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# SCIENTIFIC POLITICS

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## *PREFACE*

To the Second Edition.

Since the lectures published in this book were delivered in the middle of 1940, the world has made an experience which has shaken it to the very foundations. The history of these seven years, packed with nerve-shattering events, has deeply influenced the thoughts and emotions of all but the most insensible. Not being one of this latter blissful sort, I cannot unqualifiedly endorse everything said seven years ago.

The very title of the book, however, indicates that the ideas stated, rather tentatively suggested therein, are not dogmatic. Delivered to a small gathering of friends and colleagues, the lectures were like loud thinking, which going on in my mind for a pretty long time, was finally given definite form and sharp contours by the catastrophe of the Second World War, which at that time appeared to have been all but won by the Axis Powers. In addition to a share of the shock felt by the entire civilised world, we in this country had to live in an atmosphere of cynical disregard for the danger

of Fascism and a callous indifference to the imminent possibility of the entire civilised world being overrun by modern mechanised barbarism.

Immediately upon the outbreak of the war, the Executive Committee of the League of Radical Congressmen, as we called ourselves then, met to consider the situation, and judge how India should react to it. After several days of heated discussion, the Committee endorsed the Thesis on India and War drafted by me. Having analysed the relation of forces, underlying the international situation, and visualising the perspective of the development of the armed conflict towards active participation of the Soviet Union, the Thesis came to the following conclusion :

“The present war is not an imperialist war. Yet, if it continues, the immediate consequence will most probably be the end of Hitlerism, whether the British Government wants that or not. Therefore, it is not permissible for the fighters for democracy and freedom, not only in Europe but throughout the world, including India, to be indifferent about the outcome of the conflict and its possible development. Pacifism or dogmatic anti-war propaganda is altogether out of place in the present world situation. No

sensible person can talk of freedom and democracy and at the same time not admit that the fall of Hitlerism and the elimination of the Fascist menace in general will greatly contribute to the triumph of the cause of freedom and democracy. Are we, then, to support Imperialism? The question is altogether irrelevant. Here is an occasion wherein astute fighters for freedom and democracy can push Imperialism perhaps to the extent of destroying the bloodiest weapon of its own creation and thus rendering itself vulnerable to the coming revolutionary onslaught. Under the given situation, any movement for war resistance in the countries involved in a war against Hitlerism, even though by accident, will be positively harmful for the cause of democracy and freedom. In the present juncture, the task of the fighters for human liberation is to do everything to facilitate the consummation of that event, which will make of the present European war the prelude to the period of revolutions."

Those were ideas very repugnant not only to Indian nationalists who wished that their hated enemy, British Imperialism, might be defeated, callously disregarding the consequences of a victory of the Axis Powers. Even the Commu-

nists took up a similar attitude. The Radical Congressmen, by inner conviction, were still either nationalists or Communists. Therefore, amongst my friends and colleagues I found myself in a minority of one. To convince them of the correctness of the view of the given international situation and its perspective, was an uphill task. The discussion in the meeting of the Executive Committee of the League of Radical Congressmen revealed that fundamental problems of revolutionary theory and practice had to be thoroughly discussed, if fateful mistakes were to be avoided, and the grave issues at stake were to be properly appreciated.

Accordingly, we met in a Political Study 'Camp' to examine our revolutionary faith, to test our theoretical outfit in the crucible of experience, and to examine our cherished ideals realistically. I had to address nearly one hundred men and women who had grown up as active members either of the nationalist or the communist movement. They all believed themselves to be revolutionaries. But to most of them revolution was a vague ideal. There was a good deal of confusion about the theory of revolution, and conventional notions about revolutionary practice. So, as regards theory, it was necessary

to begin from the elementary principles, and with respect to revolutionary politics, the possibilities and limitations of the field of operation had to be realistically assessed. My endeavour was to explain that politics was bound to be a vulgar scramble for power, and often futile, unless it was conceived as a branch of social science and practised accordingly. In order to overcome prejudices, which precluded a scientific approach to the problems of revolutionary theory and practice, the relation of forces on the Indian scene had to be realistically analysed, the limitations of the nationalist movement had to be exposed, and the fallacies of an ill-digested Marxism had to be criticised. That was the purpose of my talks.

The discussions in the Camp led to the formulation of certain principles of revolutionary theory and practice, which were developed step by step on the basis of the experience of the following eventful years, finally to be concretised in the Draft Constitution of Free India. The principles not only implied rejection of Nationalism as an antiquated and therefore reactionary cult; they also marked a departure from orthodox Marxism. In course of time, they compelled a philosophical reorientation. That process culminated in the formulation of

the Fundamental Principles of Radical Democracy and their elaboration as Integral Humanism.

Six years after these lectures were delivered, to a bewildered, doubtful, but intellectually honest audience, we again assembled in a Political Study Camp. The events during the intervening period had vindicated the Radical point of view. Radicalism needed no longer to sail under false colours, either of a particular brand of Nationalism or of Communism. It could now boldly differentiate itself from Marxism, and demand consideration on its own merit. My lectures at the Second Study Camp of 1946 have also been published in a book entitled *New Orientation*. It has been followed up by another book called *Beyond Communism To Humanism*. This volume, together with the other two, constitute the history of the development of an ideology which we now call interchangeably Radicalism or Integral Humanism.

For me personally, the intervening years have been a period, not only of highly instructive experience, but also of intellectual efforts stimulated by it. The heterodox ideas outlined in these lectures, delivered seven years ago, had to unfold themselves step by step.

Finally, their logical implications have become clear. They have taken concrete shape and become co-ordinated into a self-contained system of political thought with an appropriate philosophical foundation.

Whatever difference there may be between these lectures and the theory and practice of Radicalism as formulated after seven years of storm and stress, is superficial, —mainly of terminology. Seven years ago, I still spoke as an orthodox Marxist criticising deviations from, or faulty understanding of the pure creed. Nevertheless, the tendency to look beyond Communism was already there in a germinal form. While still speaking in terms of class struggle, I laid emphasis on the cohesive factor in social organisation. Already then I appreciated Marxism as something greater than the ideology of a class. I understood it as the positive outcome of earlier intellectual efforts to evolve a philosophy which could harmonise the processes of physical nature, social evolution and the will and emotions of individual man.

The term scientific politics itself is very significant. It implies rejection of a dogmatic approach to the problems of politics. While reading these lectures, it should be borne in

mind that, since they were delivered, epoch-making events have taken place. They have naturally influenced my ideas. But at the same time, my ideas have also stood the test of experience, which has only enabled me to elaborate them, give them concrete shape and work out their implications more explicitly.

M. N. ROY.

Dehra Dun.

October 1st, 1947.



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## THE IDEAL OF A REVOLUTIONARY

*(Inaugural Address)*

From to-morrow, for fifteen days, we shall have a very heavy programme to go through, and if you have any doubt about the object with which you have come here, I hope it will be dispelled by the time the Camp is over. In this inaugural speech, I shall be anticipating much of the discussions that we shall have in the coming days. I have never been a teacher, nor have I ever been a student in the conventional sense. But I am a rather pedantic. I have the bad reputation of being very rigidly logical. I believe that systematic, organised thought is the precondition for any organised action. Emotion is not intelligence. Enthusiasm is not understanding. To entertain high ideals is not to think. We have enough of emotions, much enthusiasm, and perhaps enough of high ideals in our country, although they may not turn out to be so very high if we look at them from close quarters.

We shall have discussions on all sorts of theoretical and political problems. But in the very beginning, I shall tell you the point on which I shall lay emphasis. That is to learn how to think systematically. I shall prevent you from talking at random. You have already received the plan of our discussions. If I can, I shall hold you very rigidly to that plan. If you have well observed, you must have discovered a very strange habit with us. We start talking on some subject; since every subject in this world is connected with every other subject, we end by talking about something entirely different, and at the end we have almost forgotten why we started the discussion. That sort of discussion may sometimes display great learning. One must have read lots of books, in order to speak on everything under the sun at the same time. But that is not real learning.

In jail I came in touch with some educated young political prisoners, who wanted political training. I told them. When you are locked up in your cells, try to fix your mind on some subject and control yourself to see how many times in a minute your mind jumps to another subject. None of them claimed that they could fix their minds for more than five minutes on

one subject. I advised them to acquire the habit of concentration.

That sounds like yoga. Yoga is introspective thought. If we learn from modern psychology, there is no such thing as introspective thought. Every thought comes from outside. We get an impetus from outside; that provokes a line of thought. In your own mind, you will find the store-house of entire human knowledge. Thought is possible whenever an outside stimulus creates a certain impression on our mind. When that happens, we should try to concentrate our mind on that impression, try to develop it into a new line of thought. That is the fundamental principle of my pedagogy. I shall be guided by it.

Whenever a group of political workers meet and discuss, a number of very familiar terms are used. Take for example Satyagraha. It is asked: If Satyagraha starts, shall we join it or not? That is an entirely false way of raising a question. We try to determine our behaviour on a hypothesis. We shall ask first whether the premises are there or not. That should be our first concern. Instead of that, we ask: Supposing the premises are there, what is going to happen? But after all, we might find that the premises did not exist at

all. Then, what is the use of putting the question in such a way? If we want to act with an economic use of physical energy, we must learn to think systematically. That is the point on which we should lay emphasis.

We are living in the period of wars and revolutions, anticipated by the scientific students of history. Great changes throughout the world, in every walk of life, are bound to take place. Several hundred years ago, a similar experience was made by humanity. Although that experience was directly made only in some countries, practically the entire world was affected by it. An old order of society, based on the feudal ownership of land, and actuated by the religious mode of thought, broke down under the impact of new economic forces and scientific ideas. A chronic state of warfare evidenced the decay of the established social system, but the decayed system continued in a precarious existence until it was pulled down by revolutions. The latter set free the new forces of social progress which then went ahead with the task of remaking the world suitable for the material comforts and spiritual needs of a liberated and enlightened human race.

Such great changes in the political, social

and spiritual affairs take place periodically. The people of our generation are privileged to experience one of them. To us has been given the opportunity of participating actively in the historic task of pulling down a decayed system, and contributing to the making of a new world. A devastating war is revealing the inconsistencies, irrationality and untenability of a socio-political system which has exhausted all its possibilities. There must be a revolution to save the desolate world from destruction, and to remake it as the home of a freer and more enlightened humanity.

In India, we hear only the dreadful echoes of the war being waged fiercely in far off countries. But the forces of revolution are growing in our midst. The triumph of those forces will contribute to the process of the remaking of the world. How will those forces develop? How will they assert themselves, so as to influence the course of world history? How are they to be organised? What ideas and ideals will inspire them? Those are some of the questions which must be agitating the mind of people who wish to measure up to the great task set by history. We have assembled here to discuss, and find answers to, those questions. In our discussions, we shall be

guided by the lessons of past history as well as by our own experience.

Decisive events may take place in our country before long. The political stalemate, obtaining since the hostilities formally began in Europe, can be expected to end in the near future. Those events will naturally determine the course of the impending revolution in our country. They will either accelerate or retard it. The maturity of the objective conditions alone does not guarantee the development, and much less the triumph, of a revolution. In critical moments, the subjective factor, represented by the will to power and the leadership of the movement, is the decisive. From that point of view, one cannot be very optimistic about the nature of the political developments in our country in the near future.

There cannot be any revolutionary activity without a revolutionary theory. The absence of this latter is the most outstanding feature of the Indian political movement developing on the background of the mobilisation of objectively revolutionary social forces. The present leadership of the movement is hostile to all revolutionary ideas. Therefore, the political events in the near future cannot be expected to be such as may quicken the revolutionary consciousness of



the masses, and thus lead up to a situation of decisive importance.

Nothing less than a revolution is needed for the purpose. The forces of revolution are there. Great changes are necessary for India as well as for the world. But they cannot take place painlessly. If we want a happier and brighter future for our country, we should be prepared to pay the price.

One may ask : Why are we meeting in a study camp, when we should take up our places in the army marking time for the marching order? If that was really the case, we should not be here. But unfortunately, that is not the case. The army to fight the battles for freedom is still to be created. That task can be accomplished only by a specially trained corps of officers. There must be a sufficiently numerous band of conscious revolutionaries, before the forces of revolution, objectively maturing throughout the country, could be marshalled in a battle-array.

Our Camp is the nucleus of that would-be brotherhood of revolutionaries. We have assembled here, in order to clarify the theoretical and ideological confusion which has been paralysing political activity, and preventing possible revolutionary developments. Theo-

retical equipment will qualify us to initiate revolutionary activity. Our Camp is a vital part of the real preparation for the inevitable struggle which is to be waged, if the goal of freedom is ever to be attained. Our understanding of the nature of the problems of our movement, of the problems of mass mobilisation, of the problem of power, of the problem of leadership, does not permit us to share the illusion that the country can be prepared for any struggle by means of the non-political, utopian, ludicrous activities prescribed by the Gandhist leadership of the Congress. The country must be led in the road of revolution, if it is to attain freedom. Its present leadership is taking the Congress away from that road. We want to blaze a new trail. We want to organise the vanguard of the impending Indian Revolution. With that object, we have assembled here to find the proper approach to all the problems confronting us, and to place before the country an alternative plan of action. We shall be guided by the bold spirit of realism, by our collective intelligence and judgment.

I shall advise you to take a long view of things. Don't be carried away by appearances which are so very often false. Don't let the spectre of apparent isolation terrify you. It is

only by virtue of the courage of conviction, intellectual integrity and revolutionary catholicity, that we can expect to qualify ourselves for the task we have undertaken. In this Camp, we shall learn to cultivate those virtues. This is not meant to be a school, for students to be lectured by teachers. We shall learn from our collective experience, each of us is here as a student as well as a teacher. The lectures to be delivered in course of the Camp will serve no other purpose than to stimulate thought.

The fundamental principle of our philosophy is that the form of thought is determined by the mode of action. But at the same time, it is also true that, without organised thinking, there can be no coordinated action. We have been criticised for the rigidity of our logical approach to all questions. We have often heard the homily, even from unexpected quarters, that life is not logic. Do our critics, then, maintain that the world is a madhouse? Human life expresses itself through social organisation and social behaviour. These are, therefore, to be regarded as collective life. Are not social organisation and social behaviour guided by some laws? Life itself is a determined process. Determination is logic in nature. To maintain that life is a mysterious

category which is above all logic, that is to say, is not governed by the laws of nature, is to fall into fatalism and to dispute that the application of science is universal.

No. We need not be ashamed of the stern consistency of our position. That is our distinction. Let us have the courage to be unmitigated sinners. There must be some order in the chaos and irrationality of Indian political life. Only those accustomed to orderly thought can bring that about.

But we are not going to be dogmatic. Our logic is not a hide-bound system of syllogisms. Ours is dialectic logic. We know that, while the process of being and becoming is governed by laws, the laws themselves are also determined by the nature of the being. While we shall always approach every problem with the searchlight of a logical criticism, our mental reaction to events will be adaptable to the changes of the latter. The scientific mode of thought makes no room for prejudice. It can boldly face realities, however disagreeable they may be.

We need neither be optimists nor pessimists. We should be only realists. Realism may often sound like pessimism to

those who are fond of illusions and like to live in the fool's paradise. Optimism is the mental state of the unthinking. That is particularly so in the present condition of our country. Only those can be stout optimists whose philosophy is simplified to the formula that something will happen somehow, some day. That is no optimism. That is defeatism. That is fatalism. That is no philosophy for those who want to remake the world. That is no revolutionary philosophy. The revolutionary must have the courage to appreciate all the difficulties on his way, because the ability to overcome those difficulties makes him a revolutionary. In India, revolutionaries must boldly face and overcome enormous difficulties. They must have the tenacity to swim against powerful currents of prejudice, apathy, cowardice and blind faith. During the short period of our being together, we shall try to realise that we have the potentiality to measure up to the task of creating the cadre of revolutionary leadership which is indispensably necessary for initiating the struggle for the freedom of the Indian people. Lest we forget the tremendous magnitude of that task, let us remember that our ideal is not a sham political freedom, but the conquest of effective political power by the masses, so that

all the avenues of freedom, democracy and progress will be soon opened before them.

The few thoughts set down in this paper may sound rather abstract. But as I told you in the beginning, I am interested in abstract thought. In science, the solution of no problem is possible, unless we have isolated the phenomenon under investigation. Similar is the case with the problems confronting us in our political life. We shall have to isolate every problem and find the proper approach to it, and then we shall be able to discover the solution. Having discovered the solution of isolated problems, we shall fit those solutions in one comprehensive integrated picture. That shall be the work of the Camp.

We have divided the work of the Camp into two departments; a series of lectures and discussions. The lectures will simply state the problems: the lectures will not lay down laws. We do not recognise the right of any body, except from amongst ourselves, to lecture us. How can people, who do not share our ideas and our experience, teach us anything? Many of us are very competent to grasp the problems fully, to state them clearly, and we shall find the solutions with the aid of our collective intelligence.

I called this Camp the would-be brotherhood of revolutionaries. The Camp will be successful when we shall leave it as a spiritual community. India is a very large country. We are working in distant places. All sorts of problems are confronting each of us from day to day. We cannot meet often to discuss. Yet, we have to conduct coordinated activities. I cannot do one thing in one place, and some of you do another thing in another place. That would harm our cause. We shall have to work in a coordinated manner, in spite of the distances and our poverty which prevents us from meeting more frequently, whenever it is necessary. But if we all think in the same way, then, we shall also act in the same way, as it were, automatically. If our minds are trained in the same way, wherever we are, our minds, having been equally trained, will react in an identical way to identical problems. Otherwise, there would be constant confusion.

I am used to bitter criticism. If a day goes by without some criticism against me, I feel that life is beginning to get dull, and there must be something wrong with me. But what distresses me is the occasional differences amongst ourselves. We all have the same programme and the same plan of action. Yet, if a new situation

arises, some of us sometimes react in a different way. A group of people, really subscribing to the ideas and principles, I just outlined, must act identically in whatever situation they may be placed separately. Revolutions happened when there was no post, no telegraph and no other means of swift communication; yet, the revolutionaries independently acted in an identical way. Even in our time, in the midst of a revolutionary situation, we cannot rely on the post and telegraph nor may we be able to call a meeting of our Central Executive Committee to discuss urgent matters. In a rapidly developing movement, there will always be unforeseen problems. Only a group of people who have learned to think in the same way, can face and tackle them in the identical manner. Otherwise, the movement will break down in a crisis.

I take a long view of things. In all probability, nothing decisive is going to come out of the present political situation in our country in the near future. But ultimately something will come out of it. When it will happen, and what forms it will take, we cannot exactly foretell to-day. But when it does happen, what is to be done? If we can create a group of people who will anticipate that, and know what to do



in that situation, we shall have accomplished our immediate task. If it will take ten years to create such a group, I shall be prepared to withdraw for that long in the fastness of the Himalayas, because I shall know then that at least after that period, there will be some chance for the freedom of our country; I shall know that after those ten years the country will want us, and call for us, because only such a group of people can make it free.

## SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY & POLITICS

This lecture has been organised as a part of the programme of the All-India Study Camp which is being held here under the auspices of the League of Radical Congressmen. It is quite possible that some of you will be wondering why a subject like this should be smuggled into a programme of political study. Science is supposed to be studied in the seclusion of laboratories, and philosophy cultivated in the fastness of the mountaineous regions of the Himalayas. How can one bring them down to the low level of a political Study Camp?

As an introduction, I may tell how science and philosophy are related to political study. Politics is considered to be a dirty job, a profession of loafers and of people who cannot do any good in other walks of life. Consequently, one expects the evil sides of human nature to have a free play in the field of political activity. This is the prevailing notion of politics not only in our country. To a very large extent, it is true.

One reason for this is that politics deals with human affairs, and the affairs of the daily life of human beings. Unfortunately, human society, as it is organised to-day, is so very full of dirty things, that any branch of activity embracing human affairs cannot be very pure, elevating and ennobling. But there is another reason why politics is so full of all sorts of disagreeable things. That reason is a false conception of politics itself. It is not generally understood even by most of the political workers themselves that politics is also a science. It is not an independent branch of science, but a branch of what is called social science. Other branches of science deals with more or less stable categories; but social science deals with the component parts of society, that is, human beings, the most unstable and variable quantity ever created.

It is to-day an accepted principle of science that no branch of study can claim the distinction of being scientific, unless it can be stated in mathematical formulas. Mathematics has learned to deal with uncertain quantities. Nevertheless, without some constants, no mathematical formula is possible. Until now, the conventional social science, known as sociology, has not been able to find any cons-

tant in human behaviour, in this conglomeration of entities, called human society. If there is really none, then social problems cannot be stated in mathematical formulas; and in that case, politics cannot be a science.

This may be the prevailing view, but it is not the ultimate view. There are people, who maintain that there can be a science of society; the problems of society, problems arising from the collective human behaviour, can be stated approximately in mathematical formulas, meaning, that there are some constants in human behaviour. Politics is a science which tries to formulate a set of fundamental principles governing the behaviour of human beings organised in society. Unless there are some constants, some standards of human behaviour, no principle can be formulated generally to govern human behaviour. So long as politics is considered to be something divorced from physical knowledge, in other words, divorced from what is generally known as science, it naturally becomes a very arbitrary affair. In that case, there are no fundamental political principles. Now that isolation has disappeared. To-day, it is generally known that scientific knowledge is not something which is to be isolated and

abstracted and studied independently of the daily life of human beings. On the other hand, the bridge between science and philosophy has been built. It is known that there exists a thing called political philosophy. But there are many who dispute that there can be such a thing as a political science. That brings us to the question which is the subject of this evening's lecture; Science and Philosophy.

The general conception is that science and philosophy are two distinct things which have nothing in common. Science deals with the affairs of this world, while philosophy with the affairs of another world. If that is the case, it is very difficult to find any connection between science and philosophy. If there is no connection between the two, we cannot maintain that a political science must necessarily follow from a political philosophy.

There are people who would concede that we can state abstractly certain principles which must govern the behaviour of mankind organised in political society; but they insist that, in experience, it has been proved that those principles cannot be always acted upon. Take for instance, democracy. Nothing is so discredited to-day as democracy. For the last hundred years or more, democracy was con-

sidered to be one of the fundamental principles of political philosophy. To-day, it stands discredited everywhere. From this experience, the conclusion has been made that democracy may be an ideal, but it can never be realised in life; that it is alright to say that every human being should have the right to contribute to the formulation of the laws and principles which are to govern collective life; but the right of popular sovereignty is more or less an abstract conception which cannot be translated into action; that experience has shown human society to be a herd, and can be governed only by a dictatorial power.

This example, supposed to be drawn from human experience, is given to prove that there is no connection between political philosophy and political science. One can state certain abstract principles which should be practised in an ideal human society; but in human society, as it is to-day, they cannot be practised. Human nature is immutable; it never changes; therefore human society will remain as it is for ever. That is the conventional contention. Consequently, those principles are never practised. There can never be a political science, that is, the practice of the principles of social behaviour based on a political philosophy.

In order to disprove this contention, we have to deal with the more fundamental question about the relation between science and philosophy: Whether abstract ideals really have any relation to the practical problems of our life. The development of modern science is a story which is more or less known to the average educated man of our days. Nevertheless, it is a general belief that science may create conditions, under which some conveniences and comforts of our daily life can be attained, but the problems of existence, the problems which gave rise to what is called philosophy, cannot be touched by science. Therefore science must be regarded as a branch of knowledge which only scratches the surface of the essential problems of existence; the latter cannot be solved by scientific knowledge.

The point I want to make in this lecture is that science and philosophy are not two different things. Theory and practice cannot be divided into water-tight compartments. If philosophy cannot be brought down from the ethereal heights to our dirty world, it has no sense and no use for us. If there is no logical connection between the problems of philosophy and the problems of practical or experimental science, then, as far as human beings are con-

cerned, the problems of philosophy are illusory or altogether useless.

It is generally believed that science is of recent origin. That is not true. Science is as old as the human race. It is neither younger nor older than philosophy. It is as old as philosophy itself. Some knowledge of the history of philosophy shows that, as a matter of fact, science precedes philosophy. At least, the incentive to science, that is, the desire to know the causes of physical phenomena, a desire which ultimately culminated in the wonderful unfolding of what is known as modern science, certainly preceded philosophy. Indeed, philosophy was born out of that desire.

Man is supposed to be not only concerned with the physical world, but essentially to be only a vehicle through which some supernatural, transcendental, divine, truth is expressed. Therefore, the ultimate objective of human existence is supposed to be to know the nature of that divine truth. If we get acquainted with the history of early human society, a phenomenon that can be studied either as history, that is, in the records of old events, or experimentally, by observing the behaviour of primitive human races inhabiting the world even to-day, side by side with the most civilised



human communities, that study reveals the fact that the primitive human being is completely devoid of the idea of something beyond himself. The conception of God and soul is completely absent in the thinking process of the primitive human being. Otherwise, he would not be a primitive being. That primitive being was our ancestor. If the desire to understand the origin of the divine spark, supposed to be embedded in everyone of us as the immortal soul, is the essence of human existence, it should be possible to trace that desire down to the primitive human being. Since that cannot be done it is logical to assume that the desire is not coincident with the entire human existence; it must have intervened somewhere in the process of human evolution.

