with guiding principles in their efforts to solve the problem of Asia without losing their spiritual

origins."¹ There is nothing wrong with Western civilisation and Western technology as such. And the connection between technology and Western civilisation is not an inseparable connection. An uncritical acceptance of Western civilisation and technology by the Asians will yield disastrous results. Superimposition of Western civilisation on Asia is not what President Diem desires. Far from it. "The Asian people, long humiliated in their aspiration, their human dignity injured, and no longer, as in the past, resigned and passive," he declares, "... are impatient. They clamour for rapid and immediate political independence." Again: "The leaders of Asia, whatever their ideologies, are all faced with the tragic urgency of economic and social problems of their countries."² To meet this urgency successfully the help of technology must be taken. The force of Western technique "which we so much despise, while others admire without reservation, contains a creative spirit which justifies it."³ But Western technology will have to be introduced into Asia with caution. It should not be allowed to thrust itself on unwilling people or to challenge the vital and essential tenets of Asian culture. Mere economic independence is not enough, and that, too, will be a far cry if the immediate relief to the people is forgotten or shelved in the hope that some day the underdeveloped countries would be able to catch up with the West. In our anxiety to overtake or catch up with the West let us not forget Keynes' prophetic words: "In the long

1. Address delivered before the Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi, November 5, 1957.

2. Reply at a Press Conference held in Bando Hotel, Seoul, September 21, 1957.

3. Address delivered before Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi, November 5, 1957.

run we all shall be dead." The economic development of the underdeveloped regions must be carried out with developments in the other spheres of life. The Asians must "step up the spiritual and moral values and orient ourselves to the respect of the human person in its transcendency."¹

President Diem recognises that Asian culture has fallen into desuetude. Its old laws and customs are proving to be the most terrible of all *laws*. By his exclusively inward orientation the moral man of Asia gave scope, if not sanction, to an immoral society. He withdrew himself into the cocoon of self-denigration and self-mortification with the hope that some day his righteous attitude will be vindicated. The Asian leaders must come forward to meet the challenge of the day and solve the urgent problems of the Asian people without any loss to the vital current of Asian culture. As a matter of fact here the creative culture of Asia would be a great help to her leaders. President Diem is convinced that Asians have recognised the dignity of the human being from time immemorial and that this recognition is the vital force which if rejuvenated, will prove to be the most effective weapon against totalitarian onslaughts. Totalitarianism is antithetical to the spirit of Asia. Signs of Asia's resurgence are already visible everywhere in this vast continent. But this Asia will not be a revival of old Asia. This Asia will be a mature Asia capable of maintaining the dignity of the human being and the spirit of democracy.

1. Reply at a Press Conference held in Bando Hotel, Seoul, September 21, 1957.

CHAPTER IV

Struggle for Power

WITH the discovery of weapons of mass destruction and the danger of unpredictably extensive involvement, the politicians of the countries which will play a major role in the event of a global war are reluctant to precipitate a headlong clash. It can reasonably be supposed that the great powers would try to avoid any direct armed conflict in the near future. But the weapons of mass destruction have, even without their actual use, profound effect on the internal conditions of the very countries which do not possess them.

A few years ago Archibald Robertson wrote in a letter to the *New Statesman and Nation*: "Hitherto it has always been assumed that cruelest of all wars is a civil war. So long as war was fought with weapons that dealt destruction only to individuals or small bodies of combatants, that was no doubt true, but with the advent of weapons of mass destruction the reverse is the case. No side in a civil war can afford to use atomic bombs or bacteria, for the simple reason that it would thereby deal mass destruction to its partisans as well as its enemies—not to mention the country which aspires to control." Contemporary history gives enough support to this view. An ideological and political battle is

going on throughout the democratic world. Sometimes it even bursts into a civil war here and there. The so-called underdeveloped countries have become the ground for a fierce political and ideological conflict with occasional diversions into armed conflicts.

In the so-called Socialist world, all political and ideological conflicts are ruthlessly suppressed, though in spite of ruthless suppression the people have raised their voice against totalitarian oppression. The ideological battle between totalitarianism and democracy is not a problem in the countries where democratic values have struck root, nor is it an internal problem in the Socialist world where a ruthless totalitarian rule prevails. The real victims of this political and ideological conflict are, however, the so-called underdeveloped countries, especially those exposed to armed threat from totalitarianism. The two alternative ideals—the democratic and totalitarian—have been seriously posed in those countries. In addition to these two there is a third group—the group of revivalists. While no flight of thought, no poetic promenade, no sneak through the door or peep out of the window, in the pre-Darwinian dungeon called Dialectical Materialism, will be conceivable, the Revivalists will bring almost the same state of affairs in their antediluvian Eldorado. In either case man will be reduced to a robot and his dignity will suffer.

Though the Asians have lost sight of the vital current of their tradition, "the traditional notion of the transcendence of the human soul seen in a glimpse by Indian speculation, of equality of all men preached by Buddhism, of freedom born of the spontaneous emergence of Taoist being, of the cosmic and individual

virtues of the Confucian Jen and of the Kien-Ngai of Motsu" recognised the dignity of the human Being.¹ The task of democracy is to make "the human being the source of freedom and creation, the very core of political, economic, social and cultural structure...."² And further: "Democracy is not a group of texts and laws, to be read and applied. It is essentially a state of mind, a way of living with the utmost respect towards every human being, ourselves as well as our neighbours. It requires constant practice, flexible and patient attention, in order to achieve a harmonious balance between the desirable diverse conceptions of man and the inevitable complexity of reality. Democracy demands from each of us, then, infinitely more effort, understanding and *good will than any other form of government.*" "Democracy is essentially a permanent effort to find the right means for assuring to all citizens the right of free development and of maximum initiative, responsibility and spiritual life."³ The basis for such a democracy can only be a spiritual one—a line which the human person follows in his innermost reality as in his free pursuit of intellectual, moral and spiritual perfection.

"Among the works of man," observed Mill, "which human life is rightly employed in perfecting and beautifying, the first in importance surely is man himself. Supposing it were possible to get houses built, corn grown, battles fought, causes tried and even churches erected and prayers said, by machinery—by automatons in human form—it would be considerable

1. Address delivered at Seoul University, September 21, 1957.
2. Proclamation of the Republic of Vietnam, October 26, 1957.
3. Message to the National Assembly on the Foundation of the Constitution, April 17, 1956.

loss to exchange for these automatons even the men and women who at present inhabit the more civilised parts of the world, and who assuredly are but starved specimens of what nature can and will produce. Human nature is not a machine to be built after a model, and set to do exactly the work prescribed for it, but a tree, which requires to grow and develop itself on all sides, according to the tendency of the inward forces which make it a living thing."¹ A State or a society which does not allow human beings to grow according to the tendency of the inward forces which make them living beings is an inhuman State or society. It is man himself who is the enemy of man. "Only man can be an enemy of man ; only he can rob him of the meaning of his acts and his life because it also belongs to him to confirm it in its existence, to recognise it in actual fact as freedom . . . my freedom, in order to fulfil itself, requires that it emerges into an open future ; it is other men who open the future to me, it is they who, setting up the world of tomorrow, define my future ; but if, instead of allowing me to participate in this constructive movement, they oblige me to consume my transcendence in vain, if they keep me below the level which they have conquered and on the basis of which new conquests will be achieved, then they are cutting me off from the future, they are changing me into a thing. Life is occupied in both perpetuating itself and in surpassing itself ; if all it does is to maintain itself, then living is only not dying and human existence is indistinguishable from absurd vegetation."²

1. John Stuart Mill. *On Liberty* p. 173. Oxford University Press, (London, 1948). First Published in 1859.

2. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Ethics of Ambiguity*. pp. 82-83 Philosophical Library, (New York, 1948).