How, then, do we explain that not only in our own country, but practically in all other countries of old civilisation, the fundamental problem of philosophy was, why and how the world is created? If we read the ancient history of India or China or Greece or Egypt, where the human race attained a high level of development earlier than elsewhere, we find the intellectual leaders of those communities deeply concerned with this problem. They were also concerned with the problem of after-life. From

this, the conclusion is drawn that man must have been born with the spirit of enquiry into what can be called the metaphysical or supernatural. But one forgets to remember that Indian society was not born with Kapila or Kanad. Indeed, it is older even than the Rishis who wrote the Rigved. We know that Greece was not born at the time of Thales or Democritos, not to mention Plato or Socrates. Others preceded them. What did they think? What was their spiritual outfit? If we go into this question, then, we shall find immediately that the so-called fundamental problem of philosophy is not co-existent with the entire human existence.

Unfortunately, it is very difficult to trace the process of human development down to its origin, because, at a certain stage, recorded history disappears. We have no record to show how Indians before the Vedic era lived, thought and behaved. Similar is the case with the ancient history of other countries. Therefore, the problems regarding the mental state of the primitive human being can be studied from two points of view. For one thing, it is a recorded fact of history that those known as the founders of philosophy were concerned not with metaphysical, but with physical problems. Their thinking process was quickened by the observa-

tion of certain physical phenomena which affected human existence on this earth. Consequently, the desire to explain those phenomena was aroused, and the result of that desire was the emergence of what is traditionally called the fundamental problem of philosophy.

To-day, we live in a civilised world. We do not always realise how intimately human existence is connected with such natural phenomena as heat, rain, flood, storm, etc. But even to-day, we can realise our intimate connection with nature, if we take the trouble of getting out of the cities and live in the wilderness of the forests or in the mountains; even remote villages will teach us the lesson. There is nothing to protect us there. If we want fire, there may not be any match-box. We shall have to take two pieces of stone and strike them together. Similarly, we come face to face with other elemental physical phenomena in their brutest form. To-day, we make fire with gas or electricity, or by striking a match. If we go out for a picnic in the woods and forget to take a match-box along, it will be a fun to make fire from stones. For the primitive man, it was no fun; it was a matter of life and death. He did not know from books that fire can be made by striking two stones. He had to find that out in

experience. The difficulty of kindling fire whenever he needed it must have made him think that, if there was a permanent source of fire, he could be spared so much trouble. Hence the speculation about the origin of fire. The speculation of the savage ended in the assumption of a god who could spit fire.

Thus began the search; it was not for pure knowledge, not for the satisfaction of the hankering after truth; the search for truth grew out of the necessities of human life, as it is lived on this earth. And the truth was to be sought in our physical environments, in a piece of stone or a log of wood.

There is another angle of vision for approaching the problem. We can trace the whole line of biological evolution, and see how progressively, here and there, different forms of life came into existence. We can see the difference between the various forms of life. The difference is mainly two-fold; the change in its inner structure and in its behaviour; how the form itself is changing, and how it is reacting to its environments. The first sign of life itself is a reaction to environment. An inanimate object does not react to its environment. Only an object with life can do so. Therefore, reaction to environment is the first sign of life.

In course of time, biological evolution produced the form of human being. A new type of reaction is associated with the new form of organism. It is intelligence. Intelligence can be traced in lower organisms also. But it is the distinguishing feature of human reaction to environment. It is no longer a mere mechanical response. Primarily mechanical, now the reaction is associated with the desire to know how it takes place. That original impulse to know is the beginning of science. The word science itself means knowledge. The spirit of enquiry into every physical phenomenon confronting us is the spirit of science. It is very easy to see how that spirit gradually develops into the so-called metaphysical approach to things. In search for the cause of physical phenomena, the primitive man is compelled to assume supernatural causes, because he cannot find simpler, natural, ones. Such assumption again is an integral part of scientific enquiry. No scientific enquiry is possible without a hypothesis. In course of the investigation, either the hypothesis is verified, or discarded upon the discovery of the true cause of the phenomenon under investigation. So long as intellectual, and later technological, backwardness prevents man from finding out the physical

causes of phenomena, metaphysical assumptions are indispensable. But they have no more abiding value than of hypotheses.

The original habit of man to assume supernatural causes of natural phenomena was a manifestation of scientific spirit, the essence of which is the belief that everything has a cause, something cannot come out of nothing.

We are surrounded by a whole series of physical phenomena. Our entire existence depends on those phenomena. Gradually, the human being comes to realise that some control over those would make human life more tolerable and easier. But control presupposes power which can be derived from knowledge. Thus begins the search into the cause of phenomena. Take rain, for example. It comes periodically and fertilises the earth, so that man can grow corn for his food. Sometimes, it does not come, and the corn dries. If man could know how the rain comes, or at least when it can be expected to come, he could cultivate the ground in proper time to avoid the risk of the crops drying out. In that case, he would no longer be a completely helpless victim of the natural phenomenon of rain. If he does not know how rain happens, he cannot anticipate when and in what intervals rainfall may take

place. Similarly, with all the other physical phenomena. In the earlier stages of evolution, the store of human knowledge is limited; it is not possible to discover the physical causes of natural phenomena. But the regularity of their appearance is there. Every year, at a certain time, rains fall; always the rivers flow downwards; night falls regularly; the sun rises every day; the moon has its regular phases. On the other hand, the primitive man finds a similar regularity in his own behaviour. Every morning, he gets up; every night he falls asleep; in regular intervals, he gets hungry. He does not know anything about the biology of his body; he traces all his habits to his own desires. He behaves so, because he wants to do so. From the similarity, a deduction is made: There must be a desire, an intelligent will, behind all these regularities of natural phenomena. The world is full of regular happenings. They are not caused by any human being; they are too big to be so caused; no human being is powerful enough to bring them about. Yet, they must be caused by others—like men, but immensely more powerful. Thus, primitive man makes gods after his own image. It is a long time before human thinking comes to that position. In the beginning, it ascribes a spirit to

every physical phenomenon. Ultimately, the spirits are transformed into gods : a rain god, a sun god, a wind god, so on and so forth.

The point is that the belief in the supernatural did not precede the human desire to explain physical environments. The desire to know itself originates in the desire to live more satisfactorily on this earth. Therefore, philosophy should not be conceived as something over and above science, as something different from science, dealing with problems which do not affect our life on this earth, but with some transcendental existence. This conception of philosophy is not correct. Philosophy is science. The term philosophy etymologically means 'love of knowledge.' The philosopher is a lover of knowledge. Men engrossed in the occupation of knowing things were originally called philosophers. They were also the fathers of science.

In Sanskrit, the word for philosophy is "darshan." Another word was later on added, and it became "atma darshan." Science was called "vijnan." It is said that the object of science is the knowledge of things, and the object of philosophy is to have "jnan," and that true "jnan" is "atma jnan." I do not see any reason to make all these *ad hoc* assump-



tions. Etymologically, "vijñan" means a higher form of "jñan," that is to say, scientific knowledge is a higher form of knowledge—higher than what is called philosophical knowledge, speculative thought. The term "vijñan" can also be translated as special knowledge—knowledge of phenomena, and as such it is placed below "jñan." But the fathers of Indian philosophy, Kanad and Kapila, built their system not on metaphysical assumptions, but on an analysis of the physical world. They started with a division of the physical world into categories. The knowledge about the cause of the world was to be deduced from the knowledge about the world itself. That was placing science above philosophy. Philosophy was constructed on the basis of science which, in those ancient days, was bound to be very largely arbitrary.

The relation is clearer in the case of Western philosophy. Thales, the father of Greek philosophy, trying to explain the root cause of the world, held that the cause of physical existence must be physical. He reduced everything to water which he conceived as the ultimate substance. His contemporary Heraclitus reduced everything to fire. The speculative thinkers, primitive scientists, of ancient India reduced

the world to "panchabhuta." The Upanishads are to be appreciated as a record of a primitive enquiry into the nature of things. By some, fire is held to be the basis of everything; according to others, it is water; still others call it "bohm" (void); others again reduced everything to "akash" (ether). The beginning is always and everywhere an attempt to explain the physical world in physical terms, to reduce the natural phenomena to a unitary physical existence.

But the possibility of acquiring new knowledge is necessarily limited by the store of knowledge accumulated previously. The store of knowledge at that time was so very limited that man could not go farther with those preliminary investigations. But life must go on. The gods may not yield their secrets; Mother Nature may be very tyrannical and mysterious. Still, life must have something to go by. Hence the necessity of metaphysical assumptions. In the beginning, there was a whole series of such assumptions. Human imagination populated the earth with a whole galaxy of gods. But the tendency is towards a unitary explanation. The question arose: Who made the gods? The gods were reduced to one God, and then again, the question arose: Why do things happen in

this or that particular way, and not otherwise? From that question, there developed again a whole variety of religions, explaining why and how God made things happen in their peculiar ways. Every religion develops a theology. When a God is assumed as the creator of the world, the natural rationalism of human being raises the question: What is the nature of the God? There must be a science of God himself. That is theology.

Gradually, what is known as religious philosophy developed. Finally, man returns to the position, from where he originally started, that is, scientific enquiry. Human being starts with science. Baffled in the primitive effort to explain natural phenomena in physical terms, he falls back upon metaphysical assumptions, but in the last analysis, these also are analogous to the hypotheses of scientific enquiry. In course of experience, the store of human knowledge increases. There comes a time when man finds that he can make fire, for example. He begins to find out how things happen, what are the laws governing those happenings. The steadily accumulating store of knowledge eventually enables him to explain natural phenomena in terms of physics. He comes to know how rain happens; he discovers how the wind

blows ; the fire-god and the wind-god disappear.

Once upon a time, ignorance, and the necessity for some explanation compel man to assume supernatural causes and create gods. Later on, his own ability to explain natural phenomena in a simpler and more plausible way frees him from the necessity of creating gods. He was the creator of the gods ; as he created them, so he has the right to do away with them. That is the spirit of science. What is assumed to-day as the most plausible explanation, is to be taken as true for the time being. But if to-morrow we find that it is not true, or that there is a higher truth, we should not have the slightest hesitation to discard the assumed truth in favour of what we have come to know as the higher truth. Nothing is so iconoclastic as science. There was a time when Newton was believed to have said the last word about the physical world. He was a sort of god or a prophet with the scientists. To-day, he is almost a back-number. So many *mantras* in the older *Shastras* of science are to-day meaningless. Knowledge knows no finality. But it is never really antiquated. Old knowledge becomes the foundation of new knowledge. It begins with the biological function of human form, the function of intelligent reaction to en-

environment. Ever since that beginning, it progresses endlessly. Science as well as philosophy are coincident with that process. Science is the method of acquiring knowledge; philosophy is systematisation and co-ordination of the knowledge already acquired, as the guide in the search for new knowledge.

Knowledge cannot be acquired isolated from the physical existence. Whatever knowledge is there, is a part of our physical existence. The biological functions, which are the foundation of all knowledge, are purely mechanical reactions. Nothing supernatural enters into the process of acquiring knowledge. There is brain, a biological mechanism; and physical objects surrounding us. You see your reflexion in the mirror; but if I turn the mirror, the reflexion is no longer there. That is only a physical reflexion. I am looking at your faces, and every expression on every face is reflected in my brain, and my behaviour towards you must be determined by those impressions. That is not the case with the mirror. In my case, the mind intervenes. This intervention has been mystifying. But mind again is nothing but the function of a physical entity called brain. The mirror has no brain. Therefore, it cannot retain the picture. In the case of living beings, there are two

mirrors. Just like the inanimate mirror, my eyes reflect your pictures. But behind my eyes, there is a brain which retains those pictures. Our knowledge is nothing more mysterious than the sum total of such impressions caught by the retina of our eyes as well as by other sense organs, and stored in our brain.

“Jnan,” in order to be “jnan,” must be “vijnan.” If the two are to be distinguished, “jnan” is to be identified with simple consciousness. Is it a higher ideal to be simply conscious than to be learned? To be learned, to know, is certainly a higher stage. Even the most primitive form of life, the amoeba, possesses a primitive form of consciousness. But to acquire the knowledge of various phenomena is the privilege of that biological form called human being. In lower biological forms, primitive consciousness develops into intelligence in varying degrees. But the capacity to acquire knowledge is the privilege of man. However, in a sense, knowledge is a higher form of consciousness. It is a resultant of consciousness. Consciousness is the most essential property of organisms. Thus, if “jnan” is to be identified with simple consciousness, then, “vijnan” is to be recognised as a higher property.

Science is a higher thing than philosophy.

But philosophy need not be degraded, if it is conceived as the sum total of scientific knowledge. "Jnan" is not superior to "vijnan" by virtue of precedence; it is superior as the synthesis of the various branches of knowledge resulting from the investigation into the different aspects of the physical being.

You may ask: What has all this to do with political study? Why do you talk of these abstract things, when you should talk about politics? Just on entering the hall, I was told a very amusing story. Some citizens of this town met a friend of ours and asked: "Is it true that Mr. Roy is going to speak to-day? A C. I. D. man tells me that Mr. M. N. Roy from Moscow has come here to speak about revolution." The story depicts the general approach to politics. I was in Moscow when a revolution took place there. I am known to be an admirer of that revolution, to be what is called a revolutionary. So, whenever I speak of politics, I must describe the world going up in flames, or incite incendiarism. That is the general notion of politics. It is a vulgar notion. It is a stupid notion. Politics must be freed from such vulgarity and stupidity, before it can be really useful.

Perhaps you have also come here to hear something about revolution, What is a revolu-

tion? And who is a revolutionary? A revolutionary is one who has got the idea that the world can be remade, made better than it is to-day, that it was not created by a supernatural power, and therefore could be remade by human efforts. A revolutionary further starts with the knowledge that the world has been remade time and again, and that the process of remaking the world takes place of necessity. Those Indians who have felt the necessity of remaking our country, and are convinced that the people of India have the power to do so, are revolutionaries. One cannot be a revolutionary, without possessing scientific knowledge. One must be a scientist to be a true revolutionary. One must have the conviction that not only human beings can remake the world, can make and unmake gods, but ever since the birth of the race have been doing that. Human nature is to set up gods, topple them down, and set up new ones.

With the evolution of human society, certain principles of political organisation were formulated. If we believe them to be immutable, the question of remaking the world and reorganising society does not arise. People with such an opinion must regard revolutionaries either as visionaries or as lunatics. But political principles are not abstract conceptions; they are



determined by concrete conditions affecting the daily life of man organised in society. On the other hand, they are expressions of those conditions. Therefore, political principles are empirical conceptions, and have only pragmatic value. They affect us as intimately as the concrete conditions of our social existence. We feel the necessity of changing them, whenever the prevailing social conditions affect us adversely. But unless we have the conviction that we have the power to change them, we cannot feel the necessity. If we start from the assumption that everything is preordained and happens according to some inscrutable metaphysical will, how can we conceive of the idea of changing the adverse social conditions, and of revising the political principles in force? The idea of improving upon the creation of God can never occur to the God-fearing. We can conceive of the idea only when we know that all gods are our own creation, and that we can depose whomsoever we have enthroned. Once we realise that the world is not as it should be or could be, we cannot resist the desire to dismiss the God as a bad craftsman. And we shall not feel any scruple against that iconoclastic spirit, as soon as we know that the God himself was our own creation. That spirit can be had only from

knowledge, from what we call science, and only from that kind of philosophy which does not pretend to be something superior to science.

In this lecture, I was to deal with the philosophical consequences of modern science which are supposed to contradict the relation between science and philosophy, as I have just expounded in brief. In order to make more explicit what I wish to convey, I should now take up that treatment. But I am afraid I cannot do that now, because the philosophical consequences of modern science cannot be explained except on the basis of a fairly comprehensive scientific knowledge. I cannot assume that on your part, and it cannot be imparted in one lecture. I have been dealing with problems which were before the science of the nineteenth century and earlier. But an understanding of them is a necessary precondition for the understanding of the problems of the twentieth century science. I need not go into the technical aspects of those problems. We are concerned with their philosophical consequences.

The popular notion about the outcome of modern science is that we cannot acquire true knowledge of the physical existence. What is called scientific knowledge, does not at all reflect what exists outside, being only a creation of our

own mind ; it is only our imagination. In other words, modern science is supposed to have brought us back to the position, where the old philosophers dismissed the physical world as illusion, and held that the object of human existence was to free itself from that illusion, to merge itself into the supernatural, transcendental, existence which is the only reality.

For rounding up the lecture, I shall briefly touch the matter. I shall certainly not avoid the problem ; but for obvious reasons, just now the approach can be indicated only rather summarily.

The urge with which human being was born, namely, to reduce physical existence to some unitary foundation, culminated in the formulation of the physical theories of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. All those theories were constructed on the assumption that all physical events took place on the background of a constantly shifting mass of minute, indivisible, particles of matter which were conceived as the ultimate substance. They were called atoms. The atomist theory, however, is not an invention of the eighteenth century science. It is as old as science itself, and science is as old as philosophy. It was propounded in Greece by Democritus, and in India by Kanad, almost at the same

time. In course of time, the theory was improved by a succession of great thinkers; finally, Newton, and later on Dalton, stated it in the modern form. With this hypothesis, physical science made giant strides and could explain one physical phenomenon after another. Endless secrets of nature were revealed, and humanity made perhaps greater progress during two-hundred years than in the entire preceding history.

But now it has been discovered that the atom is not indivisible. It is composed of smaller entities. To make the blow more shattering, in course of a few years, the atom was divided into electrons, and electrons reduced to waves. The waves then presented a new problem: Their dimensions and movements cannot be accurately measured at the same time. These certainly startling revelations have encouraged the speculation about some mystic, metaphysical, cause of the physical world. Some leading scientists have appeared as the prophets of a new religion. They maintain that a considerable part of our knowledge is the product of our own mind. It does not reflect any objective reality outside; so, the claim of science to have proved the reality of the external world must be given up. They say: One has the idea of a tree, but one can never know whether the

tree really exists or not: because, the content of the idea is the picture of a tree in the retina and, according to them, there is no way of ascertaining the connection between the picture in the retina and the tree supposed to be there at a distance; the latter may just as well be a projection of the idea. How do we know that the tree is the first and the picture on the retina is the second?

That is the fundamental problem of epistemology. For ages, philosophy has concerned itself with the question, how knowledge is acquired. In the first place, epistemology is not the whole of philosophy. The confusion was, and is even now, created by the identification of the two. Secondly, real scientific philosophy does not deny the existence of mind, much less does it underestimate the subjective content of ideas. There is no such thing as purely objective knowledge. Three things enter into the making of knowledge: The external object, the knower, and the apparatus of cognition, that is, the mind. Without mind, there will be no knowledge. That is nothing new. The mystically inclined modern scientists only tell us that without mind there can be no knowledge. Everybody knows that. Yet, that is supposed to be the philosophical consequence of modern

science. On that basis, it is asserted that philosophy is something higher than science. What is it all about, then? It is maintained that modern science has completely knocked out the bottom of what is called Materialism. If that is so, then, the logical conclusion would be that the world is not a physical entity; that it is not governed by physical laws. Are there scientists who would hold this view, and still call themselves scientists? I doubt. The conclusion goes even farther. If it is not possible for human beings to know how the world is built, to discover the laws of physical being and becoming, if there are no such laws, then, the idea of men remaking the world in which they live, reconstructing their social organisation, can never be conceived.

The bottom will be knocked off from all social and political doctrines based on the conviction that the world is constantly changing, and man plays the decisive role in that process. Politics ceases to be a science; social science becomes impossible. The idea of revolution must be discarded. It cannot even be dreamed of.

The question to be answered, then, is: Whether it is true that the philosophical implications of modern science are such as make social science impossible, and consequently politics

can be the occupation only of lunatics and gangsters. I have already answered the question in the negative. Modern science says nothing more than that one must have a mind in order to know. As soon as that much is said, a whole chain of preconceived ideas holds the thinking process of the average educated man in its tortuous coil. It is like this : Mind is something different from matter ; knowledge is not possible without mind ; therefore, all knowledge is the creation of mind ; and the physical world is a reflexion of our imagination ; there does not exist anything outside our mind ; that being the case, wise human beings should not bother with the non-existing world ; there is nothing for them to do ; they should withdraw into themselves. This merry-go-round, however, is not without a hitch. If nothing really exists, everything being the creation of mind, that is, imagination, your minds are the creation of my mind. Nothing exists but my mind. But the table can be turned. From your point of view, my mind is the creation of your mind. Thus, the minds of all thinkers cancel each other. There remains only absolute nothing—not even someone to imagine a world. None of those neo-idealists, who maintain that modern scientific research has pulled down all the beautiful castles in the air

built by a pretentious science, however, would dare go to such an extent to get hopelessly in the vicious circle of Nihilism. Even if they arbitrarily stop at the insanity of solipsism—only mind exists—the position is not improved. The ego cannot exist by itself. I must have a thou. The existence of the ego depends upon that of the non-ego. Therefore, the attributeless god of the mystic—the Nirakar Chaitanya-Swarup of Hinduism—must create or imagine a world to realise his own existence. But the creation must be equally real, if the creator is real. If the world is the creation of the scientist's mind, the former exists just as well as the latter. One cannot run away from his shadow. The devil has got hold of you. It must be taken by the horns. There is no escape from the world, because we are only parts of it.

Let us resume the argument. Everything is the creation of my brain. Granted. Science cannot tell what the mind is. That is not quite true. But again, let it be granted. The mind, whatever it may be, operates through the brain which is a tangible physical entity. No scientist would deny that. Here we come to the older problem: How does the brain function? Philosophy, in the traditional sense; cannot explain that. Science can. It tells us a good deal about



our brain. There may still be much we do not know. But everything we do not know need not be veiled in mystery. Once upon a time we did not know what lightning was. It seemed to be a mysterious phenomenon: It was the flash of the *bajra*—the weapon of the King of Heaven. To-day we know that it is not the case. Grown-up people may be amused by nursery-tales, but they don't believe them. It is completely irrational and impermissible to maintain that there are things unknowable, simply because our knowledge is defective, because there are phenomena which have not yet been explained. The history of science is the decisive argument against this neo-mysticism, this morbid glorification of ignorance, this revival of the cult of *ignorabimus*, this mathematician's invention of a mathematical God.

Perhaps we may still know very little of the world. Perhaps our ideas of the nature of the physical world will be still more revolutionised. But that should give us the impetus to know more. And that impetus is the essence of life. To know is the *raison d'être* of humanity. As soon as the biological form with brain evolved, there began the process of knowing. It is an endless process. The circle of our knowledge has been widening ever since. Perhaps, even

the present circle of knowledge embraces only a fraction of the things to be known. But the very vastness of the field of the knowable opens up before humanity the perspective of a real eternity, the eternity of the human spirit. Since the process of acquiring knowledge is associated with the physical entity called brain, mind cannot be a mysterious category, independent of matter, precedent to matter, weaving in its imagination the picture of a non-existing world.

If modern science has given some blows to the arrogance of the nineteenth century science, that has been only for the good. The feeling that there is nothing more to be known will kill the very incentive of life. Because, then there would be nothing to do, and action is the expression of life. But modern science is not a prescription for the suicide of the entire human race; it does not condemn us to death.

A few words about the concrete consequences of modern science before I finish. It is true that the atom is not the ultimate physical entity. It can be broken up into electrons, the latter again being not a stable category. The electron is not a material entity as popularly conceived. Nevertheless, it is a physical category; otherwise, it could not be brought under the purview of physical research. To measure

is the function of physics. All its standards of measurement, even when conceived in abstract mathematical terms, are physical concepts. Therefore, anything that physics can measure or mathematically describe, is a physical category. The electron is one.

Our idea about the structure of the foundation of the world has changed. But the foundation remains a measurable, and therefore a physical, entity—material substance. It is not metaphysical. That is the decisive point.

Moreover, no scientist will maintain that the happenings of this world are not governed by laws. Previously, some laws were conceived as final laws. Now it has been discovered that they themselves are governed by other laws. There is much talk about statistical laws,—of probability, which is supposed to be antagonistic to Determinism. That is simply a confusion of thought. Probability itself is an expression of Determinism. Prediction presupposes causality. When the world is studied as a complex of an infinite number of inter-connected events, one particular event cannot be deduced from any particular cause. In that situation, calculation must be statistical, predictions must be in terms of probability. But the greatest probability, predicted statistically, usually amounts to certainty.

Hence all this talk about the end of determinism, or of the mechanistic picture of the world, is sheer extravagance. Science still studies the world as a cosmos a law-governed system—not as a chaos emerging out of nothing. Only, it has been discovered to be a system not made of an inert mass, but of dynamic events. It is not a static being, but a process of becoming.

Human knowledge increases. Growing knowledge, from time to time, discards old hypotheses which have either served their purpose or proved mistaken. For every law discarded, more valid laws have been discovered. That being the real position of modern physical knowledge, there is no ground for the contention that Materialism has been undermined. Science cannot do without the idea that there is a physical foundation, a measurable entity, to which all natural phenomena can be reduced. Without that idea, science must disappear, because then no knowledge is possible. It has not liquidated itself, by no means. Indeed, the philosophical consequence of modern science is to abolish completely the distinction between science and philosophy. The problems reserved for philosophy—of time, space, substance and causality—have come within the jurisdiction of scientific investigation, and have been at last

solved. There is no room for speculation about them any longer. Having thus yielded position to science, philosophy can now exist only as the science of sciences—a systematic co-ordination, a synthesis of all positive knowledge, continuously readjusting itself to the progressive enlargement of the store of human knowledge. Such a philosophy has nothing in common with what is traditionally known, particularly in this country, as philosophy. A mystic metaphysical conception of the world is no longer to be accorded the distinction of philosophy.

The habit of attributing everything we do not know as yet to something mysterious, is ultimately based on ignorance. Raymond Du Bois, a French scientist of the nineteenth century, defined this modern philosophy in a Latin term, meaning that we do not know anything and shall never know anything. That was to be the sum total of philosophy! Those who claim that modern science has brought us back to that position, may have their morbid satisfaction. Science does not offer it; nor can it be shared by those who, armed with the conviction that knowledge is power, have undertaken the task of remaking the world. Mysticism is no philosophy for revolutionary political workers. Revolutionary politics must draw its inspiration

from scientific philosophy. Without that inspiration, politics becomes the happy hunting-ground for demagogues, charlatans and job-hunters. Politics cannot be spiritualised. Spiritual or moral politics is often the refuge for cheats and humbugs. We have had our experience.

The scientific mystics and their gullible pupils philosophise with a motive. The motive is to prove that social behaviour is not to be guided by any law, that the evolution of society is not a determined process, that politics is not a branch of science, that principles of politics are not to be readjusted to the necessities of human existence, and that human society need not undergo revolutions from time to time. All these negative conclusions logically follow from the contention that science has liquidated itself; that the physical world is a chaos or a conglomeration of unpredictable events taking place, none knows why and how. Society, being a small chaos in the midst of the universal chaos, is equally a scene of arbitrary events. It is a rough and tumble in which everybody is for himself, the devil taking the hindmost. This "philosophy" is the foundation of Fascism.

In other words, those who are celebrating the debacle of science and the resurgence of

mystic philosophy are trying to create an intellectual bulwark against the rising forces of revolution. The world stands in need of a gigantic change. Science has given confidence to a growing number of human beings that they possess the power to remake the world. Inspired with that confidence, a larger and larger number of human beings are organising themselves as a mighty army to remake the world, to make of it a dwelling place for a happier humanity. To prevent them from doing that, so that the world may remain as it is, namely, a comfortable place for the privileged few, you must deprive them of this confidence, you must tell them that they are automatons, that they are mere slaves of fate, that they are puppets who must act according to the will of somebody constantly pulling the strings from behind the scene. Science to-day enables philosophy to rescue herself from this state of prostitution. The fair maiden of philosophy was prostituted for many years, to serve the interests of the ruling classes, because she did not have the protection of scientific knowledge. To-day, she has regained her godliness.

This distinction between science and philosophy has disappeared. Now, we talk in terms of science. even when we philosophise.

Bertrand Russell, an outstanding philosopher and mathematician of our time, says that anybody who pretends to be a philosopher to-day must learn the differential calculus. Because, he must have the knowledge of the entire realm of science; otherwise, he cannot be a philosopher. Upon the disappearance of the distinction between science and philosophy, the latter appears as the science of sciences. Its function is to co-ordinate the knowledge gathered by science, and to record it into a system of fundamental principles to guide the human race as a whole. Politics being the science of our daily life, of human conduct, there must be an intimate connection between science and philosophy. That has not been realised yet. Therefore, politics has until now been the profession of loafers, lunatics and careerists. But a new breed of professional politicians is growing up. They are just beginning to approach the ideal of philosopher-kings. Only, we shall have not philosopher-kings, but philosopher-citizens. That being the ideal of the citizens of the world we want to build, we being revolutionaries wanting to remake the world in such a way, we cannot do without a very deep and profound knowledge of what is science and what is philosophy. We cannot do without realising



the intimate connection between science and philosophy and politics. Thus, we shall see that the principles of political philosophy shall not remain abstract principles. They grew out of human experience. This experience changes. Therefore, old principles must be rejected, and new ones formulated. Just as general philosophy co-ordinates knowledge acquired in all the various departments of science, similarly political philosophy must co-ordinate the knowledge acquired in the various departments of the social activities of human beings. For that reason, Marxism maintains that politics must have a social and economic basis. What is regarded as the terror of Socialism or the nightmare of Communism or the blasphemy of Marxism, is nothing but a philosophical approach to politics, a scientific mode of solving social problems. It is only our conception of philosophy, of philosophy as the science of sciences; it is the sum total of the entire human knowledge which makes some sense out of politics, and which induces noble and pure, detached and unselfish men and women to take to politics as a profession. Their political activity is motivated by the realisation that there are laws governing human life, as they govern the physical Universe, and that, therefore, the problems

of politics are to be approached as scientific problems, if political and social ideals are ever to be realised. It is the politics of those who know that man makes the world in which he lives; and has the power to make it over and over again, whenever necessary. Except with revolutionary ideals, politics has no charm for people with a philosophy.

## THE RELATION OF CLASSES IN THE STRUGGLE FOR INDIAN FREEDOM

It is necessary to bring the discussion down on a lower level. It has been soaring rather high, and consequently getting somewhat cloudy. The complicated questions raised in course of the discussion cannot be straightened out, unless there is clearness about some fundamental conceptions. We must first lay down the foundation and then build upon it. We must, therefore, begin with definition of some terms.

The subject under discussion is "Relation of classes in the anti-imperialist struggle". The discussion cannot lead to any fruitful result, unless it is started with a clear idea about classes and imperialism. There is a good deal of confusion about both. Both the terms are very frequently used. Everyone has learned them from books, and employs them at random. But very few will be able to give a satisfactory answer to the question, what is imperialism, and what are classes.

In order to assess correctly the relation of classes, it is not enough to start with the pre-

conceived idea that, like any other society, Indian society is also divided into classes. Generally speaking, it is. But the division is not exactly the same. An analysis of the structure of the Indian society, therefore, must be the foundation for an intelligent discussion about the relation of classes. The relation of classes themselves is determined by the structure of the classes. It is very difficult to draw the lines of demarcation between the various classes of the Indian society. Only in a society developing normally, class differentiations are sharp, and can be clearly traced. Indian society has not developed normally. That is the case not only since the advent of British Imperialism. The disturbance of the normal process of social evolution dates much farther back. If we want to find in India classes corresponding to those in Europe, either to-day or in the past, we shall make mistakes. Such mistakes are being made. They talk of the bourgeoisie, of feudalism and proletariat. It is taken for granted that these classes are to be found everywhere uniformly, and Marxists should talk only in terms of those classes. It does not matter whether they really exist in the classical form or not. That is the new dogma which passes as Marxism. In our discussion, we must not be tyrannised by it.

We are concerned not with names, but with things, not with certain familiar terms standing for certain social groups, but with the groups in which Indian society is actually divided. Then it will be possible to make a correct estimation of the relation between those different groups.

Take for instance the term bourgeoisie. Generally, it is a label attached to all people with money. But if you attach the label to the well-to-do people in a small town, you will commit many mistakes. Every well-to-do man is called a capitalist or a bourgeois, be he a lawyer or a doctor or a landlord or a trader or a money-lender. But it is a mistake to put all these different categories of moneyed people in the same sack and put the label "bourgeoisie" on it. Such arbitrary labelling is not an analysis of the class composition of society. The idea behind it is humanitarian, the old idea of dividing society into the poor and the rich. The rich are capitalists and they are bad and immoral; the poor are the good people. This childish way of looking at things does not become a Marxian analysis, if simply the term "proletariat" or "the exploited masses" is attached to the poor. That is simplifying the idea of classes. It is done for two reasons. One is the childish way, in which Marxism is

studied and propagated in our country; the other reason is the great complexity of the problem. Even people who are capable of making the distinction find it very difficult to draw the line. In course of this discussion, attention has been drawn to the process of landlords becoming capitalists. As a matter of fact, in contemporary Indian society, many people are feudal landlords and capitalists at the same time. Many of the native princes have large sums of money invested in modern industries. Yet, it will be a mistake to classify them as bourgeois. As a matter of fact, in India, even the capitalist and the bourgeois are not necessarily identical. A man may be a bourgeois, but not a capitalist, and vice versa. For that reason, there is much confusion also about the term "petit-bourgeoisie", with which group of people we have been so largely concerned in this discussion.

Turning to the definition of terms, let me begin with the feudal class. The confusion in this connection is not only ours. As far as I know, the term feudalism has been differently defined. Even among learned Marxists, there is no agreement on this point. That is not because of any want of scientific precision. The difficulty arises from the fact that there is no uniform type of feudalism. In our country, it

is still more difficult than elsewhere to define the term. Just as capitalism is a stunted growth in India, even so was feudalism, except perhaps in certain parts of Rajputana. However, what is called feudal society, existed in India for centuries, and the present structure of the Indian society is largely feudal. But very few of us have in our mind a clear picture of the feudal society. Therefore, you were all shocked when someone said that the Indian peasantry has a feudal mentality. It would be certainly wrong to say that the peasantry belongs to the feudal class. On the other hand, we know that economic conditions determine the mentality of all living under them. Therefore, the economic conditions of the feudal society produce a feudal mentality of all living in a feudal society. The mentality of a serf is necessarily a mentality belonging to the period of feudalism. The ideology of feudalism cannot be divided into one of the landlords and another of the serf. As long as the serf considers the landlord and his relation to him to be a natural thing, outside of which he cannot exist, so long the serf's mentality is feudal. The priesthood creates that mentality in the peasantry. Religion is still a great factor in the life of the Indian peasant. Leave aside the propagandist language of a

Kisan worker, and go and speak quietly to a peasant. As likely as not, he will ask you : "But how can we do without the landlord? The land belongs to him." The land cannot be without a lord ; and the peasant cannot live without the land. Therefore, in his mind, the relation with the landlords is indispensable. This mentality is still very wide-spread among the bulk of the Indian peasantry. Therefore, it was quite correct to say that the peasantry is not naturally a revolutionary class, if, for the sake of convenience, we call it a class for the moment.

In assessing the social significance of any class, two factors must be taken into consideration. Objectively, the Indian peasantry is a revolutionary class, because its intolerable condition cannot be improved without radically changing the present order of things. But its objective significance cannot make itself felt, unless the subjective factor of revolutionary consciousness is also there. In other words, the peasant must feel that the conditions of his life are intolerable ; he must get over the prejudice that those conditions are providentially ordained, and therefore cannot be changed by any human effort. He must know how those conditions can be changed, and finally, he must have the will to bring about the revolution necessary for



the desired change. That is the subjective factor.

That was a little digression to clear away some confusion about the revolutionary role of the peasantry. I shall revert to this point. Before that, let me return to the definition of terms. A nearly accurate definition of feudalism would be that it is a system of economy in which the direct producer is deprived practically of the entire amount of his surplus produce. How that is done, whether in the form of rent or taxes, whether directly or indirectly, or through usurers' interests, that is a matter of detail. Before I proceed, another term must be defined. What is surplus produce? It is generally admitted that labour is the lever of all social progress. The progressive significance of labour expresses itself in surplus produce. If every member of a society worked just enough for producing what is necessary for his existence, there would be no progress. A community composed of such self-sufficient and self-satisfied members would stagnate. As a rule, human beings organised in society produce more than what is necessary for their existence. Whatever is produced over and above the needs of bare existence, is surplus produce. The surplus produce, in course of time, becomes the expression of collective

labour, and serves as the foundation of continued social progress.

The bulk of direct producers in feudal society is the peasantry. In the first place, the peasant produces what is necessary for his maintenance and that of his family. Maintenance includes the amount of physical energy necessary also for reproduction. A man must not only live himself, but bring into existence other human machines to till the ground after he is dead or disabled. To eat alone is not maintenance. Man must have enough to eat and also be in a physical condition for the continuation of the normal process of the reproduction of the race. In the first place, the productive member of any society must produce things necessary for satisfying all those elementary needs. If he did not produce any more than that, there would be no room for people who do not produce anything. Therefore, in every class society, a producer must produce more than necessary for his own existence, maintenance and reproduction. In feudal society, whatever the peasant produces, over and above his elementary needs, is taken away from him by the landlord. In other words, feudal exploitation expresses itself in the expropriation of practically the entire amount of the surplus produce of the

peasantry. Therefore, serfdom is a necessity for feudal society. If the peasant can save up some money gradually, so that, whenever, for some reason or other, he gets fed up with the life on the soil, he is in a position to move away elsewhere and start on a new career, he is no longer a serf. Feudal economy deprives the bulk of the peasantry of that possibility. A serf is tied to the land, not only by law, but by the economic limitations of feudal society which is based upon an abundance of human labour, and therefore must keep it in serfdom. The law tying the serf to the land, is only the formal expression of an economic reality.

The feudal economy places a limitation on the development of society as a whole. The economic development of a community takes place only when the value produced over and above what is necessary for the maintenance of the society is employed for further production. If, for example, the value taken away by the landlord from the peasantry is utilised by the former for irrigation or other purposes of causing improvement of the conditions of agricultural economy, then the surplus produce is devoted in a socially useful way. Under feudal economy, that does not take place. A considerable portion of the value produced by social labour

recurringly from year to year is withheld from the process of production in some form. The peasantry produces a surplus which could serve as an impetus for expanding production of all sorts. But those controlling society under feudalism do not permit the employment of the surplus for the purpose of the development of society as a whole. That is the reason why the abolition of feudalism becomes a necessity in a certain period of history. It is the condition for the new forces of production to grow and for the entire society to progress. The abolition of feudalism is necessary not only for the interest of the peasantry. No class is ever destroyed owing to its antagonism to any other class. Its abolition becomes necessary only when its interests become antagonistic to the welfare of society as a whole. The converse of the proposition is that a class becomes revolutionary at a certain period of history, not by virtue of its being exploited or poor; it becomes revolutionary and the leader of a revolution, when the interests of that particular class happen to be identical with the welfare of the entire society. In other words, a class frees itself by freeing the entire society.

A correct analysis of the relation of classes in present day Indian society will enable us to

find out which class occupies that position—the interest of which class is identical with that of the entire nation. That is the basic standard. In our search for the most revolutionary class, we are going to apply that standard.

The economic essence of feudalism being as I have described, it is easy to see that the great bulk of the Indian peasantry, whether under the riotwari or zemindari system, live in a state of feudal economy. You may ask: How is that? Nearly in half of the country, in the Punjab, Maharastra and Madras, no feudal lords exist; how can one then say that even there the peasants are living under feudalism? There feudalism has been replaced by imperialism. And imperialism deprives the peasantry practically of the entire surplus produce. That is how colonial booty is obtained.

This brings me to the vicious circle described by Barrister Tarkunde. We need not be puzzled by this vicious circle. Because it is the essence of a revolutionary situation. A socio-political system caught in a crisis appears to move in a vicious circle. That is the position of the established socio-political régime in India. The vicious circle results from the contradictions of imperialism. A correct understanding of

those contradictions, therefore, will enable us to break through it.

Imperialism, being the highest stage of capitalism, is a product of the bourgeois revolution. The triumph of that revolution released the forces of capitalist production. Capitalism developed and expanded, and ultimately attained the stage of imperialism. That being the case, the operation of imperialism must contain certain elements of the bourgeois revolution. The British conquest of India did have a revolutionary significance. It deprived feudalism of political power and introduced radical changes in the relation of property in India. But it did that only partially. It destroyed feudalism as a political factor, but kept it alive as an economic force. That partially revolutionary significance of the British conquest of India is to be explained by the fact that the bourgeois revolution was not completed in England itself. Even after political power passed on to the bourgeoisie, feudalism was retained as an important element of the British national economy. Consequently, the capitalist State retained the monarchy which represented a good deal of feudal influence.

Nevertheless, the operation of British Imperialism did produce even certain positive features of bourgeois revolution in India. Here

we are not speaking as political propagandists, but as scientific students of history. The social and political changes brought about by the bourgeois revolution take place because they are necessary. They are necessary also for India. Just when forces destined to bring about those changes were generating in the country, a foreign factor intervened and carried through some of those changes. Since they were necessary for India herself, imperialism struck root in our country. There is no sense in speaking about Clive's forgery or Mirzafar's treachery or Warren Hasting's spoilations or Dalhousie's bad faith. It does not explain the phenomenon of such a vast country falling an easy prey to a handful of traders coming from a great distance. It is not possible for foreign conquerors to maintain themselves in power for any length of time, unless they find a social basis in the conquered country. Imperialism could establish itself in India and remain here for such a long time, because its interests happened to be identical with those of a considerable section of the Indian population. Even to-day, that is the case. And it may be so even in the future. Only, the relation of forces is changing. In the beginning, imperialist interests were identical with those of some classes; later on, with those of other

classes. But there must be some class of Indian society organically connected with imperialism, if the latter is to continue holding power in India. British imperialism performed certain revolutionary functions, because it was an indirect product of the bourgeois revolution. But, on the other hand, it not only galvanised the decayed economic forces of feudalism, but itself operated as a feudal exploiter.

It has been pointed out that the amount of land revenue is the highest in the province of Bombay, where the riotwari system prevails. That is a very significant fact. No reliable statistics of production are available. If they were, the significance of this fact would be very clear. In any case, even on the face of it, the fact allows the inference that the relatively large volume of land revenue represents the greater exploitation of the peasantry of Bombay. The legal status of the riotwari peasant may be better than of those living under the zemindari system. The actual rate of income may even be greater. But relatively, the riotwari peasants are no better off. Of course, it is better to earn twenty rupees and spend eighteen than to earn four rupees and spend three. That difference may be there. The test, however, is whether the riotwari peasant is left with a larger portion of surplus



produce than the tenant under the zemindari system. The fact that, in a province with riotwari system, not larger than others and no more fertile, the amount of land revenue is larger than in all other provinces, cannot be explained unless the encroachment upon the surplus produce of the peasant is very great there, probably greater than in other provinces. Thus, essentially, the riotwari peasant also lives under typical feudal conditions.

The character of a social system must be judged by the form of the ownership of the main means of production. In India, it is land. For one thing, nearly seventy per cent of social labour is performed on land. Secondly, a corresponding percentage of the gross produce of the country is also from land. Thirdly, the greater part of the State revenue is derived from land. All these things taken together prove that land is still the main means of production in this country. That is also a typical feature of feudal economy. The main features of feudalism are operative in contemporary India with all the tendencies and evidences of capitalist development. That being the case, the country as a whole lives largely under feudal conditions. This picture however does not alter the fact that, at the same time, capitalism has also developed

considerably. But on the whole, the picture is one of feudalism. From that we conclude that a bourgeois democratic revolution is on the order of the day.

Revolution means a radical change in the established social order. The revolution which subverts the feudal social order is known as the bourgeois democratic revolution. The established system in India is a feudal system. There must be a radical change of that system. That historic necessity determines the character of the impending revolution. Since the character of a revolution is determined by the nature of the system to be changed, the impending revolution in India will be essentially a bourgeois democratic revolution. Imperialist economy is a part of the feudal system still prevailing in India. As a matter of fact, colonial and feudal economies have been interwoven into one system. Feudal relations are the social foundation of the colonial economy. Consequently, the situation is very complicated, and the problems arising therefrom are complex. In such a situation, we can not operate with common-place slogans learned from popular propaganda literature or a superficial reading of some text-books on Marxism. Those popular slogans have no application to the situation in our country. The

peculiarities of the situation must be scientifically understood, and the specific nature of the problems of the Indian Revolution must be grasped. Otherwise, effective revolutionary action is not possible. Incidentally, we shall make original contributions to the revolutionary theory as well.

Now let us have definitions of the different classes, in order to find out to whom the known labels can be attached. A landlord is the man who owns much land which he does not cultivate himself. But every landowner is not a feudal lord. All non-productive ownership of land is also not necessarily feudalism. A feudal lord is the person who thrives upon the serfdom of the peasantry; that means, on the expropriation of practically the entire surplus produce of the cultivator. Judged by that standard, the Viceroy, for instance, may be called a feudal lord. He is in fact a feudal lord. But formally and legally he is the representative of British Imperialism. In that capacity he is a bourgeois. You may, therefore, do injustice by attaching the label of a feudal lord to anybody owning land without tilling it. In India, in this period of transition, social differentiations are very diffuse. But in analysing the class forces, we must differentiate.

Take the next class—the bourgeoisie. It is a French word. Etymologically, the word bourgeois means a town-dweller. Originally, towns were called bourgs. The people who lived in the bourg, were called bourgeoisie or citizens. How can this explanation be connected with the economic contents of the label bourgeoisie. The towns were the centres of growing capitalist production. Just as in the desert of feudalism in India, we have some capitalist oases, similarly, in the feudal ocean of the European middle-ages, there developed some islands of capitalism which expanded increasingly, eventually drying up the ocean. In those islands, the towns, the bourgs, modern industries gradually grew. Only such people who had given up the land, and who were connected with the new forms of production came to the towns. Otherwise, they had no attraction there. Then there were no theatres, no cinemas, no government jobs. The people who came to the town did so only for their interest in the new mode of production, divorced from land. In those new centres, there grew a new system of economy which was not based upon land as the main means of production. Those connected with the new mode of production (capitalism) came to be known as the bour-

geoisie. That is how the word 'bourgeois' originated.

The class of people associated with the new means of production wanted to change the whole system. Why? The new means of production developed, notwithstanding many difficulties; more and more new things were produced. They could not all be utilised in the same town in which they were produced. They had to be sold in distant places. They had to be carried there. Trade developed in consequence. All along the trade routes, there sat feudal lords in their castles. The surrounding land was their property. The trade routes passed through their domains. When they did not simply rob the traders, they levied taxes on the goods transported on those routes. The same system still obtains, if in a slightly different form. For everything entering a town, even for a parcel of old clothes, you have to pay toll. That is feudalism. It restricts the transit of goods, and consequently injures trade. In the olden days, the townspeople of Europe, the bourgeoisie, connected with the production of goods for exchange, came into conflict with the feudal lords. The towns and industries developed. More and more commodities were produced in other

places. But the feudal lords levied taxes on innumerable places along the trade routes. They did not want trade to develop. Because, the serfs were going away from the drudgery on land to the towns, where better employment was to be found. If they were allowed to go away from the land, the feudal lords lost their beasts of burden. Naturally, they were against the development of trade and industry. To be successful in developing the new means of production, the town-dwellers must beat down the feudal resistance. That antagonism led to the necessity for the subversion of the feudal order. A revolution became necessary for society as a whole. The town-dwellers felt the necessity before others. Therefore, the revolution came to be known as the bourgeois revolution.

When the serfs went to the bourgs to work with the new means of production, even if owned by other town-dwellers, who had come there earlier, they did not immediately become proletarians. They were also bourgeois—not only so-called, but in the strict social sense as well. They did the same kind of work and had the same perspectives as other town-dwellers. To realise those perspectives, they also needed a bourgeois revolution. If you can understand this, it will help you to get over the difficulties

about the other, frequently used, but often misunderstood, term 'petit-bourgeoisie.' The people who went to the town became bourgeois. But they were not all rich. Rich people were already there, with big bellies and golden chains dangling on them.

They were the city fathers, the big bourgeois. The new-comers were poor, who had been serfs and came to the bourg to work. Those small people were called the petit-bourgeoisie. The French word 'petit' means small. They were the small fry of the new class of town-dwellers. As town-dwellers, all connected with the new form of production, the big ones as well as the smaller fry, were all bourgeois. All together, they constituted the new class of the bourgeoisie.

In India to-day, we have much the same situation. What is the relation between the big and petit-bourgeoisie in India? If we find the difference very sharp, we must regard them as two distinct social groups. If they have identical interests, they will together make the bourgeois revolution. That is the crucial point. Therefore the analysis of the relation of class forces is of so very great importance. The analogy between the development of social forces in the period of transition from feuda-

lism to capitalism in Europe and in India to-day is rendered misleading by the fact that, there, a new transition stage has been reached, in which a different type of class antagonism has become decisive, and those relations have naturally their repercussions on India also, even though the conditions here are different and much more backward. The antagonism between the forces of capitalism and socialism, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, cannot be ignored in India; nevertheless, it is not the decisive factor for the development of events at present and in the near future.

In the general historical sense, the proletariat of to-day, as the revolutionary class, is the descendant of the petit-bourgeoisie of the period of the rise of capitalism. Hence, there is an organic connection between the proletariat and the petit-bourgeoisie, historically. They mark the two stages of the evolution of the same class, the class of the small men as against the big. In this sense, even when we talk about a bourgeois revolution in India, we mean the proletarian revolution also. But a proletarian revolution cannot take place in India to-day; the bourgeois revolution is the historical necessity. The proletariat will play an important role in that revolution as an integral part of the petit-



bourgeoisie, the class of small town-dwellers.

Here arises the question about the ideology of the Indian Revolution. You must have heard the term Jacobinism. When the forefathers of the modern proletariat are still not differentiated from the class of town-dwellers, except as the poorer stratum of the same class, when they are to be included in the group of the petit-bourgeoisie and functioned, on the one hand, as the spearhead of the bourgeois revolution, and on the other, as the herald of the proletarian revolution, their ideology is Jacobinism. When the working section of the bourgeoisie rises as the spearhead of the bourgeois revolution to liquidate feudal power, and establish political democracy, it is to be appreciated as the herald of proletarian revolution. The petit-bourgeoisie, at the time of the Great French Revolution, was, so to say, the great-grand-father of the proletarian revolution of our time. That is Jacobinism. Therefore, Jacobinism is to be appreciated historically as the shadow of Marxism cast ahead. Marxism is not circumscribed by time and space. It operated long before Marx was born. Therefore, it is permissible to say that Jacobinism is the shadow of Marxism cast ahead.