Individuals that are no more than nominal contours of transeuncies, whose behaviour is the complex resultant of transeunt causes nominally included within their contours, are amoral. Conviction in the essentially ethical individual, the concrete human being, forbids President Diem to accept unity at the cost of national independence and cultural diversity. Indeed the creative spirit of man would, in his opinion, lose all its significance if all diversity were eliminated. But too much emphasis on diversity also leads us to ridiculous consequences. A life 'nasty, brutish and short' affords no opportunity for improvement ; and insofar as man's life approximates to such a state he is incapable of attaining moral status.

Traditional individualism, which, following De. Tocqueville, should be better called 'egotism' signifies a passionate and exaggerated love of self. Such an excessive self-love leads man to measure everything with his own self as the axis of reference and to prefer himself to everything in the world. "Individualism is a mature and calm feeling, which disposes each member of the community to sever himself from the mass of his fellow-creatures ; and to draw apart with his family and friends ; so that, after he has thus formed a little circle of his own, he willingly leaves society at large to itself. . . ."¹ Individualism might have been the guiding spirit of Western liberal democracy which flourished in the days of economic complacency for some who could afford to leave their society at large to itself. In the context of present-day Asian atmosphere such an individualism will not only fail to yield any result but also give easy sail to the totalitarians. Those

1. De Tocqueville. *De la Democratie en Amerique*. Vol. iii, bk. ii, ch. ii.

who leave the society at large to itself at any period of time think that human beings are not to be treated as ends in themselves but as mere means for attaining a guarantee to live a *peaceful* and *comfortable* life. The individual has nothing to do for the society at large. He only acts for his immediate environment and that again he does for a limited period of time till he guarantees a comfortable living for his family and his immediate circle of acquaintances. Such an individualism which forms the core of traditional liberalism is a travesty of the idea of the human being. To have concern and respect for the human being is to be one's own self and to be all else, it is to be humanity, it is to be the Universe. And there is no other way of being all but to give oneself to all, and when all shall be in all, all will be in each one of us. The apocatastasis is more than a mere mystical dream; it is a rule of action, it is a beacon of high exploits.

The creative spirit of man, if it is truly creative, must manifest itself through diversity. Mechanistic determinism might assemble more or less permanent conformation of events, capable of more or less independent survival in a changing environment. But such assemblages would not at all be effective with regard to individuals. The self-determination of the individual would, then, be merely nominal. Moral evolution presupposes a certain privation of effectiveness and individuality, conjoined with the availability of a capacity to transcend limitations. The human being is not a mere 'thing'. It is an 'agent'. The individuality of 'things' rests on exclusion. The individuality of 'agents' is enriched by

mutuality, and in the end constituted by it. Out of this arises the morality of the individual. The human being is essentially moral.

Commonplace morality is merely dogmatic, and for this what is essential is obedience to commandment. It seldom demands a clear knowledge of the foundation of all morality which consists in a recognition of the human being. Asians recognised that morality does not consist in mere obedience to law or custom. "Many people, especially women, perform trivial rites at time of sickness, marriage, childbirth and travel. But these bear little fruit. The rite that bears great fruit is the rite inspired by piety. . . ."¹ Morality does not consist in following the venerated authorities alone. Moral duties promulgated by venerated authorities must be critically ordered. They must have an intellectual foundation in adequate knowledge of man's being and predicament. It is in the light of such a knowledge that morality has significance, or else morality is degraded into mere obedience to law and custom. Dogmatic morality may give us contentment ; but it never makes us a moral agent. Kant stated a basic truth when he said: ". . . In fact, we find that the more a cultivated reason applies itself with deliberate purpose to the enjoyment of life and happiness, so much the more does the man fail of true satisfaction. And from this circumstance there arises in many, if they are candid enough to confess it, a certain degree of *misology*, that is, hatred of reason, especially in the case of those who are most experienced in the use of it, because after calculating all the advantages they derive, I do not say from invention of all the arts of

1. Asoke's *Rock Edic*, ix.

common luxury, but even from the sciences (which seem to them to be after all only a luxury of the understanding), they find that they have, in fact, only brought more trouble on their shoulders, rather than gained in happiness; and they end by envying, rather than despising, the more common stamp of men who keep closer to the guidance of mere instinct, and do not allow their reason much influence on their conduct."¹ Kant's diagnosis of the anti-intellectuals holds good even today. The anti-intellectuals forget that there is a wide gulf between human happiness and contentment. There is a worthy purpose of human existence for which, reason is quite properly designed, and to which, therefore, "as a supreme condition the private purposes of man must for the most part be subordinated."

Reason applied to human affairs must be guided by values or else it tends to yield diabolical results. ". . . The function of reason in conduct is to clarify and define the ends of endeavour and to relate them to one another, to disclose the nature of the forces, internal and external, necessary for their realisation, to insist on the widest consideration of all the claims that are relevant and greatest impartiality in dealing with them, and, in cases of conflict whether within the individual or between individuals, to avoid the use of repression or force and to seek rather to evoke willing acceptance. Desire or preferences so informed or guided would be rational desires or preferences."² Reason has a place,

1. Kant Immanuel, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Ethics*. Trans. Abbot, Thomas Kingsmill. p. 13. Longmans, Green & Co., (London, 1946). Tenth Edition. New Impression.

2. Morris Ginsberg, *Reason and Unreason in Society*. p. 245. Heinemann, (London, 1956).

no doubt, but its role is confined to examination of the consequences that may follow one's pursuing a certain end; the end, however, is chosen by desire, intuition—whatever one may call that subjective non-rational motive—but certainly not reason. I choose end "A" because its pursuit (reason tells me) leads to consequences "Z". This terminal point in the process of end-seeking appears to commend itself to my reason and therefore is adjudged 'good' by me. But closer examination reveals limitations of this role of reason. It only lays bare the consequences, and, if, ultimately, I choose the consequences of "Z" rather than those of "Y", it is not because my reason dictates so, but because my desires or intuitions drive me. Reason may defer the final act of choosing, but it can never determine or dictate it. Reason does not work by itself, its motive force is provided by interest, desire, instinct, love—some nonrational driving force. Man is more than a mere psychological being. He is more than a mere organism. He is a person. His spiritual nature must not be neglected. In his spiritual existence lies an unconditional meaning—his personality owns an unconditional dignity.

For the last few centuries the West has been concentrating its attention on mechanisms to explain, and techniques to understand, the human being. The vision that gave meaning to that quest has by now been practically exhausted. Now the realization seems to be that of the need for man to abandon the cult of seeing himself as a machine—the nihilistic philosophy of man. The nature of man is midway between his biological essence and the perfection of his spirit. His meaning consists in the mortal journey to the perfection of infinite

knowledge, infinite joy and infinite bliss. Such progress is the inherent destiny of man in which his essence attains ever-growing, self-transcending realization and fuller meaning. This aspect of the human being has for long been neglected. For "The apparent pointlessness of life . . . and its lack of significance and purpose are due to the fact that . . . the prevailing cosmology is what Mr. Gerald Heard has called the 'mechanomorphic' cosmology of modern science. The universe is regarded as a great machine pointlessly grinding its way toward ultimate stagnation and death; men are tiny offshoots of the universal machine, running down to their own private death; physical life is the only real life; mind is a mere product of body; personal success and material well-being are ultimate measures of value, the things for which a reasonable person should live."¹ It is because of this mechanomorphic idea that we renounce the infeasible rights of the individual and fail either to produce new ideas or make the current ones serviceable for new objectives. The prevailing ideas get more and more authority, take on a more and more one-sided development, and live on until they have produced their last and most dangerous consequence—totalitarian tyranny. The rational is made the foundation of everything and freedom of thought goes out of fashion because the majority renounces the privilege of thinking as free individuals and allow itself to be guided by groups and cliques. The power of analysis becomes the highest achievable intellectual power, and the rational the foundation of everything. Reason debases value to

1. Aldous Huxley: *Ends and Means*. pp. 123 f. Chatto and Windus, (London, 1938).

mere expediency and the human being to nothing more than a special conglomeration of cells. Human action thus loses all its significance as all values are reduced to mere expediency. To make only the rational the foundation of all human action is to debase man. An unrestricted pursuit of power is the result inherent in the pursuit of dry reason to solve human problems. But reason is not an end in itself. At its best it is an effective instrument, (perhaps the best instrument) for solving problems ; it is efficacious only when it is subordinated to the highest 'value' —the human being. Personalism insists that it would be insane idolatry to attempt renunciation of modern science and adoption of the superstitions of the past for actual knowledge. The root of knowledge which lies in man's love for spiritual perfection will become dry if we despise the pursuit of knowledge. We are to sow the roots to chew upon in a fine austerity of spiritual fervour. Intellectual curiosity must be extended into spiritual prehension and spiritual prehension must give rise to intellectual curiosity and disciplined thought. Or, else intellectual scepticism will decline to pyrrhonism or superstition ; and ritualistic religion will easily masquerade as spiritual prehension.