I was dealing with the composition of the class of bourgeoisie. A new economy developed

in the towns. Some of the town-dwellers owned the new means of production. Others did not own any; but all worked together with the new means of production. At that time, the owners were also working. Just as the worker was a bourgeois, the bourgeois also was a worker. The forefather of the modern bourgeois and the ancestor of the proletariat, both appeared on the social scene together as workers. The owner of the new means of production, the fore-father of the modern big bourgeois, was the master. He took a man to work for him as the apprentice, who was from the beginning exploited to some extent.

Exploitation is not theft. It is a very legitimate economic process. There was no other possibility at that time for accumulating capital for the purpose of expanding production. In the beginning, the process of exploitation was not very much felt. When the apprentice and the master-bourgeois were working together, perhaps with the same tool, living in the same house, as it were in the same family, they felt not much difference between themselves. The apprentice, once he had learned his trade, in those days of developing and expanding production, could in most cases eventually establish himself as a master and

employ apprentices to work for him. Gradually, the master ceased to work himself. He devoted himself rather to trade connections and the accounting work; or he could afford to employ enough apprentices to do all the work for him. When he thus ceased to be a participant in the actual process of production, the differentiation became sharper and sharper; the apprentice became a wage-labourer, and two distinct classes developed. In a strictly scientific sense, the petit-bourgeoisie is a sub-class of the bourgeoisie; but economically, there is a distinction. In the earlier stages of the evolution of capitalist society, the line of demarcation is very diffuse.

Let us now try to identify the big bourgeoisie and the petit-bourgeoisie in contemporary India. The bourgeois is not always a capitalist. Now, we must define another term. What is a capitalist? If I have ten rupees in my pocket or thousand rupees buried under my bed, I am not yet a capitalist. Indeed, I may have all the money of the world in my possession, and still not be a capitalist. Wealth is not capital. Capital is a means of production. Just as land is the means of production in feudal economy, capital is the means of production of the bourgeois economy. The most characteristic feature of the feudal system is the expropriation of the

surplus produce from the serf-producer. In the capitalist system, the direct producer is free. He sells his labour power in the competitive market. Labour being the most important factor in capitalist economy, it is necessarily performed under conditions better than those of the feudal order. The greater the productivity of labour, the greater the prosperity of capitalism. Therefore, the development of the working class is in the interest of capitalism. In capitalist economy, the entire surplus produce is not taken away from the producer. There is another reason. Trade is an essential part of capitalist economy which is production for exchange. The feudal lord had nothing to sell; therefore, it was immaterial for him whether the peasant had any money to buy things or not. But the capitalist must sell goods; therefore, the wealth produced by social labour must be a little more evenly distributed than under feudalism, so that the labouring section of society can buy what the capitalists have to sell. That is why capitalism is more progressive than feudalism. It is incorrect to speak of the feudal and capitalist exploitation in the same breath. The class distinction remains under capitalism as it was under feudalism. Both the systems are based on the exploitation of labour. The absolute position of those living on their toil

may not be any better under capitalism than under feudalism, although it is also not quite correct to maintain that; because it actually is better. Under capitalism, the worker earns more. So, he can spend more. The greater the spending power of the toiling masses, the more the capitalists profit from an expanding trade, and capitalist development takes place more quickly. Therefore, the position of the worker is bound to be better under capitalism than under feudalism. Not only as an integral part of the class of town-dwellers (*bourgeoisie*), but also from the point of view of the interests of their particular group, the workers have a stake in the bourgeois revolution *as such*.

We speak of class antagonism. We have learned that the history of human society is the history of class struggle. But there is another side to the picture—the cohesive force in society. Without that force, human society would have broken down long ago, and there would be no evolution of civilisation. There is some social interest which binds classes together. Capitalism grows out of the exploitation of labour; but at the same time, capitalist economy raises the entire society on a higher level; in so far as the working class is a part of society, in spite of all antagonism and exploitation, in the beginning,

its interest is identical with that of the capitalists.

The relation between capital and labour is not properly understood. From where does capital come? What is capital? Capital is not money. Capital is accumulated surplus labour. In the first place, the producer must perform a certain amount of labour to earn his livelihood. But if everybody produces only just enough for himself, human society would never come out of the stage of savagery. The spring of all progress is the surplus production of the collective labour of the entire society. Under feudalism, practically the entire amount of the surplus produce is monopolised by a class of people who, in order to maintain their domination over society prevent its development to a higher level, utilising its wealth for non-productive purposes, and keeping labour, the main source of social wealth, tied to a backward form of production and on a starvation level. Under capitalism, it is just the opposite. The basis of capitalism is the reinvestment of the surplus value produced by labour in the new means of production. As soon as the surplus value is invested in that way, capital is created. Money is not capital. A man produces enough to serve as an equivalent for the food and other necessities of his existence by working, say, for six hours. Money becomes ca-

pital, when a man possessing it purchases the labour power of another man, making him work for a longer time, say, for eight hours. In the additional two hours, the worker produces value not necessary for his own maintenance. Yet, he received wages only enough for his maintenance. The extra two hours' work becomes capital. It is said that capital and labour are two factors which go into the making of the capitalist society. That is true. But the performance of labour precedes the creation of capital. Therefore, capitalist society, in the last analysis, stands on the unitary foundation of labour. Even pre-capitalist wealth is accumulated value of surplus labour. It is transformed into capital with the aid of further labour. Therefore, labour must be regarded as the foundation of capital, and all wealth can thus be reduced to the common denominator of labour.

Let me describe the process in some detail. I have some money. I convert it into capital by purchasing a few tools, and set up a carpentry shop. That alone is not enough for my investment to produce profit. The other necessary means of production is labour. That also must be employed in the process. I may work myself. But the tools purchased with my money may not be fully utilised with my labour alone.

So, I hire additional labour. By the combination of the two factors of production, namely, the tools and labour, mine as well as hired, more is produced than necessary for my own maintenance and that of the hired man. Surplus value is produced. Because the tools are mine, the surplus produce belongs to me. If I keep the surplus in my pocket, it is not capital. I save several months' surplus, and then buy two more saws or hammers. So long as the extra money is not transformed into new tools, it does not become capital. The tools are my capital. Simply by virtue of possessing money, I cannot exploit labour. When I use money for acquiring means through which labour can be exploited, then I become a capitalist. The possession of money does not make a man a capitalist. A man who invests his money in the new means of production is a capitalist. But if he invests that money in buying land he is again not necessarily a capitalist. That would depend on the use he makes of the land. Land can be the means also of capitalist production. But in that case, it is only a subsidiary means. Therefore, a man who invests all his money in land is not a capitalist. Land being the peculiar means of feudal production, the investment of money in land alone does not help the development of the



capitalist mode of production. For that purpose, labour must be applied to the new means of production, namely machinery. Only then, surplus produce can become capital.

The primary means of production is land. But its productivity is limited. Eventually, all its possibilities are exhausted. That exhaustion is perhaps the root-cause of all our economic problems in India. The cause of the poverty of India is that a system of economy, which has exhausted all its possibilities, still happens to be the main sector of national economy. We are still living on a means of production which has exhausted all its possibilities. The way out of the impasse is the introduction of the new means of production. But that presupposes certain conditions. The creation of those conditions again is circumscribed by the exhaustion of the established economic system. Hence, a vicious circle is created. Whenever there is a vicious circle, revolution becomes a necessity. As long as social evolution goes on smoothly, revolution is not necessary. But when things go round and round in a vicious circle, it clearly becomes necessary to break out of that position. The process of that breaking out is called a revolution.

By describing the vicious circle, Barrister

Tarkunde has laid bare the nature of the crisis in which our country is caught, and proved that a revolution is necessary. I say, necessary, which does not necessarily mean, inevitable. I shall revert to that very important difference.

I have described what is capitalism. I have traced the origin of the bourgeoisie, and have tried to show the importance of the group called the petit-bourgeoisie. Being a large conglomeration of small town-dwellers, it is at the same time less and more than a class. It is a section of the bourgeoisie and, on the other hand, at least in the earlier stages of capitalist development, it comprises also the working class. When capitalism grows, it creates a class of people as its auxiliary. The auxiliary force of feudalism is composed of the priests and mercenary soldiers. The auxiliary force of the bourgeoisie is of an entirely different nature. Trade and commerce must have an administrative machinery. A section of people, attracted to the towns, is absorbed in that machinery and becomes an integral part of the new class of the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, there is a process of differentiation. When the richer section of the bourgeoisie becomes divorced from the actual process of production, though remaining the owner

of capital, those remaining connected with the process gradually constitute themselves into a distinct class, the proletariat. But, in the beginning, they also are an auxiliary force of the bourgeoisie. They are also to be counted among the petit-bourgeoisie. With the development of capitalist industry, trade expands and establishes a whole chain of a third category of auxiliaries. It is the small trader. The chain stretches down to the village shop-keeper. He is not rich; nor does he exploit anybody. But he is a link in the chain of capitalist economy and capitalist exploitation. He is not a capitalist in the strict sense of the term. But he is a bourgeois.

Then, there is the fourth category of small bourgeois—the peasantry. As long as the peasantry remains in feudal society, it is a part of the feudal system. Under capitalism also, food must be produced, and in addition, land must produce many other things, namely, raw materials for the new industries. So even under capitalism, the peasantry remains an important social factor. But it ceases to be an integral part of the feudal system, becoming absorbed in capitalist economy. As such, it becomes a part of the class of the bourgeoisie. The “bourg” expands. It is no longer isolated

behind high walls. The economic forces originally growing inside it spread out like an octopus to penetrate the entire society. The tenant may still produce with a wooden plough, but he produces subject to the laws of capitalist economy, and therefore becomes a part of the capitalist system.

Our country is in a period of transition. Therefore, the peasant is a dual personality. On the one hand, he is a petty feudalism, so to say, and on the other, a petit-bourgeois. Legally, as a part of the existing social structure, he lives under a feudal system. But as a producer, he is at the same time a member of a society which is at least semi-capitalist. A part of his existence is governed by feudal laws, and another part by capitalist laws. Therefore, one label cannot be attached to the entire peasantry. But this important discrimination is not made. The usual practice is to regard the peasantry as a monolithic mass. Some include it in the working class. On the other hand, there are super-marxists who maintain that the peasantry being petit-bourgeois, is a non-revolutionary force. The peasantry is, indeed, petit-bourgeois, sociologically. The petit-bourgeois lives in the village as well as in the town. Under capitalist economy, in bourgeois society, the

peasantry is petit-bourgeois. But the Indian peasantry is living still in a feudal society, Therefore, it is not petit-bourgeois. As such, it is a driving force of the bourgeois revolution. When the peasantry becomes petit-bourgeois, then it is a factor of the proletarian revolution.

The other section of the petit-bourgeoisie, the poor town-dwellers, in the meantime constitute themselves into an urban class. They must have relations with the peasantry, in order to overthrow capitalist economy when it ceases to offer any perspective of progress for either of them. In course of capitalist development, the peasantry also as a section of the petit-bourgeoisie, becomes an object of capitalist exploitation. Capitalism stands on two legs. On the one hand, it exploits the peasantry and, on the other, the workers. In our country at present, the peasantry has two roles to play. It is a revolutionary factor in so far as the revolution is bourgeois-democratic, and it is a revolutionary factor also in this era of proletarian revolution. Therefore, it deserves the distinction of being the most revolutionary factor in the present Indian situation. Neither revolution can take place without it.

When we want to abuse a man, we call him a bourgeois. But it is still worse to call a

man a petit-bourgeois. Why? Because, a petit-bourgeois is only a camp-follower of the petit-bourgeoisie. I have described the four categories of petit-bourgeois. That was a division in social space, so to say. Now I shall divide them in social time, that is, historically. In the beginning, the petit-bourgeoisie was the fore-runner of the big bourgeois of to-day. It is from the small manufacturers, small master-artisans, that the bourgeoisie as a class grew. On the other hand, there is another kind of petit bourgeois who is the creation of capitalism. In the period of capitalist expansion, a very numerous class, composed of poor intellectuals, employees, small traders, shop-keepers, etc., is created. This class is the first to be affected in the period of capitalist decay. As long as capitalism prospers, all these people can get employment. As long as trade thrives, the shop-keepers can make profits, and their dependents earn a living. But as soon as the crisis begins, the intellectual professions become unremunerative, employees are thrown out of jobs, the small shop-keeper must close down business. Therefore, economically, the relation between the big bourgeoisie and this latter category of the petit-bourgeoisie must be one of antagonism. But there is a bond to hold them together—the bond of privileges, of res-

pectability. Both grew up as gentlemen—big gentlemen and small gentlemen. The white collar is a bond stronger than chains. How can they believe that they are being ruined, even when they are practically proletarianised? To be saved, they must join the workers and peasants in a revolution. But no, a clerk would rather go hunting for a job all his life—in vain. He has nothing to hope from capitalism any more. Still he fears that, if he will speak against capitalism, even the hope for a job will go. The hope keeps him tied to a system which has thrown him into the scrap-heap.

But gradually, members of this group realise the hopelessness of their position and become conscious revolutionaries. Here I shall only refer to another subject which will be fully treated in a different discussion, namely, the relation between the petit-bourgeoisie and the working class, and the organ through which proletarian hegemony will be exercised. Why do we say that the urban petit-bourgeoisie will be the leaders of the Indian Revolution?

As a part of the capitalist system, this section of the petit-bourgeoisie has been more benefitted. Its members have got some little education. Therefore, once they realise the necessity of a revolution, they will make greater

contributions to it than the workers. In our country, the latter are still too backward, in every respect, to feel the urge for a revolutionary reconstruction of society. They are moved rather by emotions or by the desire for some improvement, than by any intelligent appreciation of social problems. Therefore, at least in the earlier stages of the revolution, the leadership cannot come from them. It will be provided by the urban petit-bourgeoisie which is as much proletarian as the workers are petit-bourgeois.

In normal circumstances, the workers are somewhat benefitted by capitalist development and expansion. Because of a rising standard of living, their intellectual level also rises. The more advanced among them feel the revolutionary consciousness. In India, the victims of capitalist exploitation are left in such a state of cultural backwardness that they cannot become conscious of the urge for revolution. But there is another group, also subjected directly to capitalist exploitation. It has to provide labour to run the administrative machinery of capitalism. Therefore, its members are given some education. That bit of education makes them the grave-diggers of their exploiters. So great is the power of knowledge. We all belong to that category of petit-bourgeois-



sie. If Imperialism has created any grave-digger for itself in India, we are the privileged. If the grave has not yet been dug, that is because we are cowards. No use handing over the bucket to somebody else and wait for the proletarian Messiah to come. The doctrine of proletarian dictatorship preached by the people hailing from the much despised petit-bourgeoisie, only betrays cowardice. The preachers of this cowardly doctrine hope that the proletariat will set up a dictatorship which will be theirs, because the poor prolets would not know what to do with it.

The greatest confusion is perhaps about the terms 'working class' and the 'proletariat'. There has always been a working class everywhere in the world. But the proletariat is a product of capitalist society. Every proletarian is a worker; but every worker is not a proletarian. What is the main feature of the proletariat? It is a class of persons who perform labour in a system of economy based on capital as the means of production-capital, not as money, but as tools, machines, etc. I should not go into technicalities here; but lest, there be any doubt, let it be said that, under capitalist economy, land also becomes a means of capitalist production. Rent still exists. But

the social character of rent changes. Feudal rent and capitalist rent are two entirely different things. Therefore, under certain condition, the agricultural workers become part of the class of the proletariat.

The second characteristic feature is that the working class must not only be completely expropriated, that is, divorced from all private ownership, but there should be no possibility of their ever acquiring it. A man can be completely expropriated, but as long as there is still a chance for him to acquire the ownership of some means of production or distribution or exchange, he is not a proletarian. Therefore, a landless peasant is not necessarily a proletarian. He has lost his land. But he may go somewhere else, save a hundred rupees, again buy two bighas of land, and settle down as a peasant proprietor. A landless peasant enters the class of proletarians only when the possibility of his ever recovering the ownership of land completely disappears. And that takes place when the relation of property in land completely changes, when it becomes impossible to own a small piece of land, when agriculture becomes a large-scale industry, when it is no longer profitable to cultivate a small plot of land. Only then, the landless:

peasant loses the impetus of the striving for regaining the ownership of land.

If that was not the case, if the absence of the possibility of acquiring private property was not a characteristic feature of the proletariat, then we could not maintain that the proletariat as a class stands objectively for Socialism. A class stands objectively for the collective ownership of all the means of production only when, for itself, there remains no possibility for the individual ownership of the means of production. Therefore, as long as a worker is employed in a small factory, he is still a petit-bourgeois—not a proletarian, even if he, for the moment, does not possess anything but his labour power. Only in a fully developed capitalist society labour power as a social category, on the whole, becomes a commodity to be exchanged for wages: but in the earlier stages of capitalist economy, it is the foundation of capital. The forefathers of the modern bourgeoisie were in many cases workers. The worker in a small enterprise may still hope to open a small shop himself one day. He becomes proletarian only when he enters large-scale production, and realises that the means of large-scale production can never be owned by himself or any other private individual, or can be broken up into

small parts so as to be owned by individuals like himself. A more scientific definition will be that a proletarian is the member of the working class, when that class performs labour collectively, with means of production which require collective performance of labour. Socialisation of labour, its collective performance, is the condition for the socialisation of the means of production, including capital.

If we apply this test to the Indian working class, our enthusiasm will not be so shocked by the statement made by Mr. Karnik, that the proletariat is a very insignificant factor in contemporary India. By applying that measure, you will find that there are not more than two million proletarians in this country. And even these two millions, again, are proletarians only in so far as they are employed in large-scale industries and are performing labour collectively. But in so far as they still retain their connection with the village, can go home to the village during a strike, do send part of their wages for the maintenance of their families left behind, or possibly to be saved for buying piece of land again, in so far even they are not proletarianised. They have lost the hope of owning industrial means of production; most probably, they never dreamt of it but they have not lost

the hope as yet of becoming peasants again. Measured by that standard, there are perhaps not more than two lakhs of proletarians in India. Therefore in a strictly scientific analysis, it is perfectly correct to say that in India the proletariat to-day is not only an insignificant factor, but almost a negligible factor. A propagandist may not say that. But that is a fact, discovered by a scientific analysis of the structure of the contemporary Indian society. The only objection to the term 'negligible' would be that nothing in the Universe is negligible. In so far as something does exist, it cannot be altogether neglected. That attitude is not necessarily excluded by our realistic appreciation of the relative strength of the Indian proletariat.

By bringing our discussion on the lower level of testing sweeping assumptions, our problem has been solved. It has been properly stated, on the basis of clear definitions of terms. Having seen how the contemporary Indian society is constructed, it will be simple to find out what are the relations between the classes composing it. The first thing that stands out is that it is practically impossible to draw lines for dividing Indian society into so and so many distinct classes. They are constantly overlapping. Generally, every Indian belongs to

at least social systems, is connected with two contradictory forms of economy. That is the characteristic feature of a society whose development has been stunted. That is the result of imperialist exploitation, and that is the source of all incentive for the anti-imperialist movement. From that feature arises the necessity of an anti-imperialist united front. If there were sharply differentiated and antagonistic classes, there would be no possibility for united front. It is the height of absurdity to talk of united front and, at the same time, of independent class organisations, with equal emphasis. The necessity of a united front grows out of the fact that we are united in slavery. There is a slight distinction, of course, but the fundamental fact is that there is a large mass of people, more or less under the same system of exploitation, and consequently it is their common interest that the system of exploitation should be destroyed.

From that point of view, let us now find out how the attitude may vary with the different sections of that mass of people. The feudal class is not interested in the anti-imperialist movement. Its economic interests are identical with that of imperialism, the feudal and colonial systems are interwoven. We can, therefore,

write off the feudal elements as belonging to the other side of the barricade. But many feudal lords are also capitalists, and to that extent belong to the class of the bourgeoisie. They should be potentially anti-imperialist. In so far as the feudalists are also capitalists, the united front could theoretically include also the princes. It must stretch from the Maharaja of Kashmere down to the textile worker of Bombay! The absurdity of "National Frontism" is evident. Indeed, the absurdity is even greater than it appears to be.

Let us now examine the relation of the Indian capitalists with imperialism. In this examination, we shall bear in mind our previous analysis. When we speak of the capitalist class, we mean a very small class of people. A lot of people connected with capitalist production are not integral parts of the capitalist class. For one thing, in present-day India, it is a very small class. Secondly, the history of the development of capitalism in India shows that it did not break its connection with feudal economy. As a matter of fact, Indian capitalism grew on the basis of the feudal relation of classes. Therefore, and to that extent, Indian capitalist economy is also an integral part of colonial economy. Colonial,

feudal and capitalist exploitation are the component parts of imperialist economy in India.

For a long time, the imperialist exploitation of India could go on very largely on the basis of feudal economy. Here, we come to a point not discussed before, namely, that Indian economy can no longer be analysed as isolated from the world economy. It has become a part of the world economy. The crisis of capitalism means a crisis of imperialism. In order to over-come this crisis, imperialism has to re-adjust the forms and modes of colonial exploitation. What does imperialism want from the colonies? The ultimate object of its exploitation is the vast reservoir of colonial labour. We have already seen that labour produces all values. But the amount of profit is determined by the method of exploiting labour. Once upon a time, imperialism could get the largest amount of value produced by Indian labour by operating through feudal economy. Later on, it wanted more. As a matter of fact, in the prosperous period of capitalism, the value of a colonial possession is rather potential than actual. Colonies are acquired as reserves, to be drawn upon when necessary. All the resources of the colonies are not tapped immediately; only certain things are taken. Trade serves that pur-



pose. In proportion as the crisis of capitalism grows, the structure of imperialism changes. It becomes necessary for it to draw upon the reserves of the colonies. In the period of capitalist expansion, from the last years of the nineteenth century until the beginning of the war of 1914-18, there was a larger and larger flow of capital from the imperialist countries to the colonies. That was the basis of modern imperialism. More capital accumulated in the metropolitan countries than could be invested profitably at home. Highly developed capitalist economy was confronted with the danger of the diminishing rate of profit. Consequently, capital flew out to other countries, where more profitable fields of investment presented themselves. That was the rise of modern imperialism.

After the war, the position was reversed. On the one hand, the actual rate of the accumulation of capital went down, except in America. On the other hand, owing to the growth of newer means of production, the entire industrial apparatus had to be changed; that was necessary to face keener competition in the world market. The result was that capital, newly accumulated in the imperialist countries, was required at home. It was largely invested

there—for the production of capital-goods, necessary for the overhauling of entire industrial plants. That meant a great impetus to heavy industry. The export of capital to the colonies ceased. But at the same time, because of the keener competition in the world market, there was a fall in the general rate of profit; the accumulation of surplus capital in the home countries correspondingly went down. That was the crisis of imperialism. It became necessary to fall back upon the colonial reserves. The countries possessing such reserves could tide over the crisis. In the last analysis, colonial possessions represent reserve labour. If more labour could be employed in more fruitful processes of production, the colonial exploitation would be more profitable. Land as a means of production was exhausted. Therefore, the interest of imperialism in crisis, of capitalism in decay, necessitated the introduction of other means of production than land even in the colonial countries. That process has been called 'Decolonisation'.

Once a term is coined, it becomes easily vulgarised or misinterpreted. So, let me state what is exactly meant by the term 'Decolonisation.' Indian economy was called colonial economy when it was based almost exclusively

on land as the means of production. When that ceased to be so, and when the modern means of production were introduced, the character of the economy of the country changed. It was no longer colonial exploitation exclusively based on feudal relations, but colonial exploitation based on new forms of relations. Whether the native bourgeoisie, the rising native ruling class, received concessions or not, is a secondary question. The decisive factor is the change in the structure of Indian economy, and that change inevitably benefits Indian capitalism; indeed, Indian economy as a whole is largely revolutionised. The crisis of capitalism necessitates a change in colonial economy. It amounts to a departure from what is known as the classical forms of colonial exploitation. We have seen that colonial economy is identical with feudal economy in so far as under that system also the direct producer is deprived practically of his entire surplus produce. The introduction of the new means of production affects that position. They talk of markets for commodities produced in the imperialist country; but markets are not static. They must expand, and there are different methods of expanding the market. In the interest of Imperialism, as a system, it becomes necessary that colonial exploitation

must stop short of spoliation, so that the masses of the colonial people can buy goods, no matter whether the industrial development takes place in India or in England, as long as the profit goes to imperialism.

If imperialism could continue that process to the extent of industrialising India fully, revolution would not be necessary in our country. Because, in that case, imperialism would have to introduce the changes which are the object of the revolution. We know that, as long as capitalism can survive its crisis, revolution is not on the order of the day. The overthrow of capitalism was far foreshadowed by Marx already in its infancy. He discovered the contradictions of capitalism, and that they were ultimately insoluble. But he knew that the actual overthrow of capitalism was to take place much later. Similarly, we may speak of anti-imperialist struggle and the overthrow of imperialism; but so long as imperialism with all its defects and evils will to some extent be able to adjust its contradictions and operate as a factor objectively beneficial for the development of Indian economy, in a relative sense, it cannot be overthrown. For the benefit of India, for the development of Indian economic life, the primary consideration is the unfolding of the

forces of production. That means larger production, increasing the volume of commodities produced. Those commodities must be sold. Here we come to the question of market, the power of consumption of the people. If imperialism can solve that problem, it will stabilise itself. For that is the fundamental problem of Indian economy, and whichever system may solve it will be a 'national' system; if imperialism could solve it, there would be no room for an anti-imperialist struggle.