When morality gets inverted and becomes immanent in brute force owing to a naturalistic view of man, moral motives no longer speak in their own voice. The voice becomes a handmaid of motives which take advantage of the existing immoralities and tries to enslave man into a new type of immorality. Lenin declared : "The dictatorship of the proletariat is a scientific term stating the class in question and the particular form of

State authority, called dictatorship, namely, authority based not on law, not on elections, but directly on the armed force of some portion of the population." Lenin possibly thought that this would bring the liberation of the people. We are at least told by the Communist propagandists that they respect the human being; and that all their efforts are for the happiness of the human being. But the human being about whom they talk is not the human being we know. He is not what Robespierre described when he said: "But it exists, I assure you, pure and sensitive souls; it exists, that passion, so tender, imperious, irresistible, the torment and joy of generous hearts, that deep horror of tyranny, that compassionate zeal for the oppressed, that sublime and sacred love of humanity, without which a great revolution is but a manifest crime that destroys another crime that exists, that generous ambition to found selfishness of men not degraded, which finds its celestial delight in the calm of pure conscience and the charming spectacle of the public good. You feel it burning at this very moment in your soul." Along with the noble traits of man there exist in him the baser elements. No man, and the product of no man's labour either, is like a perfectly thought-out book. The establishment of common rules of life, the introduction of a governing authority and obedience to it in accordance with the dictates of reason: all this implies something more than self-interest, something more than the laws of history or laws of nature. Creative attainments of mankind—be they artistic, intellectual, ethical or material—show their full and true effects only when the continued existence and development of civilization have been secured on a mental disposition which has a respect for the human being. Morality, justice, right—

everything follows from the concept of the human being.

Man is a natural being. But unlike the inorganic natural beings, man cannot be equated with a conglomeration of atoms. The metaphysical subject being the 'subject' which uses and understands language must be distinguished from the empirical subject, which is part of a world describable in language. The metaphysical subject is like the eye in relation to the field of sight; the eye cannot see itself. The human person cannot be resolved into intellectual relations. It is at once a subjective and bodily existence. The relation of the human person with the world is not purely external as the so-called realists would like us to believe. Neither is it purely internal as the idealists advocate. It is a dialectic exchange. It is a relation of ascension. Whenever the human person directs its illumination, nature, the body or matter inserts its opacity. Nature ceaselessly threatens to besiege the universe of the personal. We all belong to nature in a highly specialised sense. But only when we can turn this *belonging to nature* into the *mastery over nature*, the human person achieves its proper glory. The human person is transcendental. The solipsism of the human person when strictly carried out coincides with pure realism. The solipsistic ego shrinks to an extensionless point. There only remains the reality co-ordinated with it.

Personalism should not be confused with individualism. Individualism is the centralisation of the individual in himself. Individualists think that the individual is limited by the *other*. But the 'person' is a presence directed towards the world and the other. The

presence of other persons do not limit the personality of a human person. As a matter of fact it enables the 'person' to be and to grow. The human person realises its fuller being in being known by others. In its turn, it is conscious of itself in knowing others. The human person is capable of detachment from *itself*. It is capable of decentralising *itself* in order to become available to others. The Asian tradition has always recognised the value and reality of such self-dispossessed persons. This is what the Asian thinkers have meant by "overcoming of self-love." This is the vision which binds the Asian thinkers together. Asian cultural tradition has never attached importance to the existence of a being in an impersonal world—a world which Heidegger calls 'One's world.' As a matter of fact the Asian thinkers have thought that such an existence belonged to a lower level. Such an existence is insensate and brutish. The sign of the first awakening of the human person is the consciousness of an anonymous existence and of the degradation that it represents.

It is at this stage that the nature of the human person discloses its fundamental tension. On the one hand there is the tendency to affirm personal absolutes without limitation, and on the other there is a tendency to create a universal union with the world of persons. This union should not be confused with the submersion of diversity in identity. If every human person is nothing more than what he *makes of himself*, there cannot be any humanity. If every human person is not something more than what he *makes of himself*, 'community', 'family', 'history', etc. will lose all their significance. In the process of *making himself* every

human person creates something other than himself. He has to integrate in himself what he has created, what he is. But that is not all. He also integrates in himself what he has not created and what he is not by way of negative prehensions. If he goes for excessive individuation, he leads himself to suicide. And insufficient individuation also has the same result. "When a man has become detached from society, he encounters less resistance to suicide in himself, and he does so likewise when social integration is too strong."¹ A collective conscience which is either too strong or too weak is an impediment to the fulfilment of the human person. To sacrifice the objective value of truth for the sake of emotional intensity of the knowing subject is self-destructive. To forget the emotional intensity of the knowing subject is to reduce the subject to an automaton, objective and objectifying, and to kill the creative principle of the human person. Freedom and value are constitutives of the very essence of the human person.

The human being is essentially moral and creative. President Diem is convinced that if the human being is not made the ultimate standard of all our actions, our actions will yield results like "the vagary of an absent-minded Creator who takes great pains in creating a tail and then suddenly finds that the head is missing." The human being is not a machine whose sole function is to assimilate abstract generalities of Nature or of Ideas. The human being changes "the heart of its heart". The Kingdom of Heaven lies within him. He changes the world and makes his

1. Emile Durkheim *Suicide*. p. 364. Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., (London, 1952).

Kingdom and thence radiates over the world a transfigured Kingdom. This transfiguration is decided by personal choice. But this personal choice is not divested of values. It is essentially valuational. This transcendent and transcendental human being was recognised in the philosophies of Asia from time immemorial. Delving deep into the spirit of Asia and rescuing a great force from degradation and disrepute into which it has fallen are imperative tasks devolving on Asian intellectuals. The task is that of "making the human being the source of freedom and creation, the very core of political, economic, social and cultural structure"¹

And this cannot be done if the human being is not thought of as something possessing value in itself. From respect for the human being originates activities directed to the improvement of the living conditions of individuals, of society, of nations and of humanity. One, however, cannot have any respect for the human being, if one does not think the individual man to be free to choose his own destiny.

The idea of the freedom of the individual, long recognised in Asia in its philosophies and social traditions, did not emerge in Christian Europe until Milton interpreted "Give unto Caesar that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" to mean "My conscience I have from God and I cannot therefore give it to Caesar". Not until then had the ideal of the uniqueness of the individual as a source of authority and an ultimate fulfilment transcending the community become relevant to the political ideal of the Christian

1. Address before National Assembly of Korea, Seoul, September 19, 1957.

West. Besides, the Christian European tradition did not put the principle of liberty in conjunction with the principle of equality. Even today the average European beholds around him the gigantic forms of monolithic social integration favoured by technology. He realizes the advantage given by the geographical spaces in which his medieval sense of continuity is lost. Goethe clearly anticipated this situation in the lines uttered by Faust shortly before his blindness: "All I have done is to desire and to satisfy my desires, to desire always anew, thus stormily proceeding through my life, at first overwhelming and mighty, but now become prudent and thoughtful: I know only too well the circle of the earth."