Every system has innumerable possibilities. While predicting the downfall of capitalism, Marx also wrote that capitalism could carry on endlessly, with all its contradictions, if the proletariat did not overthrow it. That is the problem of the subjective factor. The most important and decisive factor in a revolution is the subjective factor. All the learned talk about objective conditions is but a convenient way of shirking one's responsibility of creating the subjective factor. From this point of view, the line of thought suggested by Barrister Tarkunde deserves particular attention. We are here as students. We must find out all possible lines of development. We must trace them all, even if there is only one per cent probability in favour of this or that line. The one per cent probability may become

the greatest possibility under certain circumstances. The one per cent probability of imperialism carrying through the bourgeois revolution in India should, therefore, theoretically not be dismissed. All depends on the rise and operation of the decisive subjective factor. I cannot dismiss that slight possibility as a mere fantasy. The subjective factor, that is, a consciously revolutionary, organised, force which could avail of any opportunity for overthrowing imperialism, is not yet there. It is immature to the extent of absence.

If the subjective factor is absent, we have to create it. That goes without saying. We have to look out for the raw materials. Where are they to be found? This question brings us back to the analysis of the forces involved in the anti-imperialist struggle. We have drawn a picture of the contemporary Indian society. Now let us see which is the class with the greatest possibility of becoming conscious of, and accomplishing, the outstanding revolutionary task? We have found out that objectively the peasantry stands in need of two revolutions. On the other hand, the urban petit-bourgeoisie, that is, we, who are the creation of imperialism and have been thrown into the scrap-heap by imperialism, are there to supply the subjective factor. Thus,

we come to the conclusion that the petit-bourgeois in the wider scientific sense, is the most important subjective factor of the revolution.

The picture which I have drawn appears only in our brain. It does not appear in the brain of, say, Bhulabhai Desai or Mr. Jinnah or even of Vir Savarkar. Why does the picture appear in our brain, and not of others? Because of our organic connection with the working class. The picture appears in the brain of those who by birth belong to the petit-bourgeoisie. And their brain is the organ through which the hegemony of the proletariat will be expressed. If you deprecate that brain, all talk about proletarian revolution is nonsense. The all-important subjective factor has its preconditions. Such preconditions are some education and a minimum level of culture. In other words, to be conscious, one must have a brain. If we take all the revolutionary forces in India, the proletariat, the peasantry, the petit-bourgeoisie in general, only one particular group is found to be possessed of those minimum requisites. Everyone of us belongs to that group. Everyone of us is an ardent fighter for Socialism. Yet, there is not one amongst us who belongs to the class of the proletariat. That is the fundamental fact of the present Indian situation, as it actually is. The

relation of classes in the anti-imperialist struggle must be determined by that fact.

On the other side, there are those, who own the means of production, be it land or mills or mines or factories. They own those means of production as integral parts of the imperialist colonial economy. Therefore, in the relation of classes, in the anti-imperialist struggle, they are on the other side of the barricade. On the other hand, there is the vast mass, intersected by faint lines of demarcation. The cohesive tendency of social relations still keeps them bound, in a greater or lesser degree, with the classes on the other side of the barricade. But the same tendency asserts itself much more strongly in the relation among themselves. Their unity and cohesion are essential in the anti-imperialist struggle against the combination of the imperialist-feudal-capitalist forces. Hence it is injurious in the present stage of our movement to talk so much about class struggle. The harmfulness of such loose talk is realised when it is known that the class struggle is not only between capital and labour. There is ample ground for antagonism between the urban petit-bourgeoisie and the working class, on the one side, and the peasantry on the other. Indeed, in contemporary India, the largest number of people is actually involved



in that form of class struggle. If you go and sharpen that class struggle which really exists in our country, you will act as a counter-revolutionary, because you will split the forces of revolution.

There must be some sense in revolutionary propaganda. It is sheer nonsense to lay so much emphasis on class struggle, and also talk of the united front of the workers and peasants. It is said that the trade-unions and the Kisan Sabhas constitute the basis of the united front. But if you press the interest of the peasants through the Kisan Sabhas, you harm the interests of the workers, and vice versa. The class antagonism between the peasants and the workers is the most baffling problem. It is so all over the world. You have heard of the 'scissors' in Russia. The problem of widening and narrowing the gap between the two ends of the scissors, was the problem of adjusting the interests of the peasantry and of the working class. That was a large-scale problem. In India, the workers as well as the peasants live in terrible poverty. Even a matter of one pice is a vital thing. For the welfare of the peasants, you demand higher prices for agricultural goods. If that demand is enforced, there will be a rise in the prices of flour and rice, and the workers will suffer. If the

workers, on the other hand, demand higher wages, the mill-owner raises the prices of manufactured goods, and ultimately the burden falls on the poor péasantry. Not that those demands should not be pressed. But the implication of the necessity of united front should also be borne in mind. It is not a simple problem. The idea of developing the anti-imperialist struggle by sharpening the class struggle is sheer humbug. If you want to create a united anti-imperialist front, you must emphasise the cohesiveness of social relations, and the uniting factors. The only united front possible under the given conditions is a united front of the peasants, workers and the poor middle-class (traders, artisans, employees, intellectuals) as integral parts of the petit-bourgeoisie. Only as the petit-bourgeoisie, as the impoverished town-dwellers, will the working class itself realise its immediate demands. Only as such it will exercise hegemony in the present stage of the revolution. That is how the working class of Paris acted in the Great French Revolution. Ours is still a bourgeois revolution. Therefore, the respective roles of classes will be essentially the same.

We are still living in a feudal society. That state has become so injurious that imperialism itself is trying to transform it. Even the land-

lord finds the situation going from bad to worse, and would like to change the system. But both, being interested in the system itself, can neither destroy it nor undermine it by introducing any essential change. They may tinker with it, but never liquidate it. The interest of the peasants, the workers, the petit-bourgeoisie,—all of them really petit-bourgeois—represents to-day the interest of the entire nation, because they constitute the overwhelming majority. That is our revolutionary army. In the midst of that army, we have a group of people more advanced than the rest—people like ourselves. Robespierre, Danton, Marat, were all petit-bourgeois. Who would be ashamed to play their rôle in India? When the bourgeoisie as such, as a whole, would not make the necessary revolution, the petit-bourgeoisie stepped forward and carried through the task. They recognised the working class as their own, and the working class, in its turn, acted as a section of the petit-bourgeoisie—the class of the small people inhabiting the towns. They did not demand higher wages. They demanded bread. That was not a class demand, but a demand of entire society. Only that group of people, in the whole combination, which is endowed with the intellectual ability, cultural achievements and education requisite for

giving expression to the common demand of the whole mass, can act as the focus of their revolutionary urge; only that group can claim the leadership of the revolution. Therefore, the credit and the responsibility of leadership of the Indian Revolution will be neither of the proletariat nor of the bourgeoisie, but of the Jacobins—the petit-bourgeoisie acting as the vanguard of the rising proletariat, together with the proletariat acting as an integral part of the petit-bourgeoisie.

From this analysis, it is quite clear who will supply the subjective factor of the Indian Revolution. It will be supplied by us. We know where we belong—sociologically and ideologically. What is the use of posing as proletarians? That need not be done by the leaders of the Indian Revolution, who are petit-bourgeois, socially, and Jacobins, ideologically. Above all, we are Marxists. But in contemporary India, Marxism can be practised only as twentieth century Jacobinism. We should learn that lesson from a correct understanding of Marxism, and from a scientific analysis of the relation of classes in the present-day Indian society, made in the light of a correct understanding of Marxism.

## SOME FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES : ORGANISATIONAL AND THEORETICAL

Fundamental principles are only relatively so. Therefore, we have to examine them also from time to time. Are the principles, with which we started working in the Congress, still valid, or do they require any revision? That question has to be answered in the light of the perspective of the future of the relation between the forces of National Democratic Revolution and the present organisational structure of the Congress.

Having examined the relation of forces in the struggle for national freedom, we have come to the conclusion that certain classes of the Indian people are objectively involved in the revolutionary struggle. Next, we have to ascertain the inter-relation among those forces themselves. That relation again will change in course of the development of the movement. In the beginning, one class may occupy a subsidiary place; later on, it may go over to an

entirely different position. We have to find out what changes in the inter-relation of forces have already taken place, or may take place in the course of development of the movement. The discussion of the potentialities of the Congress as well as of the role of the working class should be helpful in that respect. But an estimation which is valid to-day may not hold good two or three years hence. It is not very difficult to foresee such changes in the inter-relation of the forces of National Democratic Revolution. In that respect, we shall be helped by an analysis of the structure of Indian society and of the laws of our social and economic life.

But they are not technical problems of organisation, to be solved in the light of experience. They are theoretical problems. Our discussions so far have taken place very largely on the basis of empiricism and pragmatism. In order to divert our attention to the more fundamental aspect of the problem, I intervened in the discussion yesterday and formulated two questions. Except Barrister Tarkunde, nobody took any notice of those questions, much less tried to answer them. Yet, a correct understanding of the internal state of the Congress and the fruitfulness of our activities inside the Congress is

conditional upon the answer to those questions. To help you to realise the importance of those two questions, I want, in this lecture, to take up one very important point in the programme of our Camp discussions, namely, the problems of mass mobilisation. In my opinion, it is perhaps the most important point.

If we approach the problems of yesterday's discussion from that angle of vision, many things that have been said will appear either irrelevant or not of very great importance. We want to mobilise the masses for the purpose of a revolutionary struggle. Revolution is not a vague concept with us. We have clear ideas about it. We have definitely formulated its programme. We have realistically appreciated the forces which will participate in it. We have visualised the structure of the State machinery to be created by the revolution as the instrument for accomplishing its tasks. That being the case, it should be a simple proposition for us to find out what will be the technical form of that mass mobilisation. One of the questions I raised yesterday was: Can the Congress still serve the purpose of mobilising the masses in the struggle for the capture of power as condition for the victory of the revolution we visualise?

For us, the Congress is not an abstract conception. It has a very definite content. It is an organised machinery, an apparatus, which operates on the basis of a vague confidence and blind faith of the masses in the leadership of a group of people constituting that machinery. The legendary figure of the Mahatma sits at the top of the machinery. The machinery is political. But its mass basis is semi-religious, and one of ignorance and political backwardness.

When it is said that it is still possible for us to continue working inside the Congress, we must ask : What will be the result of our work? It has been generally admitted that there are all sorts of difficulties. Can we overcome those difficulties? Our answer to all these and many other subsidiary questions must be determined by the fundamental consideration whether the task of mobilising the masses in a revolutionary struggle is still possible within the organisational frame-work of the Congress. For that consideration it is completely irrelevant that the masses are still in, or with, the Congress. The Congress to-day represents two factors. One is its organisational machinery, and the other is the revolutionary potentialities of the masses following it. We must ascertain whether the two can be combined. We cannot disregard the



machinery. On the other hand, it is also a fact that a vast mass of people still owe allegiance to the Congress, expressed through their confidence in the Mahatma. That is rather a religious sentiment based on superstition. Nevertheless, that is the real mass basis of the Congress. The facts showing whether the masses are gaining or losing confidence in the Congress are all matters of detail, very largely irrelevant for the purpose of this discussion. The important fact is that the objectively revolutionary forces are still attached to the Congress by the bond of blind faith. The question is: Can those forces operate effectively within the limitations set by the organisational machinery of the Congress? This question has not been touched by any of you. Yet, this is the crucial question. It is necessary to state the problems of mass mobilisation before we can answer the question whether it is possible to mobilise the masses for a revolutionary struggle inside the Congress. We know the setting in which we must work. Once the problems are stated, we shall be able to see whether they can be solved in that setting.

The terms propaganda, agitation and organisation are very loosely used. Thought is confused by this slipshod use of terms. Con-

versely, the loose use of vague terms reflects confusion of thought.

A large bulk of the Indian masses has been mobilised under the banner of the Congress. That is a fact which must be taken into due consideration. In Congress meetings addressed by local leaders of some popularity, perhaps five hundred will gather. Most probably, two thousand will come to hear a provincial leader of importance. An all-India leader may attract five thousand. Jawaharlal Nehru or Mahatma Gandhi will draw crowds many times more. The mass mobilisation under the banner of the Congress obviously is not uniform. As a matter of fact, whatever mass mobilisation has taken place under the banner of the Congress, the credit for that does not belong to any political propaganda of the Congress, but to its swearing by Mahatma Gandhi. Moreover, mobilisation is not organisation, and mobilisation itself is a matter of degree. A larger or smaller number of people attend any Congress meeting. But how many Congress members are there among them? How many of them are organised in the Congress? In this place, for example, the Congress membership is not more than fifteen hundred. Yet, ten thousand people might come to a meeting addressed by

Mahatma Gandhi. But they will not come to hear what he has to say, but only for a *darshan*. Such huge meetings have no more political significance than religious *melas*.

Even the payment of four annas a year does not make everybody a member of the Congress. Under its present Constitution, the Congress grants only one right to the primary membership. Their only function is to vote in annual elections. Generally, not even fifty per cent of the membership perform even that elementary function. That proves the political backwardness of the Congress membership. It is not an organised force, doing something collectively. It is rather an amorphous mass, bound together only by a vague sentiment, when even that is there.

Every member of a group of people organised with a political purpose must do something for that purpose. That is to say, standing political activity is the life of a political organisation. Judged by that standard, there are very few Congressmen throughout the country. And they are mostly cogs in the wheels of the machinery which constitutes the organisation of the Congress. Whatever really exists, is identical with the machinery. The organisation which operates with the name of the Congress is

not even composed of all the members of the Congress Committees. They also are mostly sleeping partners. Nor even half the members usually attend the meetings of the lower Congress Committees. The real Congress is composed of an army of office-bearers. They represent whatever exists as the Congress organisation.

There is a great difference between mobilisation and organisation. Mobilisation takes place from time to time for particular purposes. It is not a standing state. Organisation is. The masses take part in demonstrations, meetings or *hartals*. They are occasional events. An organisation is a group of people united with a purpose and working collectively all the time for that purpose. Looked at from that point of view, the Congress as represented by meetings, demonstrations, etc., is not to be regarded as a powerful mass organisation.

Mobilisation also takes place with a purpose. The instrument of mass mobilisation is agitation. The masses are mobilised through speeches and slogans which agitate their mind and concentrate their attention on certain concrete issues. Some agitational work has been done by the Congress. Consequently, mass mobilisation has taken place to a certain extent.

If mobilisation takes place with a purpose, as an initial stage in a long process, it should be known what will happen afterwards, and how the mobilised forces should be held together in the meantime. There is no such continuity or perspective in Congress activities. A state of mind is created by certain slogans or speeches; suddenly, different issues are raised. The backward masses cannot see any connection. Their adhesion to, or membership of, the Congress does not lead to any political education.

Our purpose is to make the masses conscious of their community of interest, so that they can realise the necessity of acting collectively for common welfare. Mobilisation and agitation are necessary for that purpose. Mobilisation of the masses must be immediately followed by propaganda. That is the instrument for holding the mobilised masses together. Propaganda is different from agitation. But the Congress lives only on agitation. There is no real propaganda except the propaganda of Gandhism. Practically no political propaganda is made from the Congress platform. Even in the Congress Sessions and A. I. C. C. meetings agitational speeches of the same kind are delivered as in mass meetings.

Let us forget for a moment the bureaucratic

machinery, the process of the destruction of democracy and other obstacles, and regard the Congress in an idealised form, as a mass organisation which everybody can join. Still the fact remains that the Congress is defective in the sense that it makes no political propaganda, and consequently the masses, mobilised in it are not politically educated. We have been working in the Congress for a pretty long time; it would be bold to say that the masses on the whole are on a higher level of political consciousness to-day than in 1920. Had it not been so, the mass control on the leadership would have been greater. Why is political consciousness absent? Because no political propaganda is done, only agitation. We see that there is something lacking, and realise the necessity for it. Why do not others also realise it and set about to remove the deficiency? The reason is that we approach the problem of mass mobilisation from an entirely different point of view.

The others do not feel the necessity of going beyond the stage of mobilisation; and we want an organisation of the masses. For simple mobilisation, agitation is enough; for organisation, propaganda is essential. A political programme cannot be popularised without propaganda. Unless the masses understand the

implications of the political programme, the sanction for enforcing it will not be created. The masses must become conscious of their revolutionary urge. Whatever propaganda is done, from the Congress platform, is calculated to produce just the opposite effect. We want to quicken the political consciousness of the masses, to raise their general intellectual level, to remove their cultural backwardness. That desire is not shared by the Congress leaders. Because, the very political backwardness of the masses is the foundation of the present leadership of the Congress. Political backwardness and blind faith go hand in hand. Remove the political backwardness, and blind faith will burst. As soon as blind faith goes, the leadership will be compelled to yield to the pressure of the masses; otherwise, the latter will create a new leadership. The present anomalous state results from the contradiction between the leadership of the movement and the movement as a whole. An objectively revolutionary movement has been saddled with an anti-revolutionary leadership. That is not an accident. A movement gets the kind of leadership it deserves. The Gandhian leadership was the creation of the earlier stages of the mass movement which developed under the banner of the

Congress. The masses were backward; they were just beginning an elemental revolt; at that stage arose the Gandhian leadership. The cultural backwardness of the people, their habit of thinking in terms of vulgar religiousity, created a Mahatma. Outcome of such backward conditions, the Gandhian leadership could not be the instrument for quickening the revolutionary consciousness of the masses.

Eventually, the movement acquired experience. The masses as a whole could not draw any lesson from it. But there were some who could do that. In course of its development, the mass movement began to throw up new elements to enter into its leadership for transforming it according to the needs of the movement. The penetration of those new elements would be dangerous for the established Gandhist leadership. The growth of those elements could be checked by retarding the development of the mass movement in a normal way. Such a development became antagonistic to the position of the Gandhist leadership. At the same time, the leadership had to retain the mass backing, thanks to which it had attained that position. But the leaders would not adjust themselves to the urges of the movement. Therefore, for retaining the support of the



masses, they appeal to their religiousity, cultural backwardness and blind faith. If political propaganda was allowed, some people might have talked in a different language. That would undermine the position of the Gandhist leadership. The latter kept up the mass effervescence by agitation with empty slogans. Deliberate deception was also practised. The masses were told that great things were going to happen. Swaraj would mean Ramraj under which there would be no rent or taxes to pay. That picture naturally appealed to the masses, but the leaders did not mean anything of the kind. They formulated the slogans so very vaguely as could never be realised. Political propaganda was completely neglected, and in the absence of political propaganda, the preconditions for an organisation were not created. Therefore, for twenty years, the Congress has remained a movement rather than becoming an organisation.

We accepted that estimation of the Congress as our point of departure. We regarded the Congress as a movement which embraced the oppressed and exploited masses objectively interested in the impending democratic revolution. Those masses could be organised to form an instrument of the revolutionary struggle.

Therefore, we assumed that the mass movement developing under the banner of the Congress could be eventually developed into a political party of the Indian people. It might be argued that even to-day the Congress can be regarded as such, and therefore we should remain in this movement and try to give it the shape we want. But one factor has intervened which has created a great difference. It is the organisational machinery of the Congress. To-day, whatever exists of the mass movement, is an adjunct to this machinery, completely controlled by it. You cannot have any access to this movement without the permission of this machinery. The masses have been accustomed to the language of Gandhism. They do not easily respond to any other language. The machinery does not allow the systematic political propaganda necessary to break the paralysing faith in Gandhism. Whatever you do, must be adjusted to the desire of this machinery.

Therefore, any success of our further activity inside the Congress pre-supposes breaking of this machinery. One of our fundamental principles of organisation is internal democracy. Therefore, theoretically we may assume that the machinery can be broken. We shall raise the political consciousness of the masses; eventual-

ly, the majority of them will be sufficiently conscious politically, so as to vote for us. We shall get a majority and capture the Congress. That is the obvious chain of reasoning. But the question is whether that perspective is still there. We should not be deluded by appearances. We have made bitter experiences. We are constantly running up against the machinery which stands there like a stone-wall. However much we work, it does not allow us to come anywhere near our goal. If after two or five or ten years' patient work we could secure a majority and capture the control, say, of fifty per cent of the districts, we could democratise the Congress from below, even if the higher Committees remained beyond our reach. The machinery could be blown up from below. But the development is not even. We secure a majority in some places, while elsewhere we are not yet in that position. We cannot act. We must temporise. Meanwhile, the growth of our influence alarms the right wing. The machinery is set in motion, and we are crushed. We must not forget this uneven development. The development being uneven, the right-wingers choose their ground to fight us. Wherever we raise our head, they will do everything to break us. Thus, the machinery operates as the decisive

factor. We cannot estimate the possibilities of our work in the Congress by disregarding the importance of this new factor.

The situation is somewhat analogous to that under parliamentary democracy. Even in the ideal form of parliamentary democracy the masses cannot capture the State machinery constitutionally. We are up against a similar problem inside the Congress. Theoretically, the position is this: There is a mass movement, its membership is objectively revolutionary; therefore, we must work there. Nobody can prevent us from doing the work that the Congress leadership is not doing. We can carry on political propaganda. But from this, it does not necessarily follow that the consequences of that activity will eventually give us the control of the Congress. Since we cannot capture the Congress constitutionally, so to say, is there any other means for doing so?

We started with the knowledge that the Constitution of the Congress was defective. We expected to remove those defects gradually. That would have given larger scope of activity to the rank and file, and the latter, being objectively revolutionary, would have gradually come under our influence. Consequently, we should have greater possibility of influencing Congress

politics and eventually shaping the whole Congress organisation in the way we want. But all our efforts to change the Congress Constitution have failed. Indeed, they have not failed completely. The right-wingers have taken over some of our suggestions, and distorted and vulgarised them to suit their purpose. To-day, they are using those constitutional changes for crushing us. Consequently, the perspective of democratisation and activation of the Congress rank and file, and the possibility of influencing the entire Congress organisation, without seriously disturbing its very existence, do not seem to be there any longer. That, of course, does not mean that we should go out of the Congress immediately, or that we should underestimate the possibilities of the Congress, in so far as it still wields some influence over the masses. But we have to find a different approach to the problem of organising the masses, mobilised under the banner of the Congress, for a revolutionary purpose. In so far as the Congress is a movement, expressing the urge of the Indian people for freedom, we are an integral part of it. So, the question is not whether we should continue working in the Congress or go out of it. The question is about the further development of the mass movement which has

taken place until now with the name of the Congress.

Only a change in the approach to the problem is necessary. But from the new approach, the solution appears to be entirely different. We never believed that the Congress as a whole could be transformed into a revolutionary party of the people. If we ever had that idea, our slogan of an alternative leadership would be completely unwarranted. We started from the fact that there are two antagonistic factors in the Congress. We regarded the Congress as a movement involving the masses. We wanted to transform the masses, mobilised under the banner of the Congress, into a revolutionary party of the people. The Congress as a whole embraces also the machinery which to-day serves the purpose of checking all revolutionary development. It is impossible to revolutionise the Congress machinery. The immediate object of our work in the Congress was to raise the political level of the rank and file, to radicalise and activate them progressively. We hoped that, in course of time, the defects existing in the Congress would be eliminated; and in proportion as they would be eliminated, the masses, mobilised under the banner of the Congress, would be crystallised

in a revolutionary political party. We expected the process to be peaceful and painless.

Now we must approach the problem from another angle, because the situation has changed. A machinery has come into existence. It obstructs our work. Experience shows that it cannot be removed constitutionally. Whatever we could do in the Congress to-day, is done in spite of its machinery. We might go on with our political propaganda; gradually, the membership might become politically conscious; but ultimately, there is bound to be a clash. The clash is pre-determined by the existence of the organisational machinery. What will be the result of that inevitable clash? When a clash takes place on a higher political plane, between the popular forces and the State machinery, the result is a revolution. Inside a political party, it is a split. The name of the Congress to-day is identified with a certain individual. He is magnified into an organisational machinery. To-day, the Congress is identified with a definitely anti-revolutionary organisation. The organisation functions as a powerful apparatus, checking the revolutionary urge of its own components. The clash will be between the mass basis of the Congress and its machinery. In the case of a split, the name 'Congress' most

probably will remain with those people who have come to be known as orthodox Congressmen—a handful of followers of Mahatma Gandhi. It is difficult to say whether Gandhi personally will be still there. In his absence, the Holy Family will no longer be able to claim the proprietorship of the Congress. So, there may be a fight for the name also. But what is more likely is that the amorphous mass called the Congress will break into two pieces: The machinery will retain the name and will perhaps be recognised by the public as the Congress; but we shall take away the life of the Congress, though we may not be able to capture the name which, then, will be no greater as an asset than dead body. Until then we can go on working as Congressmen. But when we shall have taken away the life of the Congress without its name, what shall we do then? Shall we still say that, except with the name 'Congress', we cannot have a political position in the country? Shall we bring the masses back to the Congress?

The idea of organising a new party arises from this question which, in its turn, is raised by the reality of the situation inside the Congress and by our own experience. The problem of organising the masses mobilised under



the banner of the Congress will be solved through a split. A split has become necessary. You can split an organisation, but you cannot split a name. You split up the amorphous mass. The name will be retained by one part. Perhaps, we shall be able to capture the name also. In that case, we shall still function with the name of the Congress. Most probably, we shall not. What shall be our name then? If we adopt a different name, that will mean the formation of a new party. And after the split, we must have a name.