Liberty is constitutive of the essence of the human being. In recent political theories at least two major tendencies in regard to the interpretation of the term 'liberty' can be discerned. While discussing the question of liberty we must not confuse between two distinct questions: (1) Who shall govern me? and (2) How far should Government interfere with me? There is no contradiction involved in thinking that the despot may sometimes allow individual citizens a large measure of personal freedom while a democracy may, in fact, deprive the individual citizen of a great many of his *liberties*.

A deep concern for an answer to the question "who governs me?" sometimes leads us to asceticism, withdrawal into one's self and also to the claims of omniscience by others. A law is an infraction of liberty. In order that I may enjoy freedom I must rise above law and free myself from the bondage

of law. But, unfortunately, I have been, so to say, thrown into a so-called *law-governed* universe; I, being a rational agent, cannot sweep out of my way the laws of logic, of mathematics, of physics. Once we know the laws of socio-historical development, it is absurd to believe that these laws can be other than what they 'necessarily' are. The man who knows the truth should govern, while I who do not *know* the *truth* should bask in my own idiocy and withdraw into my own self with the pious wish that the man or the Party which knows the truth will deliver the goods.

More or less the same conclusions are reached by rationalistic metaphysics when it discusses the meaning of the "individual". A man does not have a Crusoe-like existence. He is a social animal. He belongs to a group and the man who serves the interest of the group or class to which he belongs should govern him. Rationalistic metaphysics hypostatizes the 'group' or the 'class'. Poetic vagueness and linguistic exuberance take the place of logical discernment and obfuscate our vision of liberty. Rationalistic metaphysics forgets that the proposition "We cannot *know* everything" is not a contingent but a necessary truth. Man can never be compressed within the framework of certain definite categories.

The problem of democracy is to determine "how far government should be allowed to interfere with the lives of the individuals?" Interference is a concrete problem and the individual always tries to find out specific solutions to specific interferences. The question "Who shall govern?" is significant only when it refers to specific issues. It is necessary for us to

realize the relative validity of our convictions. The distinction between the barbarian and the civilized man lies in the fact that whereas the civilized man can stand unflinchingly by the side of his convictions whose relative validity he knows, the barbarian needs the *absolute* validity of his convictions, for guiding of his activities. Human goals are many. All the convictions and beliefs need not necessarily be commensurable. But the broad framework for such rivalry is provided by the respect for the human being.

The human being cannot be defined uniquely except as a being whose nature is spiritual. Liberty and moral responsibility derive from his free will. Man cannot have free will if he is not a spiritual being. Man is a unique expression of Divine Creation. He is not insignificant but individually honourable. No State, no authority can claim absolute right over him. The human being is not a mere pawn in any political game, nor the property of any government, but the living, protesting and creative individual for whom and by whom all political games are played and governments instituted. "Men are born free and equal, in respect of their *natural* and imprescriptible rights of liberty, property, security and resistance of oppression."¹ The same principle has been acknowledged by all the democracies. The potentialities of an individual cannot develop fully except under a democratic framework based upon a respect for the human being. In democracies justice is *commutative*. Each individual is free to decide in

1. Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens by the National Assembly of France, 1791.

what ways his own capacities and property shall be used. A democratic government sees to it that an individual's way of using his capacity and/or property does not prevent others from using their capacities and properties in their own ways. The idea of commutative justice requires that the individual shall be a free agent. Both competition and co-operation are facts of human life. "Man is not man at all unless social; but he is not much above the beast unless more than social."¹ This aspect of the human being is denied by the socialists to whom justice is essentially distributive. According to the socialist concept of justice there is something basically wrong with the self-regarding instincts. It wants to kill these self-regarding instincts. Socialist justice finds it necessary to gag the three freedoms—freedom of speech, contract and expression—held to be its bitterest enemies.

A personalist philosophy on the contrary recognises that man has both the self-regarding instincts and the other-regarding instincts. The two sets of instincts are not necessarily mutually contradictory or in conflict with each other. They are mutually complementary. Man is an integral part of the *family*. He has a life of his own, but that life cannot fulfil itself without the basic social institution of *family*. The family forms the basic rampart for the fulfilment of his self-regarding and other-regarding instincts, desires, and intentions. Personalism, in consonance with the Asian tradition, holds the family sacred and worth preserving.

Every individual man is, in a certain sense, immortal. He is destined for a development surpassing

1. F.H. Bradley. *Ethical Studies*, p. 223. Oxford University Press, (London 1935). 2nd edition.

a mundane, temporal order through which he must work out his own fulfilment. "You never enjoy the world aright," observed Traherne, "till the sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens, and crowned with the stars. . . .Till your spirit filleth the whole world, the stars are your jewels... Till you feel it more than your private estate, and are more present in the hemisphere, considering the glories and the beauties there, than in your own house."¹ This eternal aspect of man, this capacity of man to transcend his mundane limitations and to attain blessedness has been recognised by the Asian thinkers from time immemorial.

Traditional theology has tended to deny the divine nature of man. The individual human being can only do good, says traditional theology, through divine grace. But the abuse of a good thing does not invalidate its right use. Personalism does not stand for any denominational religion. Nor is it syncretistic. It enjoins every human being to realise his own potentialities. It recognises the creativeness of man. Creativeness is always an expression of personal values. The morality of creativeness recognises the good as the expression of love regarded as a universal vital energy. It also recognises that every individual being can pursue knowledge and beauty. But all human institutions, though necessary for actualising the potentialities of the individual, are liable to certain errors and abuses through the process of, what Berdyaev calls, 'objectivisation.' The duty of every human being is to see that this process of objectivisation

1. Cf. Thomas Traherne, *Centuries of Meditation*. Ed. by Bertram Dobell..., The Editor, (London, 1908.)

does not stultify the human institutions and affect the individual adversely. A personalist is not a defeatist or an anarchist. He is concerned not only with social and political ends but also with the inner life of the people. He tries to find out the true character of his ends and evaluates the limits which must be placed on the State power. The individual man knows what social justice and the common good are ; he knows how to achieve a concentration of his energies. For all his miseries he, as an individual, is partly responsible. The society and the social institutions guided by adventurists and those who have no respect for the human being are responsible, to a great extent, for the miseries of man. Poet Tagore truly said that let the wrath of God burn all those who inflict suffering on others as well as those who submit to torture and coercion as in both the instances humanity is degraded.

Personalism does not advocate an atomistic conception of human being. That would be anarchism. Personalism recognises the individual's vital link with the family and the society. But it does not equate the individual with the social. That would amount to saying that the individual is nothing but a mere cog in the social machine. We live for the society as much as for ourselves. As a matter of fact the society and the family make the existence of the individual human being possible. Personalism recognises the value of efficacious action in the objective and social world. A flight into ascetic and mystical hermitage may bring one peace or forgetfulness but never is it a matter of morals. Running away from the cares and battles of life may come as solace to a burdened soul, but it never enhances the dignity of the human being. The

world and the society provide to the personalist an arena where he can realize the values and prove and enjoy the fruits of the fulfilment of his potentialities. Personalism, in short, is a continuous adventure, an engagement with an ever-changing and developing historical reality. It is essentially based on a precise body of values. To it man is an entity possessing a capacity for independence and self-integration. Man's destiny is, so to say, to transcend his limited empirical self through the uses of spiritual energies, through meetings with others, and through engagements with the objective world. The *partialitas* of man is not primarily due to his minuteness and *insignificance vis a vis* the total universe ; it is there because of the low grade of responsiveness to higher grades of individuality which is self-transcendent. The world provides the arena where the human being can prove his mettle. The world is at once, as it were, a battleground and an arena to be conquered and transcended by the human being. The individual becomes more and more perfect as he brings his passions under control, for then he is less subject to the vagaries of fate more balanced and tranquil in mind, more potent, less divided against himself. His glory lies in directing his passions to higher levels of value.