The idea is not new. We have often discussed it. The perspective of a horizontal split is there. The process of differentiation is going on. It can be completed either by our eliminating the defects of the Congress and capturing it, or by the mass basis breaking away from the Congress machinery, and a new party structure being built on that basis. With this dual perspective, we have to continue working in the Congress. But upon the hypothetical accomplishment of that work, it will no more be the Congress we know to-day. Because, the inevitable result of our activity will be a split of this amorphous mass. The perspective of a new party should be regarded in this sense. I have never had any doubt on that score.

To-day, there is even less room for doubt. But we must go step by step. Three years ago, our own comrades would have been horrified by the idea of our organising a new party. But now it has become so very obvious, that everybody must think about it. Many feel that we cannot work in the Congress any longer. Others are of the opinion that we can still accomplish much, if we work with greater vigour. But none has any illusion about capturing the Congress machinery. That point must be made very clear. However much we may work in the Congress, the machinery will remain unaffected. The result of our activity will be the development of a force inside the Congress, not to be accommodated within the machinery. Regarding the problem in that light, we can no longer expect to transform the Congress as such into a revolutionary people's party.

We must go back to our starting point. We want to create a revolutionary party of the Indian people. It is one of our fundamental principles that, for the development and success of the Indian Revolution, a certain type of political party is necessary. We set about to organise that party. We discovered that a considerable section of the masses destined to

go into the making of that party were partially mobilised in the Congress. Therefore, we joined the Congress. We tried to make finished goods out of the available semi-manufactured raw material. Experience has taught us, that the object of transforming the Congress as such at any cost should not be a fixed idea. Our purpose is to create a certain kind of political party. Whether that party can come into existence with the label of the Indian National Congress or not, is a different question. Previously, we hoped that, crystallising out of the Congress, the party would eat up the Congress with the exception of the dry bones of the Gandhist coterie. Now we have come to realise that perhaps it will not be possible for the party to operate as the Indian National Congress. That means that, as soon as mass mobilisation has attained certain degrees of organisation, as soon as the process is sufficiently advanced, the Indian National Congress will cease to be the common label for this entire bulk now associated with that name.

I pass over to another aspect of the problem which will make the position still clearer. We appreciate the Congress from two sides. On the one hand, it was a mass movement; consequently, the tendency of its growing into

a political party was inherent in it. On the other hand, we appreciated the Congress as a peculiar form of broad mass mobilisation which could eventually develop into an equally peculiar type of organisation—a periphery of a political party, which could become the framework of a future State. From the very beginning, we attached greater importance to this peculiar feature of the Congress.

Ordinarily, a revolutionary political party makes the masses conscious of the necessity of a radical change of the established order; only in the last revolutionary political crisis, the new State grows out of the background of the mobilised masses. During a short period, two States exist simultaneously; between them, the final clash takes place, and the old State is overthrown.

In India, the peculiar organisation of the Congress created a situation, in which the foundation of the new State could be laid over a long period of time by extending and reinforcing the framework of the Congress as a mass organisation. The framework of the new State and the political party were thus interlinked. That was the peculiar feature of the Indian situation, and all our strategy had to be adjusted to that. We approached the prob-

lem of mass mobilisation from the point of view of that peculiar feature.

The potentialities of the Congress thus were twofold: It could develop into a revolutionary political party, and it could also supply the framework of the new State. As regards the party, again, the Congress had two possibilities. The mass mobilised under its banner is composed of two sections, the toiling multitude and the propertied classes, owners of land as well as of capital. That being the case, the tendency of the development towards a political party was bound to be in two directions. The Congress could develop as a political party of the bourgeoisie or of the revolutionary masses. Because of our estimation of the role of the bourgeoisie, and in view of the fact that the masses were mobilised with the unconscious purpose of accomplishing a bourgeois democratic revolution in our country, we thought that the Congress might develop into a revolutionary people's party. Our analysis of the structure of the various classes of Indian society led to the conclusion that the bourgeoisie could not assume the leadership of the democratic revolution in India. The corollary to that conclusion was that the development of the party inside the Congress would rather go to the direction

of the organisation of a revolutionary people's party than towards the formation of an exclusively bourgeois party. We have not been mistaken, although our anticipation has not been altogether fulfilled. The organisational machinery of the Congress functions as a political party, but it is not a political party of the Indian masses, nor is it a political party of the bourgeoisie. It is a political party of certain sections of the propertied classes. The potentialities of the Congress as a mass movement to develop into a party of the kind, necessary for the Indian Revolution, need not be necessarily eliminated thereby. The potentiality still remains—*but only as a potentiality*. If the Congress machinery could serve the purpose of leading the anti-imperialist struggle, another party would not be necessary. But it cannot be expected to do so. The Congress machinery has proved itself incapable and unwilling to lead the anti-imperialist struggle, to accomplish the task of the bourgeois democratic revolution. But the necessity of the people's party remains and the forces to go into the formation of that party are still largely mobilised, *though not organised*, in the Congress.

The crystallisation of the reactionary elements as the machinery of the Congress

makes it impossible for the revolutionary forces to organise themselves into a political party within the Congress. The condition for the splitting of the Congress has been created by the crystallisation of the reactionary elements into a political party. Since what is known as the Congress has already been transformed into a party of an entirely different kind, the Congress can no longer be transformed into a political party of the masses. But the revolutionary party of the people must be created. It may not have the privilege of the name of the Congress; when it appears on the scene, it may unfold itself as something entirely new.

The problem, however, is more difficult and complicated. With the breaking up of the Congress, the possibility of its periphery developing into the framework of a democratic State will also disappear. It may be argued that, in order to prevent that, the Congress must be kept intact. But look at the other side of the picture: If the Congress remains intact as it is to-day, the revolutionary party of the people will not grow. To-day the Congress organisation, with its District, Tahsil, Mandal and Village Committees, exists very largely on paper. We may still carry on our activities for quickening the political conscious-

ness of the masses through those organs. But you have already seen that we shall eventually come to a clash with the Congress machinery. It will be a clash between the unorganised mass membership and the reactionary elements organised in the machinery. There will be a break or a split. In that case, the framework of the Congress Committee will not remain in our control. It will go with the organised leadership of the Congress. We shall not be able to utilise it as the basis of the new State. Thus the anxiety to keep the Congress organisation intact would not allow us to force the process necessary for the rise of the party we want to organise. At the same time, our activity inside the Congress, assuming that it will serve the original purpose, is bound to lead to a clash with the machinery. It will not be a clash between the Working Committee and the A. I. C. C., on the one hand, and the rest of the Congress, on the other. It will be a clash with an organised machinery, on the top of which stands Gandhi, and which is based upon the hierarchy of Congress Committees controlled by the Ashramites; it will be a clash with the great Mahatma on the top and the myriad of Chhota or Pseudo-Mahatmas at the bottom, connected by an unbroken chain of mercenaries



and obedient tools composing the Congress machinery. The latter is in the pocket of the anti-revolutionary Gandhist clique. Obviously, there is no chance of capturing it, it being beyond popular control, impervious to mass influence. Yet, that is known as the Congress; as a matter of fact, it has usurped the reputation of the Congress. The clash will not affect its solidity. It will not split. Only the mass basis will be destroyed and decomposed.

That is a dilemma. If we want to organise the party which must be organised for the success of the revolution, we must forego the privilege of utilising the name and the framework of the Congress. Because, if we want to utilise them, we must adjust ourselves to the operation of the machinery and subordinate ourselves to the forces of reaction represented by the present Congress leadership. We must be prepared to follow Mahatma Gandhi to the attainment of the substance of independence which in reality will be only the shadow.

This perspective compels us to make a very serious change in our approach to the organisational problem. That again is really not a change. We have simply to revert to our original position. At Ramgarh and even previously, the idea of People's Councils was

introduced. Theoretical considerations and also the factual changes in the structure of the movement called the Congress compels the introduction of this idea in the place of the previous perspective of the possible development of the primary Congress Committees as units of the democratic State.

Why do we talk of People's Councils, when we want to create a political party? Because we are in the midst of a revolutionary crisis. Two of the three conditions of a revolutionary crisis are mature or maturing. There is wide-spread popular discontent; the conditions of life are certainly becoming intolerable for the masses. It is true that thousands come to hear the Mahatma, not because he is a political man, but because he is believed to be a Mahatma. Nevertheless, this religious hero-worship has a political content. The big mass meetings and demonstrations give expression to a seething discontent. Occasionally, it breaks out here and there. The Mahatma is terrified by the "forces of evil", and offers imperialism his co-operation in the holy crusade against them.

The other condition is a political crisis. That may happen any day. Therefore, we have to talk in the terms of capturing power.

But that is not possible in the absence of a political party. This latter is the decisive factor in a revolutionary situation. It is not there. It has to be created. We alone claim to know how that can be done. It need not be a mass party with several million members, on the model of the Congress. We have seen how that imposing model breaks down in a critical moment. A party like that can be created within a year in the midst of a political crisis. If Camps like ours are conducted with the right spirit, and we can have half a dozen of them within a specified time, our task can be accomplished before long. But it is not so easy.

We have been propagating the idea that, in order to capture power, an instrument for the purpose must be forged. We have been also pointing out that the frame-work of the Congress could be that instrument. But now that instrument is being destroyed, we must create a new one. The People's Council is only a new name for the organ of democratic will and power that we have been visualising for a long time as a precondition for the success of our struggle for freedom. The content is the same. The Congress Committees have practically ceased to be what we thought they were or could

have been. They are no longer the local organs of struggle. They are not representatives of the local population. On the one hand, they are parts of a machinery functioning not as representatives of the people, but with sanction from above. The men who control the Congress Committees need not have the confidence of the local people. They rely upon the patronage from above. That enables them to function as leaders of the local Congress organisations. Therefore, the Congress Committees have ceased to be popular organs. As long as local Congress leaders can speak in the name of Mahatma Gandhi and count upon the loyalty of the so-called Congress Civil Service, they do not require any popular sanction, nor do they represent any popular interest. The process has gone farther in consequence of the setting up of Satyagraha Committees. The lower Congress Committees were to some extent democratic. Now the Satyagraha Committees are replacing elected Congress Committees under the dictatorship of Gandhi's Pro-Consuls, who act like Hitler's "Statthalter", with the only difference that it is a 'non-violent' dictatorship. The activities prescribed for the Satyagraha Committees cut them off from the masses altogether.

Some comrades said that the situation might change if the Congress returns to office. May be. But to-day, that is the position, and we shall have to act accordingly. The position is not likely to change in the near future. The proposition that Congress Committees should become the electorates of the Constituent Assembly, and that eventually the Congress might meet as the Constituent Assembly, was based upon an entirely different perspective. We visualised the Congress embracing the entire oppressed masses. In so far as the Congress stood for independence, and all that is implied in that programme, that perspective was possible. To-day, the situation has changed. It will not be much different even if Congressmen return to office. Therefore, in that case also, the Congress Committees could no longer become the organs of popular power.

Whatever may be the social basis of the communal problem, politically the fact is that it has been aggravated very largely by the mistakes of the Congress leadership. We suggested ways and means for solving the communal problem. It could be solved, at least prevented from assuming the present baffling form. Our expectation of the Congress eventually embracing the entire oppressed and

exploited masses was not altogether unwarranted. It was objectively possible. But the subjective factor intervened. The peculiar interests and prejudices of the Congress leadership prevented it from acting in a way so as to achieve communal unity.

Let us assume that the Satyagraha Committees are only temporary phenomena; let us further assume that the Congress machinery can still be democratised. Even then, the Congress Committees will not be representative of all the sections of the oppressed masses. The Muslims will not be in them; the depressed classes and many others will also be outside. Taken together, they constitute a vast bulk of the population. So, the Congress will represent only a minority of the oppressed masses, if at all. To-day, the Congress, except for its name and tradition, is a minority party. That is a decisive fact. It claims to represent the entire nation, but actually does not. The revolutionary significance and political importance of the Congress Committees consisted in that they could become local representative bodies. Now they cannot serve that purpose any longer. They have ceased to be so, owing on the one side, to the mistakes of the Congress leadership and change in the internal structure

of the Congress, and on the other side, owing to external facts,

The idea of People's Councils implies that we want to retain the tradition of what the Congress was, or might have been. In every village, there was a Congress Committee, and those who have worked in the villages, know that the people began to look upon the Congress Committees as a sort of new Government. That was the positive outcome of the acceptance of ministries by the Congress. But the people at the head of the Congress did not want that tendency to develop. They tried to check it. But the tradition has not yet died. The people had come to believe that there can be local authorities of theirs. Therefore, People's Councils will be a continuation of our programme of building up the local Congress Committees as the units of a democratic State. Our original idea was that in every Congress unit, there should be two groups of people : active members who will really constitute the party, and the bulk of the passive membership, the periphery, so to say, who will constitute the organised basis of the new State. The Congress Committees presented a possibility to combine those two aspects. If we function as a political party of the people with the object of

mobilising the masses in a struggle, and of creating out of the struggle an instrument to serve as the local organ of power, then, what we wanted to do through the Congress Committees, can still be done, although no longer as part of the Congress organisation.

Some comrades are afraid that, if we begin to talk about a new party, our work inside the Congress would be necessarily neglected. There is no ground for that misgiving. The Congress as a movement still remains the main field of our activities. Political activity among the masses, mobilised under the banner of the Congress, is necessary for the rise of the party we want to organise. But we can no longer expect the Congress to be an all-embracing organisation. The slogan "All power to the Congress Committees" must therefore be abandoned. The People's Councils will represent also those section of the people which are not in the Congress and can no longer be brought in the Congress. Therefore, the propaganda for the organisation of People's Councils cannot be carried on through the Congress. By functioning exclusively as Congressmen, we shall restrict the field of our activity. If we only work through the Congress Committees, we shall not be able to draw other elements under



our influence. Our Congress patriotism must be curbed. We cannot maintain that, who is not a Congressman is a counter-revolutionary. Moreover, we have learned from experience that no revolutionary political propaganda, not to mention any struggle, can be conducted through the Congress Committee.

Nevertheless, we should insist on functioning as Congressmen as long as possible. When we approach the Muslims, or others outside the Congress, we should not make a secret of our being Congressmen, so that they know that there are different kinds of Congressmen. That knowledge may remove the mistrust that has been created by the mistaken policy of the Congress leadership and stupid behaviour of a certain type of Congressmen.

By functioning only as individual Congressmen, we may have greater freedom of action. As members of Committee, we are restricted in our operation. I am of the opinion that no useful purpose will be served by Radical Congressmen seeking election to Congress Committees. Henceforth, we shall remain in the Congress only as ordinary members. Since we have come to the conclusion that the Congress machinery cannot be captured, we should not limit our freedom of action by trying to

function through the Congress machinery. In so far as the Congress is identical with the machinery, we can have nothing to do with it any more. In that position, the perspective of our developing into an independent party opens up before us more clearly than ever. Our activity was heading this way all the time. We need not be afraid of a split. That is a necessary event in the process of building up an organisation on the basis of the mobilised masses.

On a different level, a similar experience was made by the revolutionary movement in Europe. In the earlier stages of capitalist development, when the working class was just beginning to constitute itself, there was an elemental revolt. On that background, the Social-Democratic Parties came into existence. They were, of course, organised very differently from the Indian National Congress, being composed only of one class. Those parties also came into existence with the express purpose of attaining Socialism, just as the Congress declared its object to be the attainment of national freedom. Before long, some accommodation within the framework of the capitalist society, persuaded the original leaders of the Social-Democratic Parties to pay only lip-

service to the goal of Socialism. There developed a left wing inside the parties to carry on propaganda for the enforcement of the original programme. The left wingers in the European Social- Democratic Parties also came up against the difficulties that we are experiencing in the Congress. Finally, in a revolutionary crisis, the Social-Democratic leaders, supported almost entirely by their respective parties, went over to the camp of counter-revolution. They also had created a powerful machinery which enabled them to do whatever they liked with their mass following. That experience proves that a mass basis is not a guarantee for the triumph of the revolutionary tendency in any political organisation. As a matter of fact, objectively revolutionary masses can be utilised for the purposes of counter-revolution by reactionary leaders armed with a powerful organisational machinery. At the time of such betrayal, mass movements split. The Communist Parties came into existence in consequence of splits in the Social Democratic parties, when the leaders of these latter went over to the camp of counter-revolution. That inevitable split happened in Russia earlier than in other countries. That fact perhaps contributed very largely to the triumph of revolution in Russia. The

practical non-existence of a Communist Party in England is a perplexing phenomenon. This is explained by the fact that the Labour Party was never split. A split of the revolutionary movement in its earlier stages is an essential condition for the development of the party which ultimately leads the revolution to success. That can be regarded as a law. And it must be applicable also to India. We talk about class differentiation. How does it express itself? The process of class differentiation culminates in a split.

Now let us revert to the question discussed yesterday. It should have been made sufficiently clear by what I have already said. The conclusion of our discussion is summarised in the concluding passages of our Draft Manifesto. It is declared there that the present leadership of the Congress will ultimately betray the cause of national freedom and, therefore, the rise of a new political party will be a necessity. Before finally deciding to change our approach to the problems of mass mobilisation, we may once again consider the question whether the Congress can still be saved. The desire of the leadership, which has now culminated in the plan to destroy the Congress as a mass organisation, originally expressed itself in the failure

to carry on political propaganda. The idea that the leaders want to destroy the Congress may appear preposterous. But the leaders themselves look at it from a different point of view. They believe that Gandhi has created the Congress; as its creator, he has the right to destroy it. We differentiate the mass movement from the Congress machinery. Therefore, we have a different point of view. Gandhi is the creator of the Congress machinery, not of the movement. He became the leader of the movement by a fortuitous combination of circumstances. He created the machinery for curbing the revolutionary tendencies of the movement. Time and again, he has done that. The first time, it was at Bardoli. The Bardoli resolution almost destroyed the movement. It took six years to recover from the blow. If the movement becomes politically conscious, and is given an organised form, it may no longer be handled according to the will of the leaders. When masses of people do no more than attend meetings or participate in meaningless demonstrations, to be scattered in the next moment, nothing serious happens. Organised in a political party, they come closer to each other, form definite opinions collectively, and can find out whether the leaders act as they talk.

The Gandhist leadership of the Congress did not allow that. They only let the masses listen to their speeches and cast votes for them once in a while. Having prevented the masses from developing their own strength, expressed through an organisation, the Congress leaders are in a position to destroy the mass basis of the Congress. We were the first to insist upon the recognition of the rights of the loose mass of Congress membership. We worked for an organisational cohesion of the loose mass of Congress membership. If we had succeeded in our effort, the Congress could no longer be destroyed. Therefore, from the very beginning, the leaders were afraid of us. It is not generally realised that our propaganda for the activation of the Congress rank and file has borne some fruit. That has compelled the Congress leadership to put a stop to our propaganda. But whatever has been achieved by us in the meantime, cannot be destroyed. It may be small, but as a ferment it is bound to spread. Nor is it confined to one single spot to be thrown out. Eventually, it may affect the whole organisation. The only guarantee against that danger is to destroy the organisation itself.

The organisation of the masses is a danger for the reactionary leadership. If the masses

could be organised, there would be a pressure for the democratic control of the organisation and its policy. The Congress leaders are determined to destroy that danger. They can do so because they can rely upon the asset of mass ignorance, blind faith and hero-worship. Let the masses remain scattered, ignorant, politically backward; still, they can be expected to worship the Mahatma and whenever necessary be persuaded to put in the ballot box pieces of paper together with some rice and even some small coin. They don't vote, but they bring offering to the Mahatma. That is the character of the mass basis of the Congress. That is no political asset. We need not depend on that basis for building up a political party. The Congress leaders, on the contrary, are against the organisation of the masses, because blind faith is their only asset.

For some time, Gandhi has been devising ways and means for reducing the Congress membership to a closed association of Gandhists. That tendency has finally culminated in the forcible transformation of Congress Committees into Satyagraha Committees. The significance of this transformation is nothing short of the destruction of the Congress as a democratic organisation. Upon the acceptance

of office by Congressmen, there was a great mass influx. The result was the creation of some sort of an organisation. Now that is to be destroyed and replaced by a machinery imposed from above. That must change our entire outlook regarding the Congress organisation. The question is if we can prevent the destruction. We cannot. It can be prevented only by a split. If a sufficiently large number of Congress Committees was in our control, we could force a split even to-day. They would have refused to transform themselves into Satyagraha Committees, and together continued to function as the Congress. On the other hand, parallel Satyagraha Committees would have been created everywhere. In that case, we might even capture the name of the Congress. But with our given strength, we cannot do that to-day. A split at present would be disadvantageous for us. We must prepare for the split in a more favourable occasion. But the split is inevitable. It is a condition for the attainment of our object of organising a revolutionary party of the people. Sooner or later, we shall have to part company with the Congress machinery, because it can neither be captured nor be split.

Severe restriction of the radius of Congress



activity is yet another obstacle in the way of mobilising the masses in a revolutionary struggle under the banner of the Congress. Functioning only as part of the Congress machinery, we shall have to devote ourselves to activities which cannot serve the purpose of mass mobilisation. We shall have to assert the right of individual Congressmen to function as the members of a political organisation. That will inevitably bring us up against the machinery. The line of differentiation will sharpen. The split looms before us. One group of Congressmen wants to work according to the political programme of the Congress; another group would not allow that, and insists upon limiting Congress activities to Gandhist fads. There is nothing in common between the two. They must part company. So, looking at the situation from all points of view, we come to the conclusion that the mass known as the Congress must break up. That is our perspective. We should also know that, the policy of the leaders having been to keep the membership in political backwardness, it will not be possible for us to take along any considerable part of that mass. Therefore, we must create a mass basis outside the Congress. Henceforth, greater importance

must be given to our work among the masses outside the Congress.

As a result of our discussion, on the basis of an exhaustive analysis of facts, a new perspective opens before us. We are compelled to adopt a new line of action. Will that be in accordance with our fundamental principles? This question must be answered, because some comrades have already expressed the opinion that we are giving up our original position.

We start from two sets of fundamental principles; theoretical and organisational. The latter has already been treated—the former can be formulated briefly as follows :

India is in the throes of a democratic revolution. A democratic revolution socially is a bourgeois revolution. Therefore, in the strict scientific sense, we must characterise the impending Indian revolution as a bourgeois democratic revolution. A revolution means clash between two classes, each associated with specific means and modes of production. The bourgeois democratic revolution is the clash between a class based on land as the means of production and another based on new means of production, namely, capital. In other words, it is a clash between feudalism and capitalism. In the programme of the Indian Revolution, we

have included industrialisation through the introduction of modern machinery in the process of production. Evidently, a bourgeois democratic revolution is visualised.

As against our view of the nature of the impending Indian revolution, others hold that it is the age of proletarian revolution, and India must be abreast of time. But the bourgeois democratic revolution is a historic necessity. It creates the conditions for the proletarian revolution. The one is conditional upon the other. The bourgeois democratic revolution, therefore, must take place in India. The intervening period between the two revolutions may be two hundred years or twenty years. But a whole historical period cannot be simply jumped over.

At the same time, we hold that, taking place in the period of the decline of capitalism, when proletarian revolution is on the order of the day, the bourgeois democratic revolution in India may create conditions favourable for a direct development towards the establishment of Socialism. I draw your attention to the word 'may'. Because, a historical necessity is not an inevitability. Nothing is inevitable. Anything may happen. We have already seen that, although India will go through a bourgeois

democratic revolution, the bourgeoisie will not lead it. The chances for a direct development towards Socialism, therefore, are there. Yet, the possibility of a break and the establishment of a peculiar type of capitalist society for the intervening period, is not altogether excluded. Therefore, our theoretical formulation is that the bourgeois democratic revolution in India may develop directly towards the establishment of Socialism. Even then, there will be an intervening period, during which the conditions for Socialism will be created. The introduction of the mechanical means of production on a large scale, the abolition of all pre-capitalist restriction on production, the attainment of a certain minimum economic level—these are the historic pre-conditions for the establishment of Socialism. Ordinarily, they are created under the capitalist society. The instrument, however, is not capitalism, but mechanisation of the process of production. Therefore, capitalism, in the traditional sense, need not be regarded as an indispensable stage of social evolution. On the other hand, the structure of society during the intervening period, during which the pre-conditions for Socialism will have to be created, will not be socialistic. The character of the State will be accordingly determined. The

nature of economy, social relations and political institutions during the transition period again will be determined by the class composition of the forces of revolution.

The connected problem, namely, the role of the proletariat, as well as of the bourgeoisie, have already been discussed. We have seen that the proletariat is not in a position to lead the revolution, nor is the bourgeoisie able to assume the role. It is generally held that the proletariat will not be the leader of the impending Indian Revolution, but will exercise hegemony. This is a term very frequently used, but little understood. If it is to be conceived as something distinct from leadership, hegemony must mean ideological influence, proportionately much greater than the physical strength. So, the concept of hegemony raises a philosophical problem. How can a class wield ideological influence before it exists physically. Proletarian ideology pre-supposes the existence of the proletariat. It cannot be distinguished from another ideology, unless the proletariat itself is distinguished from other classes. We say that the Indian proletariat is not yet fully constituted as a distinct class. How can its ideology then influence the situation? I have just pointed out that essentially it is a philosophical problem.

Propagandist clap-trap is not the proper approach to it. The inability to find the philosophical approach to a philosophical problem causes the confusion about the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat.