The individual human being apart from the community is rather an abstraction. "He is one of a people, he is born in a family, he lives in a certain society, in a certain State. What he has to do depends on what his place is, what his function is, and that all comes from his station in the organisation..."¹ But he is not a mechanical part of a mechanical whole. The

1. F.H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, p. 173.

society in which he lives is not a machine. In his turn he is not merely an automaton. Bradley truly said that the attempt to realise the mere individual in practice "is the starvation and mutilation of human nature."¹ Just as the mere individual is a theoretical delusion so also the wholly social man is a product of a diabolical intellect bent upon enslaving man in the social juggernaut. We have already shown how the attempt to identify the individual with the social leads to totalitarian tyranny. Anarchism which takes the individual as an isolated atom and thinks that the glory of the individual lies in an assertion of his particularised existence is an inverted form of totalitarianism. Like totalitarianism it leads to enslavement of man as it preaches a philosophy of irresponsibility.

Personalism recognises that "Our self is not a harmony, our desires are not fully identified with the ideal," and that a false ideal brings tyrannical havoc in its wake. To the personalist all ideals which do not recognise the dignity of the human person are false. He does not want to propound a philosophy which shall answer all questions of life. He does not claim that he has known everything. Only on one point he refuses to compromise—the dignity of the individual human being. He says in the words of the exhortation in the last chapter of Philistines: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

1. Ibid. p. 174.

A philosophy based on respect for the human being cannot but advocate peace. President Diem's stand could be cited in this connection. He has taken several steps for a fuller co-operation between the peoples of the Republic of Vietnam and those of other free countries. But "on one point," says President Diem, "we shall brook no compromise: it is the active and effective respect for the human being, otherwise the sacrifices by our people for their country would be meaningless." Further, "to replace one kind of oppression by another more pitiless kind of oppression under the pretext of an ever elusive earthly paradise would be depriving the people of the fruit of all its valiant effort for a better life."¹ If we sacrifice the human being for an "elusive paradise on earth", we shall be guilty of suicide and treason to the future. The only way the democratic world can defend itself from the onslaughts of the totalitarians is by consolidating its own ranks and by improving the cultural and economic standards of its people. Democracy in its inherent toleration must be on guard against self-destruction either from within or from without.

President Diem does not suggest war with the Communist world which threatens all that is held valuable by the democratic world. A philosophy based on the respect for the human being cannot advocate wars of aggression. Neither can it suggest total surrender before an aggressor who is out to subvert everything held precious by the Vietnamese people. Vietnam is still in a state of war with one-half

1. Speech delivered at the Toast at the Dinner in honour of the President of the Union of India. New Delhi, November 6, 1957.

of its land lost to the Communists and with increasing and constant threat of internal subversion and external aggression.

Personalism does not preach pacifism in the face of a threat which challenges the very basis of human existence. Such a pacifism is a travesty of human dignity. Human dignity is enhanced if man fights against evil. Socrates said to Polus: "How do you mean? If a man be caught criminally plotting to make himself a despot, and he be straight-away put on the rack and castrated and his eyes burnt out, and after suffering himself, and seeing suffering inflicted on his wife and children, a number of grievous torments of every kind, he be finally crucified or burnt in a coat of pitch, will he be happier than if he escapes and makes himself a despot, and pass his life as the ruler in his city, doing whatever he likes, and envied and congratulated by the citizens and the foreigners besides: impossible, do you tell me, to refute that."¹ A personalist wants to get man out of his ivory tower, to learn to come to grips with the realities of the practical world—the actual world from which alone the true wisdom of life is to be learnt and where alone man can realise his potentialities.

The essence of Personalism can be found in the writings of the great classical thinkers of the East and of the West. It is a sublime doctrine existing as the core of all religions and all philosophies which have genuine concern for the human being. Man should be the basis and the ultimate concern of all religions and philosophies. A philosophy which advocates the

1. *Gorgias*, 473c.

dignity of the human being is of necessity in direct contradiction with Communism. This was recognised in a resolution passed by the 3rd Conference of the Asian People's anti-Communist League held in Saigon in 1957, attended by delegates and observers from Australia, Burma, China, Korea, Malaya, Singapore, Turkey, Thailand, Macao, Tokyo, Vietnam, Germany, Indonesia, and different democratic world organisations. The conference resolved: "That in the struggle for preserving human freedom and values, besides all other action, APACL seeks ways and means to destroy Communism in the very field of ideology.

"That the promotion of a free, harmonious and complete development of the human person, in every respect, spiritual, in an individual as in collective life, must be the aim of all national activities."

Vietnam is at present the centre of experimentation in Personalism for Asia. Of all the countries in Asia she has taken up the noble task of applying the personalist principles on a grand scale. The existence and prosperity of the Republic of Vietnam is important not only for the life of the Vietnamese people but also for the betterment and strength of the democratic world.

The threat of totalitarianism must be resisted. Communism is already on the defensive in the West. But in Asia the situation is different. Having failed to conquer Asian nations through internal subversion, Communism is trying to extend itself through armed might. The efforts of the Asians should be directed to make each Asian a man who is motivated by common national solidarity and by the desire to enhance

the dignity of man. The characteristic personality of each nation is different. Personalism does not seek to stamp a common pattern on all. Given the worthwhile goal of mutual interest in humanity and the respect for the dignity of the human being, each country can adopt its method of assurance suitable for the particular conditions obtaining in that country.

"Today," observed Ngo Dinh Thuc, "world conditions are uniting free people even without their being aware of the unity. Common experience is unavoidably leading to common will for order and freedom.

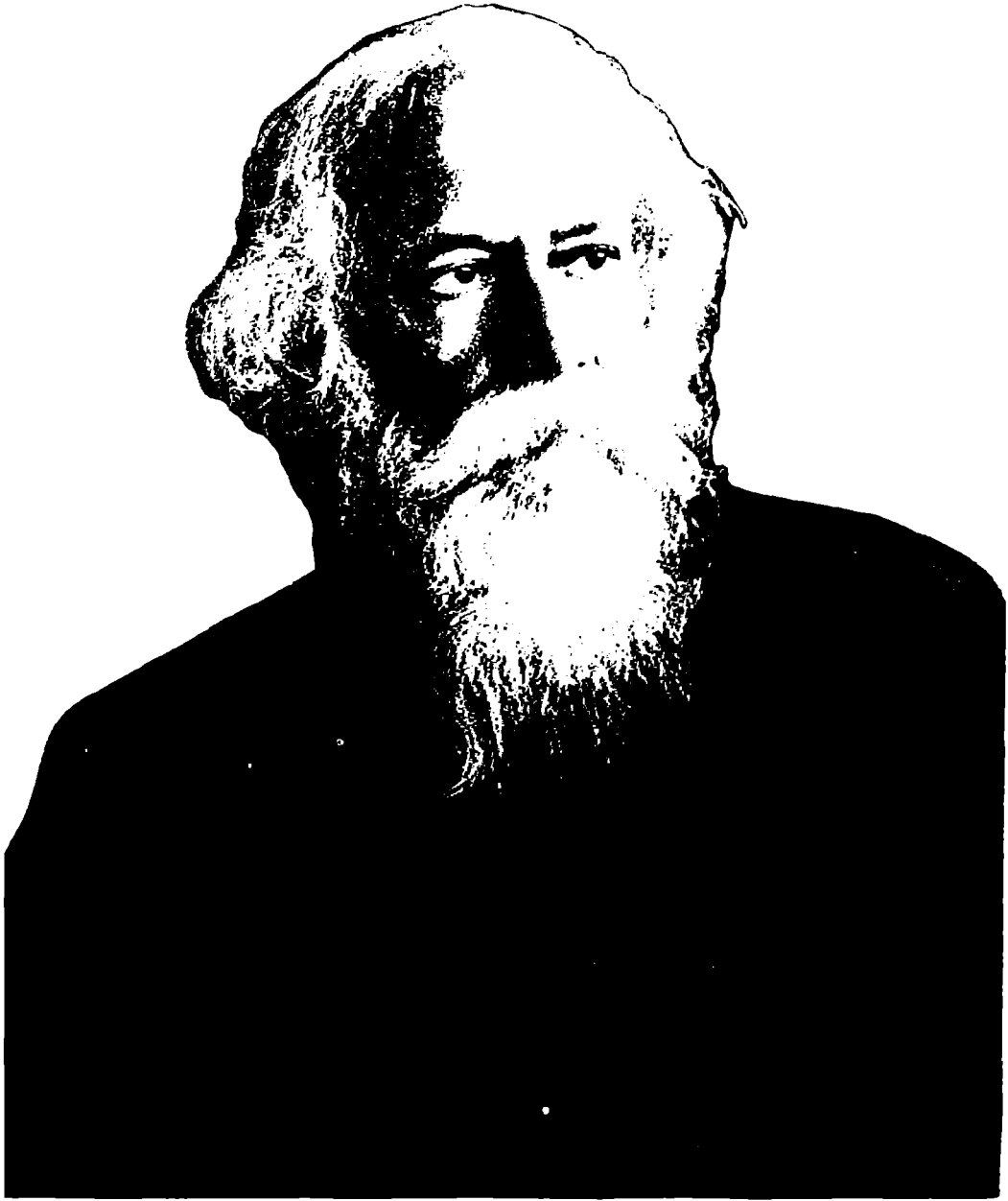
"In the face of concerted Communist action, we of the Free World have little choice other than that of a joint effort for mutual understanding and support. In personalism, we have a proven ally. . . ." Free peoples of Asia should close their ranks in a common fight an ideological one, for as we have said only an ideological struggle can efficiently combat.. Communism. . .