That brings us to the question of the role of Marxism in bourgeois democratic revolution. A comprehensive treatment of that question is reserved for another lecture. In this connection, only a few words will suffice. We are not living in the age of the bourgeois democratic revolution; ours is the period of proletarian revolution. When large parts of the world still remain in pre-capitalist conditions, how can it be said that the world as a whole has entered the age of proletarian revolution? The characterisation of our age results from the fact that the proletariat has been definitely formed as a distinct class on the world scale. Consequently, there has grown a proletarian ideology. Once it is born, it travels. It has its own laws of motion. Its operation does not remain limited only to those parts of the world where proletariat exists. An ideology resulting from the emergence of a new class in some parts of the world, before long, becomes an integral part of the entire intellectual outfit of mankind.

In India, we live simultaneously in the six-

teenth as well as in the twentieth century. While chronologically India lives in the twentieth century socially, she is lagging several hundred years behind. This anomalous situation influence the ideology of the nationalist movement. Capitalism is breaking down everywhere. It has proved to be a failure. Why should we have it in our country? Capitalism is breaking down because machine is an evil. We should not allow that evil to come to our country. So, let us have charkha, revive village industries and go back to simple life. Because the struggle for the bourgeois democratic revolution in India is taking place in the period of the decline of capitalism, and the bourgeoisie itself is not leading the struggle, it is so very difficult to find a correct approach to the problems of the revolution. The problems can be solved only in the light and context of social developments which transcend capitalism. Therefore, the solution can be offered only by the few people who have, so to say, received a message from their spiritual brothers in other parts of the world, whose physical existence has contributed to the development of the proletarian ideology. This ideology, in other parts of the world, in the normal course of events, come to us as a spiritual message. That message

opens before mankind the perspective of social developments beyond the stage of capitalism. The carriers of that message are the instrument through which the proletarian hegemony can be exercised on the bourgeois democratic revolution in India.

It is true that ideas are determined by the conditions of existence. But at the same time, the basic features of future development can be predicted by studying history as a science. Just as the physical knowledge of to-day enables us to predict certain happenings in the future, just so our knowledge of the laws traced behind the process of social evolution enables us to predict future developments of society. As a matter of pure thought, the ideology of the proletarian revolution can be formulated even before the emergence of the proletariat as a class. It actually happened that way. Physically, Marx preceded the emergence of the proletariat engaged in a revolutionary movement. Yet, Marx formulated the fundamental principles of what has come to be known as the proletarian ideology. What was possible for Marx in his time, might be theoretically possible for some people also in India, even if they were deprived of receiving the spiritual message from others who have preceded them. We are living



in a certain social atmosphere; we are equipped with a certain degree of knowledge, which enables us to study history as a science. Consequently, we can predict the developments which will most probably take place in our country. Marxism does not say that there must be a capitalist society before Socialism can come. It simply says that recurring revolutions in the means of production are necessary for social evolution. The growth of a new means of production changes the mode of production. A revolution takes place for replacing those associated with an antiquated mode of production by others connected with a new mode of production. Therefore, Marxism will not be belied if a revolution in the current means and mode of production of our country, so as to create the pre-conditions for Socialism, does not take place in the framework of a bourgeois capitalist society. The fundamental fact will be a revolution in the means of production as a necessity for social evolution. That is a law predicted by Marx. The knowledge of all this, and the approach to all the peculiar problems of the Indian Revolution in the light of that knowledge, amount to the hegemony of the proletariat in the Indian Revolution.

In the lecture on the role of Marxism in

in bourgeois democratic revolutions, I shall show that Marxism is independent of the individual Marx, and it operated previous to his existence, not only in the time of the French Revolution, but even in earlier revolutions. All those revolutions of history were governed by laws which were later on discovered and scientifically stated by Marx. Therefore, the knowledge of the laws of history has come to be known as Marxism. But the laws themselves did not come into existence when Marx discovered them. They had been there all along.

Those considerations show that Marxism should be conceived not merely as the proletarian ideology, but as the highest form of philosophy—of human knowledge. The proletarian hegemony on the Indian revolutionary struggle will be exercised through the instrumentality of Marxism. But Marxism must be regarded not as the property of one particular class. It is the philosophy of human progress, of social liberation. The fundamental fact of the present world situation is the conflict between two classes; one possessing the means of production, land, capital, etc.; and the other employed in the process of production, but deprived of the fruit of their labour. That conflict determines everything that happens anywhere in the

world to-day. Each of the classes is guided by its ideology. One is the philosophy of conservation, reaction, the other is the philosophy of progress, revolution. Therefore, the revolutionary forces throughout the world, to whatever class they may belong *locally*, must be influenced by Marxism. Because it opens before humanity as a whole—not only before England or Germany, but before India also—the perspective of a new form of social evolution and a new intellectual, moral and material progress. Thus, as a philosophy, as well as a source of inspiration, Marxism is bound to influence the struggle for Indian freedom.

Horried by the evils of capitalism, many good people fall back upon the reactionary outlook of returning to the village, to simple life, etc., because they cannot study history as a science. There is no escape from the laws of history. Human society must always go ahead. Going back is not possible. But it is not necessary for it to plunge into capitalism, and experience the evils of its defects and drawbacks. A bridge can be built over that formidable ocean. Marxism shows how that bridge can be built. By opening up that perspective before those groping in the dark, terrified by the evils of capitalism, the proletarian ideology

asserts itself on the situation. But strictly speaking, that is not hegemony of the proletariat, but of Marxism. Learning from Marxism, it is possible to carry through the bourgeois democratic revolution in our country without plunging into the wilderness of capitalism, and even spare Indian society the turmoil of a second revolution.

In that sense at the time of the French Revolution, the Jacobins were the Marxists of their time. The ideology of the Indian Revolution cannot be completely Marxian. We can influence the movement. But if we tell the average Indian nationalists that they must accept Marxism with its materialist philosophy, they will run away from us, perhaps into the embrace of counter-revolution. We should not ask them to accept Marxism. But our understanding of Marxism will enable us to offer solutions of the problems of the Indian struggle for freedom which must be acceptable to them if they are really anxious to carry on that struggle with success. As a matter of fact, some of our solutions have already been accepted. To that extent, the hegemony of Marxism, the proletarian hegemony, if you please, is already established. We have contributed not a little to the

formulation of the tasks of the struggle for freedom and its programme.

The Congress Socialists and the National Frontists, once upon a time, wanted to confront Gandhism with Marxism. They contended that Marxism must replace Gandhism as the ideology of the anti-imperialist struggle. That simply cannot be done. Gandhism and Marxism belong to two entirely different periods of history. In so far as India socially still lives in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, Gandhism is an appropriate ideology for her. On the other hand, in order to come out of that backward social atmosphere, India must have a new ideology which cannot yet be identical with Marxism. Therefore, Marxism should enable us to form a special form of the ideology of the Indian struggle for freedom. We must have an ideology which can be called Twentieth Century Jacobinism. I shall explain that in detail in another lecture.

The tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution in India will be accomplished under the influence, (and perhaps by themselves) of Marxists who would not appear on the scene as representatives only of the working class. Marx condemned Baboeuf and his followers for going further than the Jacobins and talking of

Socialism at the time of the French Revolution. In our case, the contradiction may not be so sharp. But the contradiction is there. Therefore, we have, on the one hand, rejected the ideals of a purely bourgeois revolution, but, on the other hand, we cannot impose on the Indian revolutionary struggle, Marxism as the proletarian ideology. • Our task is to create a new ideology of our movement. We have applied ourselves to that task, not without success. The fundamental principles of that ideology have been outlined in course of this discussion. I have elaborated them in some detail. It should be clear therefrom that no revision of our fundamental principles in the theoretical sense is necessary, even if, for practical application to the organisational field, they must be restated.

We are living in the atmosphere of the seventeenth century, in the midst of the twentieth century. That is a very peculiar position. The revolutionary ideas, belonging respectively to those two epochs, are both applicable to our country. But, on the other hand, apparently, they are mutually exclusive. Our task is to combine them into a new system of revolutionary ideology. The structure of the contemporary Indian society is very peculiar; the relation of classes is very confused and complicated.

That predetermines the character of the impending revolution. It is going to be a type of revolution hitherto unknown in history. It will be neither a bourgeois revolution of the classical type, nor a proletarian revolution. As a matter of fact, there is no standardised type of revolution. Every single revolution is distinct from another in various ways. Social development is governed by some fundamental laws of uniform nature. But the development itself is uneven. Therefore, it is a great mistake to dogmatise about the theory and practice of revolution.

The State to be created by the peculiar form of the Indian Revolution will be correspondingly peculiar. It will neither be a parliamentary democratic State, nor dictatorship of the proletariat. The peculiarity of the State, in its turn, will put its stamp on the period of transition towards Socialism. This big complex of peculiarities cannot be solved in the light of any dogmatic system of ideology. The rejection of all dogmas is the fundamental methodological principle of Marxism. The problems of the Indian Revolution will be solved by the application of Marxism to pre-Marxist conditions. The product of that application will be what I have already characterised as Twentieth Century Jacobinism.

## TWENTIETH CENTURY JACOBINISM

### (The Role of Marxism in Democratic Revolution)

Our organisation, the League of Radical Congressmen, though not a Marxist or Socialist party in name, accepts Marxism as its ideology. A question arises from that fact. On the one hand, we say that Socialism or Communism is not the immediate issue in our country; we further say that the Indian Revolution will be led by a multi-class party. On the other hand, we say that we are Marxists, and we must conduct our struggle according to the Marxian ideology. How can the two things be reconciled? That is the question.

In other words, we say that in India we are still to have the bourgeois democratic revolution. The term 'bourgeois' sticks in our throat. Therefore, we usually drop it and say only 'democratic revolution'. In our previous discussions, it has been made clear that we need not be squeamish about the term bourgeois. The bourgeois revolution took place before Marx was born. How, then, can the ideology formulated after the bourgeois democratic



revolution be its ideology? In this lecture, I want to answer that question.

Let me put the question in a more concrete form. In so far as it is a bourgeois democratic revolution, we cannot altogether discard the ideology known as philosophical Radicalism. It is the ideology of the bourgeois revolution. An economic or social programme must have a philosophical foundation. If we want to carry through the economic and social programme of a bourgeois revolution, we cannot discard the philosophical counter-part of that programme. Is it, then, possible for one to be a Marxist and at the same time accept what is known as philosophical Radicalism, that is, the ideology of bourgeois revolution?

Secondly, we have to accomplish an economic programme which was done previously, in other countries, by the bourgeoisie. In other words, we have to carry through a social revolution, on the accomplishment of which conditions for the reconstruction of society on Socialist lines will be created. Is it permissible for Marxists to do that? Can one be a Marxist, and yet work for the accomplishment of an economic programme which may lead to the development of capitalism, and the establishment of a bourgeois society?

Thirdly, in order to organise the kind of party which, in our opinion, is necessary for leading the impending revolution in India, we shall have to recognise the revolutionary role of non-proletarian classes. Is that permissible for Marxists to do? These three concrete questions are associated with the three different aspects of the subject of our lecture to-day.

Before we proceed to examine whether it is permissible for a Marxist to do this or that thing, whether Marxism is compatible with this or that programme, it is necessary to have a clear definition of Marxism itself. The term is used almost *ad nauseum*; yet, there is an endless confusion about it.

What is Marxism, after all? It has been defined as all sorts of things. Generally, greater emphasis is laid on the economic aspect. By many it has been interpreted, accepted or rejected, only as a system of economics. There are others who are more impressed by the political significance of Marxism, because it is revolutionary. It is supposed to provide a technique of revolutionary struggle. The phrase 'Marxian technique' frequently occurs, for example, in the literature of the group which calls itself the Communist Party of India. I fail to understand what is

'Marxian technique.' Essentially, Marxism is a philosophy. As such, it naturally embraces all the various aspects of human life. Therefore, there is Marxian economics and there is Marxian politics. The economic and political as well as all the other problems of human life and society can be approached from the Marxist point of view.

In order to understand a comprehensive system, it is necessary to find out its fundamental principle. Otherwise, anybody can interpret it in any way he likes. There must be some underlying principles. Anything which cannot be fitted into, or reconciled with should not be regarded as a part of that system. In this connection also, there are different opinions. But this is not going to be a critical lecture. I shall not be concerned with others' opinions. I shall give you my opinion, and I believe that this opinion is shared by practically all who call themselves Marxists, not as a fashion, but out of a thorough understanding of Marxism.

The fundamental principle of Marxism as a philosophy is that being precedes consciousness. Our being is not determined by consciousness but our consciousness is determined by our being. This very simple principle upsets

the entire structure of pre-Marxian philosophy which is still holding sway to a very large extent.

Let me explain in some detail. Marxism also gives a definition of philosophy. Traditionally, philosophy is a system of speculative thought which has absolutely nothing to do with the daily life. Philosophy is some thing which deals with abstract metaphysical problems, and has no, or only very remote, relation with our existence on this physical world. There were thinkers who brought philosophy a little nearer to this earth. For them, philosophy was an attempt to explain life. There are many explanations why this or that is like this and not that. Marxian definition of philosophy is entirely different. According to Marx, the function of philosophy is not only to explain the world, but to show the way for remaking it. The Marxist does not regard the world as something simply given, men knowing nothing about its origin, having nothing to do with its future.

Some philosophers hold that man can only contemplate; they deprecate even the attempt to explain the world. According to them the function of philosophy is to regard and admire and contemplate. That is, however, no philosophy. If anything, it is either religion or

poetry. Others go beyond passive contemplation, and try to explain phenomena with the object of finding the noumenon. They hold that the object of philosophy is to find a reality behind the appearances. That sort of a philosophy is rather a description of the world than an explanation. It does not say why it is so, and not otherwise. It is not within its scope to say that things are so and not otherwise, for such or such reasons, and therefore they could be otherwise, if the reasons were different.

Marxism revolutionises philosophy itself. It sets new tasks to philosophy; previously philosophy has simply tried to explain the world, but in future it must point out the way to a reconstruction of the world.

The Marxian definition of philosophy is not arbitrary. There is reason for the change in the fundamental principle of philosophy. The growth of knowledge introduced that change. Previously, inability to know the causes of natural phenomena resulted in the fantasy about them. Man's consciousness is determined by the physical and social environments in which he lives. Therefore, man's knowledge and its scope increase in proportion as his power to dominate the physical environments grows. Knowledge is power. In proportion as man's

knowledge of the world increases, his power to re-make it also increases. In the beginning, that power is the power to know. The more man knows, the greater is his power to know yet more. Once a man knows how a thing is constructed, the knowledge gives him the power to reconstruct the thing. Therefore, Marxism says that our mental equipment results from our being, which includes our experience. Once we appreciate Marxism in this way, it becomes evident that it is not limited by time. Nobody has ever said that Marxism should be limited by space, that it is applicable to some countries, not to other parts of the world. But it is not generally realised that it is also not limited by time. We can go and investigate into the existing primitive societies or read the history of the world, and in either case, apply this fundamental principle of Marxism as our 'creed.' As a matter of fact, Marxism has thrown a completely different light on entire human history. Many events of history now appear in an entirely different complexion. That is the intellectual application of Marxism.

Then, there is the practical application. In this country, we live in the atmosphere of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. We are confronted with tasks which were accomplished

by the revolution of that epoch. But Marxism was formulated in the nineteenth century. Marxists, as a breed, came into existence only after Marx. We are living in a pre-Marxian period, so to say. How can, then, Marxism be applied to our problems? It is not a question of reading the history of the German Peasants War or of the French Revolution or of the rise of Buddhism in the light of Marxism. That has already been done. Our task is to apply Marxism to problems which were the specific features of pre-Marxian period. That is a very curious, and apparently anomalous, position.

Let us now revert to the three concrete questions formulated in the beginning. An examination of them will enable us to see if a practical application of Marxism to the problems belonging to the pre-Marxian era is possible or not. But before we take up that examination, it is necessary to concern ourselves with the appreciation of Marxism itself. Its successful application is conditional upon its proper appreciation, which shows where it can be applied and how it can be applied.

Its mechanical, orthodox, protagonists regard Marxism as the philosophy of the proletariat. If that was a correct appreciation of Marxism, if it was the ideology only of the

proletarian revolution, Marxism would be of no immediate use for us in this country. We cannot take up that position, because our point of departure is acceptance of Marxism, and that is not a mechanical acceptance. We do not profess Marxism fanatically as converts to a new religion. Our profession is based upon an intelligent understanding. Therefore, we cannot be forced to the position where Marxism appears to have no practical application to the problems of the Indian Revolution.

It is a wrong and narrow conception of Marxism to regard it only as the philosophy of one particular class, as the ideology of one particular type of revolution. I have already stated the fundamental principle of Marxism. The Marxian conception of philosophy has also been generally enunciated. Therefrom, it should be evident that Marxism does not belong to any particular class. As a matter of fact, Marxism is the highest form human knowledge has attained so far. It is based on the accumulated store of human experience, gathered ever since the dawn of civilisation. As such, it cannot be the property of any particular class. It is a human heritage. It is the highest form of philosophy.

There is so much talk about class culture



and class philosophy and class ideology. One cannot claim the distinction of being a Marxist, unless he qualifies every concept with the term 'class' ! Only, that is a dubious distinction. That may befit an ordinary political propagandist ; but a Marxist deserving the distinction is primarily a philosopher. Philosophy, particularly as conceived by Marxism, not only an interpretation of the world, but also a guide for its reconstruction, must concern itself with the entire complex of the problems of society as well as of nature, the former being a part of the latter. And a class is only a part of the society.

In a previous lecture, I explained how a particular class became the standard-bearer of progress in a given period of history. History allots to it that role of honour when the special interests of that class happen to be identical with the general interest of society as a whole. When that class creates a culture—art, literature, science, indeed anything of an abiding value, the creation naturally bears the stamp of the creator. But in so far as there is a relation of identity between that class and the entire society, the cultural values produced by it are the production of society as a whole. As such, it goes down in history as a heritage of huma-

nity. Otherwise, there would be no culture, no philosophy, no knowledge.

The priestly class, for example, dominates society for a whole period. It creates certain cultural values. Its domination is overthrown in course of time. But the cultural values created by it remain. Human heritage is thus enriched progressively by ruling classes in their own interests. Those traditional values are utilised by the ruling classes in their own interest. But a thing does not cease to have an intrinsic value because it is abused. Take for instance what is called the mechanical means of production. Superficial observers, people with no historical sense of value, see only the abuse made of them, and propose to throw away the baby with the bath water. They cannot distinguish the corn from the chaff. We approach the problem differently. We recognise the civilising and liberating significance of the machine. Primarily, it is not a means for exploiting man, but for increasing the productivity of his labour, and consequently for freeing him progressively from the drudgery of earning a livelihood. The more man is freed from that drudgery, which can be called his original sin, so to say, the farther he advances on the path of spiritual development. Having created the means for his liberation,

man still remains a slave, enslaved by his own creation. We lay the finger at the root of the evil. The liberating influence of the machine is not fully felt, because it is abused by private ownership. Remove that factor as soon as it becomes superfluous, and the social value of machine is fully realised. A thing created, for the purpose of capitalist exploitation, ultimately, becomes a social asset—a human heritage.

Similarly, all cultural values have intrinsic historical significance and, therefore, transcend time and space. Yet, they may all be utilised by any particular class for selfish purposes. Take for instance the old Scriptures. There are two things in them: form and content. The form is the poetry, literature—the language which has an abiding artistic value; it can be characterised as imperishable. Then, there is the content of a certain system of ideas. One can read the hymns of the Rigveda and enjoy the beauty of poetry without taking seriously the content of quaint ideas. The latter was created as the ideology of a particular class, and as such it had only a passing, temporary, social significance. At the same time, another value was created which transcends all limits of time and space, and which goes into the accumulated treasure of human culture. Yet, that

also was created by a particular class. It would be foolish to throw away, or even under-estimate it, as the product of the priestly class culture. In so far as it is culture, it transcends the limits of social space and time.

That being the case, empires rose and fell, revolutions occurred and became antiquated, one class came forward while another receded in the background, but the march of progress continued through the ages. Successively, through the instrumentality of the priest-hood, of the early traders, the monks, the merchant class, the manufactures, in different periods of history, humanity as a whole laid down brick after brick and raised the magnificent structure of human culture. That is the sum total of human achievements. If there was no stable, abiding, factor underlying the kaleidoscope of shifting scenes, the whole life would be meaningless. Something would be created by the entire human energy, over a whole period, only to break down, and for mankind to begin all over again from the beginning.

Just as in the process of biological evolution, innumerable forms were created and destroyed, but ultimately human being appeared as its culmination, just so does the process of social evolution create a variety of cultural

values which are destroyed, but there is an underlying chain of unbroken progress incorporating the positive achievements of each successive epoch, which blossoms forth as the sum total of human culture.

Marxism is the positive outcome of the entire process of human development, being based upon the accumulated store of human experience from the earliest time. Unless it is so appreciated, it cannot be regarded as the guide for a reconstruction of the world. Therefore, it is perfectly correct to say that Marxism is not the ideology of any particular class, but the philosophy for the future of humanity. It is so because it is the positive outcome of the entire past of mankind.

With such an understanding of Marxism, it is not an anomaly to say that, if only we can study and understand history, in the light of Marxian theory, all the problems belonging chronologically to the so-called pre-Marxian ages could be subjected to Marxian practice. That is to say, if by imagination some Marxist transplanted himself in the seventeenth or sixteenth century, or even earlier ages, he would not feel like a fish out of water; he would be able to apply his Marxian theory to practice. He would be able to determine his practice so

as to be suitable to a given period in which he has been transplanted. Therefore, we should also be able to do that. Only, we are not living in imagination, but actually in the conditions of the sixteenth or seventeenth century.

By analysing the structure of Indian society, we have come to the conclusion that, although chronologically we are living in the twentieth century, in the scheme of social history we are living partly in the eighteenth and partly in the seventeenth and partly even in earlier centuries. There, we happen to have a group of Marxists placed in a situation, in which they are compelled to tackle problems of a pre-Marxian period. The experience of solving those problems entered into the making of Marxism. It is a sort of reverse projection of Marxism. That is the task with which we are faced.

Let us go back to our concrete problems. One of the questions was: Is it possible for Marxists to recognise the revolutionary role of non-proletarian classes in the twentieth century? In the capitalist society, the Marxian view would be that the proletariat is the only revolutionary class. But socially, we are not living in the twentieth century. We are living in an earlier epoch. Let us remember the fundamental prin-

ciple of Marxism : Consciousness is determined by existence. In India, we are having our political being in the social atmosphere of the seventeenth or sixteenth century. Our political consciousness therefore, must be determined by that peculiar nature of our social being. The idea that the proletariat is the most revolutionary class cannot spontaneously grow in us; it can only be artificially cultivated. Because, our appreciation of the roles of the various social classes in contemporary India must be determined by their actual position. It would be completely un-Marxian to assert that in India to-day the proletariat is the most revolutionary class, and that the other class cannot have any revolutionary role. That idea cannot enter in our mind in the scientific process of ideation; at best it is an idealistic proposition. Instead of looking at the thing as it is, and letting environments react on our consciousness, thereby determining the process of our thought, we would be cramping our mind with what we have read in books.

On the one hand, we have the picture of our environments, which are socially analogous to those obtaining in the seventeenth or sixteenth century; and, on the other hand, we have in our mind—*not outside, but only inside*

*our mind*—a picture of the twentieth century. Thus, we are living in one epoch and thinking in terms of another; that is to say, in terms of things which physically do not exist at all. Some of us, as it were by some miraculous means, have taken a journey two hundred years ahead of time, and come back with a picture of a future world. They draw a beautiful picture of that world to come. We have to choose between two pictures: the one made of ugly realities, and the other drawn out of imagination. Marxism helps us to make the choice. It teaches us that our thought, if it is to be distinguished from fantasy, must be determined by the realities of our being. We see what the world actually is, and not imagine what it should be.

In our case, Marxism is casting its shadow ahead, so to say. If it were a system of revealed wisdom, if it belonged to any particular period, it could have no application to our problems. Consequently, it would be of no help to us. It is true that physically and chronologically we do live in the twentieth century. But it is also true that the problems we shall have to solve belong to the social atmosphere of an earlier epoch.

Let us now look at the other two concrete questions. There is the question of ideology.



What is called philosophical Radicalism, that is, the philosophy of the bourgeois revolution, was a revolutionary ideology in a social atmosphere which happens to be also our environment in India to-day. That being the case, it should not be difficult for us to reconcile our Marxist conscience with what is known as the philosophical Radicalism of the bourgeois revolution.

Things must be connected directly. A certain mode of thought is liquidated by another mode of thought which immediately follows it. The religious mode of thought was liquidated by the rationalist mode of thought which resulted from a change in social environments brought about by the development of science. To-day we know that bourgeois Radicalism was defective. It did not go very far. It had still some connection with the religious mode of thought, and ultimately became itself a form of religion. Even the modern idealist philosophy is only a form of rationalised religion. Nevertheless, it is equally true that philosophical Radicalism was the solvent for the religious mode of thought. It was the direct outcome of scientific knowledge and of the changes brought about by it in the social atmosphere, namely, the revolution in the process and means of production.

The religious mode of thought still prevails in our country. The popular mind is still swayed, consciously or unconsciously, by religious prejudices. So much so, that even Marxism, somehow or other, has been transformed into a sort of religion. It is conceived as a creed or held as a faith. In the ideological field, we have still to dissolve and liquidate the religious mode of thought. Before that is done, any other form of thought or any other philosophy will simply not be understood. Therefore, the intervening period of philosophical Radicalism must be there. It is the intervening link. There must be a connection between the past and the future.