". . . We shall triumph over Communism the day when each Asian accepts the personalist ideal as a civic virtue, which enables citizens to act in accordance with human dignity and the value of conscience, in order to better achieve common welfare within the national or even international community. . . ." Thus Personalism is not a set philosophical system. It is more than that. It is an attitude towards life. It bestows the highest value on the human being. It takes the world as ground for the adventure of men. It recognises that machinery and money are instruments to liberate society and man from the compulsions of physical needs so that the human being finds more time and

more freedom to pursue his work which is nothing short of his search for blessedness. The nation itself gains a wider significance than that of a mere armed State putting its resources against those of its neighbours. Instead nationalism becomes a symbol for a pacific society dedicated to seek out the beneficial measures capable of preserving and expanding wealth as well as moral and spiritual values germane to the traditions of every land. Personalism recognises that "A diversification among human communities is essential for the provision of the incentive and material for the odyssey of the human spirit."¹ "The end of man, or that which is prescribed by the eternal or immutable dictates of reason, and not suggested by vague and transient desires, is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole..." The object "towards which every human being must ceaselessly direct his efforts, and on which especially those who design to influence their fellow men must ever keep their eyes, is the individuality of power and development."² For this the political and socio-economic framework must provide "freedom and varieties of situation." From the union of freedom and varieties of situation, as Mill observed, arises "individual vigour and manifold diversity, which combine themselves in originality."

1. A.N. Whitehead. *Science and the Modern World*, p. 258. Cambridge University Press, (London, 1933).

2. Quoted by John Stuart Mill in *On Liberty*, p. 71 from Baron Wilhelm von Humboldt's, *The Sphere and Duties of Government*, pp. 11-12.



RABINDRA NATH TAGORE
Indian Poet

CHAPTER V

The Civic State and the Human Person

THE dignity of the human person has been recognised by the Asian thinkers from time immemorial. The great philosophical systems of ancient China and India after recognising and glorifying life as the greatest virtue of nature, as something boundless in its immensity, and as the immortal and energising source of all creation concerned themselves more with an understanding of men rather than of things. When Confucius was asked to define the aim of knowledge, he said: "It is to know people . . . to help virtuous people to get ahead and to push back the dishonest ones, or if possible, to straighten them out." Filial piety is the essence of virtue. "Filial piety," says Tsengtu, is the basis of virtue, and the origin of culture. Sit down again and let me tell you. The body and hair and skin are received from the parents, and may not be injured: this is the beginning of filial piety. To do the right thing and walk according to the right morals, thus living a good name in posterity, in order to glorify one's ancestors: this is the culmination of filial piety."¹ The same is the message of the Gita. The sum of all human wisdom and the problem of human knowledge

1. cf. Quoted by Lin Yutang, *My Country and My People*, p. 171. William Heinemann (London, 1938).

and action is how man shall remain a man and how he shall best enjoy his life. Man cannot do so if he does not have a respect for the human person.

The same spirit can be discerned in the best traditions of India. Tagore spoke for the whole philosophical tradition of Asia when he said: "This personality, (the infinite personality of man) which is the conscious principle of oneness, the centre of relationships, is the reality—therefore the ultimate object of attainment. I must emphasize this fact, that this world is a real world only in its relation to a central personality. When that centre is taken away, then it falls to pieces, becomes a heap of abstractions, matter of force, logical symbols ; and even those—the thinnest semblances of reality—would vanish into absolute nothingness if the logical person in the centre, to whom they are related in some harmony of reason, were unknown."¹ It is for the dignity of this human person that countless heroes have given their lives.

A philosophy which holds the human being to be the ultimate norm of all existence cannot hold the civic State sacrosanct. The civic State provides a rampart of mutual security within which that 'truer profit' which the human being pursues may be enhanced. The sanctions of law are effective in moderating the mutually hostile endeavours of individuals. It at the same time provides for mutual security and help. "Having its origin in the same principle of our nature, constitution stands to government as government stands to society ; and, as the end for which society is

1. Rabindranath Tagore, *Personality : Lectures Delivered in America*, p. 98. Macmillan & Co. Ltd. (London, 1959) Indian Edition.

ordained would be defeated without government, so that for which government is ordained would, in great measure, be defeated without constitution. . . . The right of suffrage (is) the indispensable and primary principle; for it would be a great and dangerous mistake to suppose, as many do, that it is of itself sufficient to form constitutional governments. . . . It is manifest that this provision must be of a character calculated to prevent any one interest, or combination of interests, from using the powers of government to aggrandise itself at the expense of others. . . . This too can be accomplished only in one way, and that is, by such an organism of the government—and, if necessary for the purpose, of the community also—as will, by dividing and distributing the powers of government, give to such division or interest, through its appropriate organ, either concurrent voice in making and executing the laws, or a veto on their execution. . . . The tendency of the concurrent government is to unite the community, let its interests be ever so diversified or opposed; while that of the numerical is to divide it into two conflicting portions, let its interest be naturally ever so united and identified. . . . The numerical majority, by regarding the community as a unit, and having as such the same throughout all its parts, must, by its necessary operation, divide it into two hostile parts, waging, under the forms of law, incessant hostilities against each other. . . . In an absolute democracy party conflicts between the majority and minority. . . . can hardly terminate in compromise. The object of the opposing minority is to expel the majority from power, and of the majority to maintain their hold upon it. It is on both sides a struggle for the whole; a struggle that must

determine which shall be governing and which the subject party...."¹

This was written by Calhoun more than a century ago. But the ideas which he expressed are true even today. Democracy is based on the respect for the human being. A human being is a cipher if he is not an agent. An agent is not an agent if he determines nothing. Democracy provides him with opportunities to determine who shall govern him. But this power which he relegates to others is never an absolute relegation.

Community life in Asia was shaken by the inordinate and unscrupulous greed of the Western business houses and indigenous apathy. The nationalists of Asia know that a revival of the old type of decentralised democracy in the present-day world would give rise to endless factions and petty rivalries in village life. Their endeavour is to review the essentials of a democratic way of life found in their old village republics and bring them in line with the needs of the modern man. A renewal of faith in the essentials of human nature, in its potentialities to respond to reason, truth, beauty and morals is their primary concerns. Such a renewed consciousness will act as a surer bulwark against the seductions of totalitarianism. The Constitution of the Republic of Vietnam enacted on October 23, 1956, is a singular act of courage; it enshrines and gives expression to such a hope. It vouchsafes a government of the people, by the people and for the people. The leaders of Vietnam are confident that their country would not only choose to be a republic but also chalk out for

1. John Caldwell Calhoun, *Works*, Vol. I, pp. 7-83. D. Appleton and Company, (New York, 1851-56).

itself a democratic path. This path will not only protect the rights of the majority but also encourage the minority to follow its own way. The defeat of Bao Dai, the blue-eyed baby of the French, at the hands of Ngo Dinh Diem on October 23, 1955, had given them a solid encouragement in that direction. In a popular referendum Bao Dai got no more than 63,017 votes as against President Diem's 5,721,735.

The Constitution reflects the principles of democratic government as practised in most democratic countries with such modifications as are found necessary to bring it in line with the genius and tradition of the Vietnamese people and the circumstances of their emergence as an independent nation.

The French parliamentary system, the only one with which, thanks to history, they were intimate, had precious little in it to recommend itself to them. With one set of laws for the French and another for the "natives," the French system had encouraged a double standard of "justice." Besides, the circumstances prevailing in Vietnam indicate the need for a stronger executive, capable of solving complex and pressing problems facing the country. In the light of their own, as well as other countries' experience, the people of Vietnam had, in other words, to evolve effective means for protection of the fundamental rights of the human person to existence and to the free developments of his intellectual, moral and spiritual individuality.

Vietnam did not think it was necessary to have an elaborate document to clothe the fundamental law of the land; its needs and problems were to revitalise and secure democracy in the best possible manner.

Accordingly, the Constitution of the Republic of Vietnam provides guiding principles and leaves promulgation of laws and bye-laws to the people while providing them with the machinery through which they can do so whenever they feel it to be necessary.

The Constitution vests executive functions in the President elected for a term of five years on the universal adult franchise. To obviate the danger of the executive becoming too powerful, or tyrannical, the Constitution stipulates that the President shall not seek re-election for more than two terms. There is also provision for his removal, should he forfeit the confidence of his people.

All legislative functions vest in the National Assembly. As in the case of the President, the members of the National Assembly are elected by universal adult franchise but for a term of three years. The Constitution can be amended when three-fourths of the members of the National Assembly voting in person on a roll-call decide to do so.

Unlike the French Constitution, where the "Rights and Duties of the Citizen" occur as a preamble, the bill of human rights is included in the text of the Constitution itself. This avoids all possible controversy as to whether the *Droits de l'Homme* have the force of law or are merely a catalogue of desirable things, as in the case of the United Nations list of the Rights of Man. The Constitution provides that "Everyone is presumed innocent until proven guilty" and that "no one can be accused, arrested or detained except as defined by law."

Vietnam's judicial system is based on the principle of separation of the judiciary from the executive. There is a High Council of Judiciary which supervises the application of the Statute by the prosecutors. There is also provision for a special court of justice, whose function is to judge "the President and Vice-President of the Republic, the President of the High Court of Appeals, and the President of the Constitutional Court in cases where charges of treason or high crimes are brought against them." Among others, the special Court includes "15 Deputies elected by the National Assembly for each legislature . . . which ensures significant active participation in governance by the country's highest law-making institution.

A novel feature of the Constitution is the specific provision for a National Economic Council. (This is a recognition of the growing need for expert and independent help in the field of economic development otherwise beyond the ability of special committees of the legislature or even of the specialized departments of administration). The members of the National Economic Council are chosen from the professional associations, various branches of the economic activity, various social organisations relating to the economy, and economists. But "membership in the National Council is incompatible with membership in the National Assembly."

Article 6 of the Constitution provides: "Every citizen has duties towards the Fatherland, the community, the fellow-citizens in the pursuit of the harmonious and complete development of his personality and that of others." And article 7 provides: "All activities

having as their object the direct or indirect propagation or establishment of Communism in whatever form shall be contrary to the principles embodied in the present Constitution." Article 7 of the Constitution has given rise to endless debates, especially in the traditional liberal quarters.

Pierre Bayle whose works, according to Paax, were "the first exposition (in French) of the principles of tolerance," and about whom Brunetiere wrote, "To forget or to suppress him is to mutilate and falsify the whole history of ideas in the eighteenth century," was faced with the problem of tolerance in the midst of an intolerant atmosphere far less oppressive than that faced by the modern man living in countries under totalitarian dictatorship or under the threat of being engulfed by totalitarianism. Bayle raised his voice against the bigotted intolerance of the Churchmen whom he described as the "Director-generals of the butchers and hangmen." The illustration he gave in this connection is classic. Suppose, a deputation of missionaries go from the Pope to China. They may argue, (as the totalitarian argues or will argue when he captures the State power), "we have a command from our God to compel the obstinate. In consequence of this command we are obliged to poison the idolatrous Chinese, to reduce them to beggary, to cudgel them into our Churches, to hang some for an example, take away their children, and give them over to the gentle treatment of armed men."

Bayle did not believe in the pious dictum of the fatalist that the forces making for disruption are inherently discrepant and must eventually bring about

their own defeat. He recognised what Renouvier later described as the "terrible solidarity of evil," the fact that greed and deceit, violence and war, support each other. Accordingly, he maintained "if this new doctor has really no designs of stirring up seditions, if his only aim be to establish them by reason and instruction—in this case, we ought to follow him, if we find he does not happen to convince us, yet we ought to permit those who are convinced, to serve God in this new doctor's way."

The tolerant should resist "designs of stirring up seditions:" The mischievous should be deprived of the power to do mischief. An overall tolerance for everything good, bad or harmful is another name for indecision. A world where there is no decision, a world where there is no sense of belonging, a world where there is an overall toleration for everything good, bad or harmful is an anarchical world, a world where totalitarianism easily thrives as the resistance to it is made weak and at times completely obliterated in the name of 'foundational tolerance.' An overall tolerant attitude to everything good, bad or harmful is so nebulous that it tends to obliterate the distinction between a tolerant attitude and an irresponsible attitude. It leaves us in a valueless world. An attitude must result in choice. The democratic way of life demands that we must "substitute articulate hesitation for inarticulate certainty." In contradistinction to this, a totalitarian enjoins us to substitute articulate certainty for inarticulate hesitation. "Doubt, vacillation and suspense do not constitute choice. To balance is not sufficient ; the scale must be tipped."

A mere attitude of overall tolerance will always keep us in the balance. A recognition of clear and present danger has helped the Vietnamese people to include Article 7 in their Constitution. Communism is a total evil. As such it is antithetical to all philosophies which are based on a respect for the human being. In the peculiar context of the socio-political conditions of Vietnam, this provision in the Constitution is an answer to the realities of the situation of the country. In countries where the traditions of democracy have been forgotten, for various reasons, such as colonial rule, unwariness or a false step may mean disaster. While hoping for the best, democrats cannot afford to ignore preparing for the worst. What is important is to ensure the essence of democracy even if the forms of its expression have to be varied. Moreover, the traditional concepts of democracy are to be practised within the limitations normal in a war zone. Vietnam is a war zone. Scores of people have succumbed to the attempts at assassinations by agents planted by external agencies. And then the threat, as subtle as has engulfed North Vietnam, almost all the Eastern European countries, Tibet and parts of India, still darkens Vietnam's horizon like an ominous cloud.

Besides, it has to be noted that Vietnam is in a unique position. One half of its territory is occupied by those who for conviction or pressure from the shrine of their faith believe in a creed which is a negation of democracy as understood in India, Vietnam or any other democratic country. In this case, moreover, it is not only a differing political faith, but also an undisguised menace to Vietnam as a democracy and an independent nation. From what is currently happening

in Laos and also from the engineered subversive activities in the Republic of Vietnam, it should be clear that the regime in the North wants to extend the Sino-Soviet system to the Republic of Vietnam as well as to any other independent country. The framers of the Constitution of the Republic of Vietnam could not afford to be oblivious of that dreadful possibility.

The Constitution of Vietnam enshrines principles hallowed by countless heroes who have fought and died in the defence of democracy. It is unthinkable that the Republic of Vietnam would condone, connive at, or support subversion of democracy on its soil. In the millions of refugees, Saigon has a perpetual reminder that unceasing vigilance is the price of liberty. They have written with their legs¹ the need for constant preparedness. The Constitution is their shield and assurance. The Vietnamese people are experimenting on a form of democracy which hopes to maintain and enhance the dignity of the human person and allow the individual being to develop into an autonomous individual—the fulfilment of all democratic ideals.

1. There are in the Republic of Vietnam about one millions refugees from the Communist North.

Epilogue

DURING the eighteenth, nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth centuries, European capitalist expansionism brought the different Afro-Asian countries under its direct or indirect control. Today capitalist expansionism is a dying force. It has already receded from most of the Afro-Asian countries. After a long period of subjugation, stagnation, struggle, stress, cultural barrenness and consequent economic backwardness, the Afro-Asian countries are asserting their right to live as free and equal partners in the community of free nations. The vestiges of moribund capitalist imperialism no longer present a serious obstacle to their progress. The danger to the newly earned freedom comes from a different direction.

Willy nilly the Afro-Asian countries are being involved today in the whirlpool of power politics generated mainly by the rise of totalitarian imperialism. At the same time, they have to grapple with the problem of their economic regeneration and shake their people out of a sense of complaisance in worldly matters. One cannot think of spiritual advancement by impoverishing the body. Neither can one think of economic development by neglecting the spiritual adventure of man. But both Capitalism and Communism—the two social expedients of our time—have little affinity with the cultural traditions of Africa and Asia.

The peoples of the newly independent Afro-Asian countries are struggling hard to find out their own systems of democratic government and economic development. A great experiment to realize the essentials of democracy is going on in India today. We cannot call it capitalistic; neither can we call it totalitarian. Pakistan is experimenting on her concept of 'Basic Democracy.' Indonesia has taken to 'Guided Democracy' in quest of finding out her own way to achieve the ideas of democracy. The Republic of Vietnam has launched a pilot project, so to say for experimentation in personalism; the results achieved so far are encouraging.

The Asian tradition has throughout its history recognised the value and dignity of the individual human being—a tradition which has sustained the Asian countries despite the long period of colonial rule they were subjected to. To the genius of the Afro-Asian people neither capitalism nor totalitarianism can have a real appeal. Capitalism has lost its initial dynamism and rationale. And totalitarianism is another name for tyranny. Both systems, moreover, fail to accommodate the things held valuable by Asia and Africa.

The only way the Asian countries—nay, all the underdeveloped countries of the world—can hope to resist the truculence of totalitarian temper and overcome the limitations of the capitalist system lies in a political, economic and social system which shall provide an effective guarantee against the easy seductions of atavistic totalitarianism and the anarchic potentialities of classical capitalism. Personalism is in

that view the answer the countries of Asia and Africa have to the challenge they face.

Personalism enjoins us to recognise the dignity of the human being and resist all attempts to curtail the free development of the individual. The philosophy of personalism recognises that the paths chosen by different nations are bound to be different; each must choose the path which will, instead of thwarting the development of the individual, help him to realise his fuller existence. Personalism is not a blue-print for the future development of man in *all* the countries. It is only a constant reminder against the lures of easy solutions at which we often arrive forgetting that immensely complex, rich and significant existence—the human person. It urges us to so plan our life that it may lead us to our own fulfilment. Fulfilment is, however, meaningless without the corresponding advancement of the society in which we live and which, in the ultimate analysis, by way of an approbation, so to say, confers all the significance that the individual human being has without causing any loss to the prestige of that individual and mystic concretion—the human person. But in order to realize the economic well-being of the people and to secure the essentials of democracy, it is not necessary for us to go through the painful experiences of the West.

Mere measures for the economic development of our own countries are, however, not enough. Nor are attempts to enhance the dignity of man according to our respective genius and tradition sufficient by themselves. We cannot forget that today there is the very real danger of our being involved in the whirlpool of world politics. A personalist is a realist. If we neglect

the reality in which we are living, we may commit suicide and treason to our future generations.

Faced with the realities of the present-day world politics, and being conscious of the fact that the dignity of the human being cannot be enhanced, or even maintained, by being blind to the threats which challenge the very existence of free individuals and nations, personalism provides its own ideas and programmes of internal development and of international relations. The personalist programme for the internal development of a country is guided by its concern for the dignity of the human person. The same is true about its attitude towards international power politics.

Most of the newly independent countries of Africa and Asia have chosen 'neutrality' in world politics as their guiding principle. But 'neutrality' in regard to power politics does not imply neutrality in regard to values. 'Neutrality' as a sentiment is laudable as it enjoins us to 'Live and let live'. But no sentiment operates in a vacuum. Indeed a sentiment loses its significance if it is not based on a clear appraisal of values. A sentiment which has no concern for values often leads the individual to an anonymous existence. The sentiment for 'neutrality' too must therefore be based on a system of values.

Personalism recognizes that absolute truth is a limiting concept, even as absolute goodness and beauty are. Certain things may appear to be good to certain people in a particular time. But it may not be good to another people at the same time or at a different time. It may not be good even to the same people at a different time. As man cannot attain absolute truth or goodness or beauty, he has no right to

interfere in the affairs of other men. A certain regime or system not suitable to one country may be suitable to another. Pascal said: "Truth on this side of the Pyranese, but error on the other side."

Communists do not accept the possibility of their beliefs being falsified. On the contrary, they affirm that they, and they alone, know the absolute truth. And they think that it is their responsibility to propagate and apply that absolute truth. While the underdeveloped countries of the world have declared 'neutrality' to be their policy in regard to world politics, the Communists think that the neutral countries of Asia and Africa, eager to catch up with the West, will eventually be forced to accept their philosophy. Communism will, they reckon, get a chance of capturing the State powers through internal subversion and external pressures. The more neutral these countries are, the greater is the possibility of their being Communists. With this idea, the Communists, through internal subversion and threat from outside, are trying to bamboozle the countries of Asia and Africa.

Personalism is conscious of the fact that 'neutrality' is not a stand-offish attitude towards a threat which intends to jeopardise everything that the human being has held sacred so long. It holds that the concept of 'neutrality' has significance only insofar as those to whom it is related believe in the essential incompleteness of their own beliefs. It enjoins us not to be neutral in regard to our attitudes to values though it recognises that there may be some scope for choice between one set of values and another. But between value and negation of value the choice is absolute: there is no room for neutrality.

Personalism is not an idle dream. It is a guide to the practical and spiritual affairs of men. It stands for world peace and free development of the individual human being, which becomes a far cry if the very human person, so much valued by the best traditions of humanity, is neglected or threatened to be exterminated. It is, in short, a perpetual reminder of the duties that we owe to our family, to our society, to our nation, to entire humanity and, above all, to our own selves which is the ultimate mystery and which confers all the significance that we have so long as we live in this mortal frame of ours.

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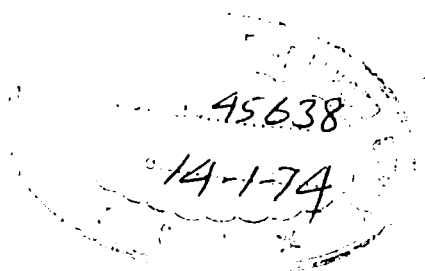
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ERRATA

Page	Line	Instead of	Read as
li	30	Than	Thanh
liv	26	Chacum	Chacun
6	9 and 10	"life are separable"	"life are not separable"
25	2	"half a century"	"more than half a century"