The spiritual evolution of mankind went through stages. The religious mode of thought was followed by Rationalism; then by what is known as scientific Idealism. All these are links in a chain of development which ultimately culminated into Marxism. Why should, then, Marxists disown their ancestry? In order to be a revolutionary, it is not necessary for me to declare that my grandfather was a counter-revolutionary. If I happen to be so situated as to be a contemporary of my own grandfather, so to say, I shall have to adjust myself to the mentality of my great-grandfather. My grand-

father cannot possibly adjust his mentality to mine and even less to that of my children. As a Marxist, I should not expect him to do so. Because, his mentality is predetermined by the mode of living of his fore-fathers. If I know that my existence would not be possible if my great-grandfather did not exist, that my great-grandfather, with his intellectual outfit of the religious mode of thought, was a necessary link in the chain of which I am another link, it will not be at all difficult for me to recognise that the mentality of my great-grandfather had a place in the scheme of history.

The same thing happens to the third question. In the economic aspect, Marxism says that after the liquidation of the feudal mode of production, after the introduction of the mechanical means of production, the capitalist mode of production is introduced. It brings the process of production and the entire structure of society on a higher level. On that level, Socialism becomes a necessity.

I must remind you of a point. I have been making repeatedly. Marxism knows no inevitability. The belief in inevitability is fatalism. Marxism knows only necessity. That which is determined takes place. But a thing or event is determined by a number of causes. Its fructi-

fication or its abortion may have been determined by some additional causes unknown to us. Therefore, nothing can be inevitable. Nowhere in Marxism is it asserted that Socialism becomes inevitable at a certain stage of social development. Marxism only says that at a stage of the evolution of society Socialism becomes necessary for further development. If by some other reason any particular community has been doomed to disappear, the change to Socialism will not take place. There will be no further development, but disintegration. That has happened in history. Marxism does not allow the assertion that a similar tragedy will not happen again.

Now let us go back to the result of our analysis of the contemporary Indian society. There is a large feudal element in our present national economy. Imperialist exploitation rests on the basis of feudal relations. Therefore, the task of the impending revolution in India is the liquidation of Feudalism, so that the process of economic development eventually creating conditions for the establishment of Socialism may take place freely. In other words, we shall have to do things which were done by a class, to-day considered to be the greatest opponent of Marxism. How is it possible for us to be the

representatives of the bourgeoisie, so to say, and the vanguard of the proletariat at the same time. It is possible because we are Marxists. Only as Marxists we can be the representatives of the proletariat as well as of the bourgeoisie. Here the principle of identity is in operation. Marxism enables us to see that there are two relations in society: one of antagonism and the other of identity. At a later stage, there will be a conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. But to-day, in the atmosphere of the sixteenth or seventeenth century's social conditions, in which we are having our being, the actual identity is much greater than the would-be difference. Consequently, as Marxists, it becomes permissible for us to advocate a programme of social revolution which under normal conditions would mean the establishment of capitalist society.

Marxism thus being a sort of inverted projection with us, we are the bearers of a light projected from the future, as far as our country is concerned. That appears to be a rather strange position. For us, as social beings, to be Marxists should appear anomalous. Because we are trying to apply Marxism to the problems of a time before Marx lived. In a sense, for us, Marx is still to be born. How can we, then,

call ourselves Marxists? We can do so only by differentiating Marxism from the personality of Karl Marx. We must separate the brain of a particular individual from the rest of his physical structure. The physical structure of Marx was nourished by food produced in the nineteenth century; but his brain was the storehouse of ideas produced throughout history since the dawn of civilisation.

But the question of name still remains. The philosophy we profess is called Marxism because it is associated with the name of Marx. Therefore, to avoid all possible confusion, it might be advisable to give a new name to our ideology. There are posthumous children. But children born ahead of their fathers are certainly curious things. They are not to be found. For these considerations, it would be more correct, historically and scientifically, to give a new name to our philosophy. If we called ourselves philosophical Materialists, the confusion would immediately disappear. But then we would be confronted with practical difficulties. Firstly, the term conveys a very abstract idea. Secondly, we must not forget that we are living in a social atmosphere in which Materialism may not have a direct

application. Some earlier form of scientific thought might be more suitable.

However, if Marxism is understood in the sense I am trying to explain, then, there need be no objection to the term Marxism. Among ourselves, we may call ourselves Marxists, because we know what we mean by it. But we are not a monastic order. We have to mix with people, for whom the term Marxism at present has an entirely different connotation. From their point of view, we would not be acting like Marxists. Therefore, they might call us imposters. How to get around that difficulty?

It is not impermissible to call ourselves Marxists, while undertaking tasks which were accomplished elsewhere long before Marxism was formulated or before Marx lived. Yet, for our own guidance, and for the sake of precision, in order to prevent all possible confusion, it would be useful to give a name to our peculiar form of ideology, at least tentatively. I am not going to be dogmatic about it. It is a matter to be discussed. For the moment, I am only thinking aloud, so to say. I am communicating to you certain thoughts which have been going through my mind, so that we can think collectively.

Why should we be wedded to particular

terms? Why should we be subjected to a tyranny of words? The analysis given previously makes it clear that we cannot call ourselves Marxists in the narrow sense. We have to face that to-day. Marxism is generally understood in a narrow sense. We cannot run away from the maddening crowd. And they have a limited understanding of Marxism. If we call ourselves Marxists, they will measure us by their standard. They are incapable of seeing that our Marxism is bigger, broader and more comprehensive than theirs. They will think that ours is a fraudulent Marxism. If, for the love of a term, we place ourselves in a position where our motive could be questioned, we shall be at a disadvantage as regards our appeal to other people.

In course of one of our previous discussions, the question was raised, if the League of Radical Congressmen was a Communist Party with only a different name. Another form of that question would be: Will only Marxists be allowed to be members of the League of Radical Congressmen? If our answer was in the affirmative, we should deserve the rebuke to which one comrade was subjected yesterday. I am afraid, in the heart of hearts, many of us are in the same boat as he. We condemn ultra-



leftist practice, but we still remain fascinated by an ultra-leftist theory. We say that the so-called Communist Party of India is wrong, and maintain that the impending Indian Revolution must be led by a multi-class party. But we throw something out of the front door only to smuggle it in by the back-door. It is not only a matter of our frankness before the public. It is a matter of our own conviction. It is an internal problem.

I suppose it will not be very difficult for you to imagine that many people subscribing to our political and even to our social programme may not accept Marxism, as narrowly understood. In so far as they will subscribe to our social and political programme, they will be Marxists living two-hundred years before Marx, whether they themselves realise it or not. Therefore, from our point of view they will be Marxists. But from the point of view of those who have a narrow mechanical conception of Marxism, they will not be Marxists. We have seen that our social and political programme is such as was associated with the philosophical Radicalism or Rationalism of the bourgeoisie. Therefore, one need not accept Marxism in order to subscribe to our social and political programme.

I shall tell you a rather interesting story. Last year, I had a long discussion with some of the old Bengal revolutionaries. Once upon a time, we were friends and co-workers. Since then, we had travelled different ways. During the long years of imprisonment, there was a searching of heart among them. In the discussion with me, they said that they were prepared to accept our political and economic programme, but they would not accept Marxism, because of its materialistic philosophy. Previously, in jail, there had been a conflict among themselves. Some had become out and out Marxists and insisted on the acceptance of Materialism, holding that otherwise one could not be a Marxist. They associated our political and economic programme with the philosophy of Marxism. Asked to tackle the problem, after a long discussion, I made the following proposition : You accept our social and political programme ; we shall not insist upon your giving up spiritualism. My proposition was accepted. as the basis of a working agreement. Shortly afterwards, they were persuaded to subscribe publicly to a political document. One of them, on that occasion, declared in a rather resigned manner : You are compelling us to subscribe to a programme of Communism !

It was he who had persistently opposed Marxist philosophy for years. The others who had agreed to the programme contained in the document, thereupon said : What is the use of arguing ; we are all heading towards Communism, and there is no way out of it. Either we have to head that way, or give up revolution. Unfortunately, later on, they decided to give up revolution. It was not accidental. They had not really accepted our social and political programme. There is only one way to revolution in our age.

That is not an isolated instance. We shall come across any number of people of that nature. If the League of Radical Congressmen cannot make room for such people, then let us not talk of a People's Party. If we insist on the label of Marxism, we shall have to do without the co-operation of many people like our Pundit Dev Dutt, for instance, and I would prefer one such Pundit, who still prefers to call himself a Vedantist while acting as a thorough revolutionary to a whole crowd of those noisy self styled Marxists. All those who talk so noisily about Marxism, proletariat, dialectics and what not, are mostly trying to convince themselves with their own talks. And as empty vessels, they make most noise. It is like the orthodox

Indian who does not believe in God, but constantly repeats "Ram Ram". If you are a convinced Marxist, you can regard anybody as a revolutionary who is prepared to work with you for the revolution, whatever his philosophy. That is possible under the conditions of our country.

We say that we have a distinct ideology. People will ask what is it? There is Gandhism; there is Vedantism; and there is Marxism. What is the ideology of the League of Radical Congressmen? If you say it is Marxism, then many people who have been attracted by our political programme will not join us, because Marxism is Materialism which they may not be prepared to accept philosophically. It is necessary for us to have some label. But it must be of a kind which can be attached to real Marxists without being a lie.

I am of the opinion that, in a very strict sense, the ideology of the League of Radical Congressmen, that is to say, of the Indian Revolution in its present stage, will be a specific type of ideology. In the absence of any other name, I shall call it Marxism applied to the problems of the Democratic Revolution. But it is not convenient to tell the whole story every time you are asked. However, the child is just being born ;

and, even before it is actually born, the parents may think about its name. What are we going to call the child? But it is not just as simple as naming a child; the name of our ideology must be descriptive: it must epitomise the character of the child. Such a name cannot really crystallise until after the child is born, and its characteristics are clearly known. Therefore, we might postpone the naming ceremony, and instead of calling in an astrologer, let the child be born first. It will be easy to hit upon the appropriate name when we shall know what the child is really like. Meanwhile, it may not be entirely fruitless and futile to speculate about it. Descartes said: "I know that God created the world. But it will be interesting to find out how the world might have evolved by itself." Out of such idle speculation, sometimes, great ideas are born.

If we wish to find a historical analogy to the task set to ourselves, we should fix upon neither the Russian Revolution nor any other revolution of our time. We shall have to go further back and find our prototype in the Jacobins of the French Revolution. The social foundation of the party we propose to organise is very analogous to that of the Jacobins. The leading cadre of our party will to a

very large extent come from the identical class. The Jacobins carried through the bourgeois revolution in the teeth of the opposition of the bourgeoisie. The representatives of the bourgeoisie, who had heralded the revolution, went over to the camp of counter-revolution, and the Jacobins carried it through against the feudal aristocracy as well as the big bourgeoisie. The relation of classes in contemporary India is somewhat analogous. But the analogy is bound to be incomplete : there is a difference of nearly two hundred years.

For the ideology of Jacobinism, We must turn to the French Materialists of the eighteenth century—the Physiocrats and the Encyclopedists; and they were the direct predecessors of Marxism in the line of philosophical ancestry. On the other hand, in Jacobinism, the rationalist philosophy culminated and exhausted itself. Jacobinism made a Goddess of reason; a religion was made of Rationalism. Rationalism played its role as a solvent of the religious mode of thought. But in Jacobinism, it exhausted all its possibilities and opened the way for the development of eighteenth century Materialism towards Marxism. Historically, in the philosophical sense, we in India to-day are standing in such a period of transition. We

are very much influenced by the scientific mode of thinking. We are also attracted by the materialistic philosophy. But at the same time, as a whole, the people who will take part in this revolution, and even many of those who will constitute its leadership, may be attracted rather by Rationalism than by out and out Materialism.

Another characteristic feature of the tendency we represent is that it is a tendency towards a direct development in the direction of socialist reconstruction of society. That tendency was there also in Jacobinism. It was represented by Baboeuf and his followers. They also were the product of that period of the French Revolution which was under the leadership of the Jacobins. But at that time, the tendency could not assert itself, because consciousness,—the ideas and thoughts—had to be determined by the environments of the time. The bourgeoisie were afraid. They could not carry through the revolution. The petit-bourgeoisie, which at the time of the French Revolution included the working class just as is the case in India to-day, carried through the revolution. But once the revolution was carried through, it was the bourgeoisie who came into power. Nevertheless, the tendency to develop

directly towards Socialism was there all the time, represented first by Baboeuf, and later on by Blanqui and others, and ultimately by the Paris Commune. The tendency did not disappear with the failure of Baboeuf. It manifested itself throughout the entire period of the French Revolution, and disappeared only with the fall of the Paris Commune.

The Indian Revolution is taking place in an entirely different period of history, when the relation of classes on the world scale has completely changed, and the economic conditions and technological development necessary for the reconstruction of the world as a socialist society have been created. Therefore, once the revolution takes place in our time, though with a Jacobin ideology and with a Jacobinist programme, the tendency towards a direct development to Socialism, which was inherent in Jacobinism, will most probably prevail in our country. For all these reasons, I would suggest that our ideology, the ideology of the party which is to lead the Indian Revolution, be named Twentieth Century Jacobinism. I make the suggestion tentatively. It is made pending the formulation of some other name which may be more appropriate. Marxism applied to a bourgeois democratic revolution,



Marxist theory applied in practice to the problems of the bourgeois democratic revolution, is Jacobinism. Therefore, Marxism applied to the social problems of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, to be solved in the atmosphere of the twentieth century, can be called Twentieth Century Jacobinism.

I repeat that this is a purely tentative name. After all, it is not necessary to give ourselves a name immediately. On the other hand, no use of our talking that we have a distinct ideology, if we cannot tell what that exactly is. If our ideology is orthodox Marxism as generally understood, we have no business to say that we have a distinct ideology of our own. On the other hand, if we simply call ourselves Marxists, we throw over-board our analysis of the Indian situation. Because, in that case, we shall be compelled to have a wrong approach to the problem; we shall not be constantly reminding ourselves that we have a broader understanding of Marxism. As a matter of fact, most of us have not. Most of us have learned Marxism from the orthodox school, not only of our own country, but of the whole world, including Russia. Only those who are applying Marxism to peculiar conditions can develop and amplify Marxism in a

way necessary for the purpose. Therefore, an orthodox exposition of Marxism, of the Anglo-Saxon or German or Russian variety, will not help us. I want to make you understand this point: We have the privilege—history has given it to us—of not only carrying through a peculiar, a new and unprecedented type of revolution and create a new form of State opening up the possibility of a new line of development as transition to socialist society; we are also privileged to make some original contribution to what is known as Marxism. If we do not do that, then we have no business to call ourselves Marxists.

Our existence, our environments, our very being must determine our thought. From some books we have acquired a kind of understanding of Marxism. But we have our being in a peculiar set of circumstances. Our political consciousness and behaviour will be determined by these peculiar features of our social being. Necessarily, our thinking process, our ideology, also must be very largely influenced thereby. And we shall be able to contribute to an amplification, enrichment, of Marxism which is not a closed system of philosophy, not a bunch of dogmas. It is based on

human experience, and therefore must adjust itself to new lessons acquired from experience.

These are new ideas. They are not yet quite crystallised in my mind. I can more or less visualise the problem and the approach to it. But I am not quite clear as yet how exactly things should shape themselves. Therefore, having gone through the earlier part of our programme, I thought that it would be proper to communicate to you not only the thoughts already shaped in my mind, but also some of my doubts, so that you can also think and the solution of this problem be the result of our collective thinking.

The point is that we are functioning in a very peculiar situation, living simultaneously in two periods of history. This peculiarity of our being must determine our thought, which therefore cannot fit into any of the known patterns. We approach every problem from the point of view of a philosophy called Marxism. In my opinion, it is not a narrow philosophy of any particular class, but the quintessence of the entire process of human development. The result of our Marxist approach may, and I am inclined to believe that it is bound to be, an amplification of Marxism. Don't be hide-bound and believe that the whole truth has

already been discovered, that the text should not be changed, and that we can only interpret it. That is scholasticism. Marxism is something entirely different.

After all, Marxism is not a body of dogmas. It is rather a method. As such, it has a permanent abiding value. As a method of approach to all the problems, it holds good for all time and under all circumstances. The method is applicable to the problems of two thousand years ago, and will be equally valid for an approach to problems of two thousand years hence. But the formulas of Marxism or the peculiar prescriptions of Marxism may not be immutable, and may have to be changed from time to time.

In my next lecture, which will conclude our programme, I shall deal with another very curious problem confronting us to-day in our country. The discussion of that problem will show the necessity of revising or even discarding certain formulas which are considered by orthodox Marxists to be part and parcel, even the very essence, of Marxism. I mean, dictatorship of the proletariat. In the next lecture, I shall show that, if the process of development of the Indian Revolution will be as we can visualise it even to-day, there will be no room

for a dictatorship of the proletariat. In a certain type of the process of revolutionary development, it appears as a necessary stage. As the process cannot be standardised, no stage in it can be regarded as universal. If dictatorship of the proletariat will not be necessary in our country, why should we tyrannise our brain with the idea, and identify Marxism with a particular term?

The point I wanted to make to-day is a general proposition: Because we are Marxists, or at least because we try to have a real understanding of Marxism, and appreciate it as a philosophy of life, not as the property of any particular class, it should be possible for us to operate as Marxists in a pre-Marxian social environment, and completely adjust ourselves to that environment, and not be afraid of taking a different name, if that becomes necessary for the convenience of our operation under peculiar circumstances. In other words, if we come to realise that the nature of our being and the process of our becoming are creating new ideas and new concepts in our mind, we should have the courage to give a concrete expression to them; and by doing that, we shall amplify Marxism, make some contribution to the accumulated store of human knowledge.

Finally, I shall ask you to remember that our task is not so petty as only to overthrow Imperialism; nor is it only to make a bourgeois democratic revolution. So many bourgeois democratic revolutions have taken place in the world. Our task is much greater; it is to contribute something to the spiritual heritage of humanity. We can do that only on the basis of our own experience. Our experience should not be only a mechanical repetition of the experience of others. While making our own experience, we should not delude ourselves that we are living the life of others. In the midst of a revolution in India, we should not think that we are living in October 1917 in Petrograd, or in Paris either in 1793 or in 1871. We must make our own experience. As the experience of a very large community of human beings, it is bound to be the basis of some contribution to human ideology, to the accumulated store of human knowledge. If that was not the real object of a revolution, personally, I would have no interest in it. It would not attract me, and I do not think that it would attract any civilised human being. If revolution is separated from that connotation, it becomes nothing bigger than rowdiness on a large scale. We cannot go through all the dirt and squalor, suffer-

ing and sacrifice, unless there is something noble before us, unless our experience is going to make the light of human knowledge shine still brighter. Otherwise, it would be all in vain. Therefore, after all these two weeks' talk, often on technical questions, I wanted to focus our attention on something big and noble and bright, the consciousness of which will give us the heart to go through all the disagreeable, revolting and unpleasant experiences.

## PROBLEMS OF THE INDIAN REVOLUTION

The subject of this lecture is a sort of summary of a number of problems which still remain to be discussed. We have already discussed a good many problems during the last two weeks. This lecture is a summing up of everything we have discussed hitherto.

The main and most baffling problem of the Indian Revolution just now is how to run a race with time. Theoretically, we have been working with a long view of things, with a long-range programme of action. Our analysis of the forces of revolution did not permit us to entertain any romantic view. We do not believe that a revolution can be made to order. The examination of the situation in our country led us to the conclusion that none of the three factors necessary for a successful revolution is quite mature. The objective factor of popular discontent is there; it is in a process of development. But only a blind revolt, a vague discontent, is not a reliable revolutionary factor. The masses must be conscious of the cause of their discontent, must realise the nature and magnitude of the political task to be accomplish-



ed for removing the cause. Neither such discontent nor the consciousness is there as yet. Whatever exists is still on a very low level. Therefore, we do not go to the extent of declaring that the objective conditions are mature, or, to use a hackneyed phrase, the country is ready for a struggle, or the masses are simply impatient for a struggle.

As regards the subjective factor, we have come to the conclusion that this is practically absent, and that is the decisive factor. The third factor is the breakdown of the established State. Until recently, that factor was totally absent, and there was no reason to anticipate its happening in the near future. In the meantime, a serious change has taken place in that respect. The international situation does create the possibility of a breakdown. But it is only just a possibility, in so far as a Fascist invasion of India is not altogether excluded.

Nevertheless, that possible perspective creates a very baffling problem for us. That is one of the problems to be solved by us as a conscious, determined group of revolutionaries. How can we do that? The whole complex of the conditions for a successful revolution must be borne in mind in reviewing the situation. The established Imperialist State may break

down under the impact of a foreign invasion. But in the absence of the other two factors, a revolution cannot succeed. Consequently, nothing is very likely to result from such a possible eventuality.

You know what is happening in the country to-day. People who have been shouting for Swaraj have taken up the most short-sighted and irresponsible attitude. They are pleased by the perspective of a possible collapse of Imperialism; but they cannot conceive of themselves doing anything for preparing the country for that crisis. They can only sulk and complain. They are utterly incapable of taking any initiative. They would either non-co-operate, deceiving themselves with the belief that the fall of Imperialism will automatically mean Indian freedom, or co-operate, in return for some concessions, to defend India as she is to-day. That is a tragic situation. All the other political groups are completely baffled by the unexpected problem of devising ways and means for seizing freedom which may be within our reach before long. They are completely unprepared to measure up to the situation. I do not know if it will be at all possible for us to solve the problem. The solution will amount to making the masses conscious of their objectively revolu-

tionary urge, and, on the other hand, creating an organisation, within a very short time, to give the country a realistic lead in these fateful days.

That being the case, the immediate problems of the situation, as far as we are concerned, are two : How to make the masses conscious of their revolutionary urge in the shortest possible time ; and how to create a revolutionary party to lead the Indian masses in the struggle for freedom, also in an equally short time ? For finding a proper approach to these problems, it is necessary to appreciate their general nature, irrespective of whether they present themselves suddenly or only in course of time.

A very curious idea of revolution is prevalent in our country, even among the groups who call themselves leftists or revolutionaries. As a matter of fact, I do not think that, except ourselves, there is any political group in India with a clear idea about how a revolution takes place. The prevalent notion is that agitation, even for the most impractical and fantastic demands, is bound to be followed by a mass uprising ; then, something will happen, somehow. It is true that even in the case of the Russian Revolution the masses were not fully conscious, nor was there a mass party. The Bolshevik party was not a mass organisation.

In the case of previous revolutions, the conditions were still more immature.

Indeed, the masses cannot be organised as a whole. That sounds like a heresy; but it is an empirical truth. You can organise trade-unions or even Kisan Sabhas; but they can never embrace the masses as a whole. Workers as well as peasants are all like potatoes. You can put them in a sack for some time. If organisation of the masses is the condition for a revolution, it will never take place. Masses are mobilised, in a revolutionary struggle. But mobilisation and organisation are two different things.

The immediate problem set to us by the development of the international situation, after all, is not so baffling as it may appear at the first sight. The masses of the people cannot be organised within a year or so. But regarded as one of mass mobilisation, the problem becomes less baffling. One year is indeed a very short time. But on the other hand, we are living in a time when events move very swiftly. Masses can be mobilised much more quickly in the midst of a revolutionary crisis than in normal times. We are living in the midst of a maturing political crisis. Therefore, the process of mass mobilisation can be very swift. But that de-

depends on the existence of the third factor—the mobiliser, the political party. Thus, it is clear that the problems of the Indian Revolution, whether they are to be tackled in course of one, two or three or more years, could be reduced to the one problem of organising a party to lead the Indian masses in a revolution.

What sort of a party must that be? We have already discussed its social composition. Now we are going to discuss the technical aspect of the matter. That brings us up against another prejudice : that a revolutionary party must be a mass party. What is a mass party? Is a mass party always a very powerful thing? The Indian National Congress is the largest mass party the world has ever seen. It is a historical phenomenon—a political party with four million members ! But the failure of this huge mass organisation to do anything by way of attaining its goal is also phenomenal. This failure once again proves that number always does not mean strength.

On the other hand, the experience of history is that a revolutionary party with a much smaller membership can do wonders. Indeed a revolutionary party should not be very large. Because, it must be composed of revolutionaries, and revolutionaries cannot be produced on a

mass scale. If there were forty lakhs of revolutionaries in India to-day, the revolution would have already taken place. Less than a hundred revolutionaries are meeting here in this Camp—not to hatch any plot, but to discuss political problems in an intelligent manner. Yet, what a terrible alarm that has caused! A regiment of policemen has been stationed to keep watch on us. It seems as if Imperialism was trembling! If there were forty lakhs of revolutionaries in this country, Imperialism would have collapsed long ago—out of sheer fright.

A revolutionary party cannot be a mass party in the sense that its membership is counted by hundreds of thousands. You must get over the prejudice in this respect. A party becomes a mass organisation not by virtue of an endless membership, which necessarily must be sleeping, passive, bogus, non-existing. A revolutionary party becomes a mass party not even by commanding the confidence of the masses. The Congress, for example, has had this confidence for twenty years. A party becomes a mass party by its ability to mobilise the masses in a revolutionary crisis and to lead them in such a way as to guarantee success in the struggle.

Here is yet another shock for revolutionary romanticism. A really revolutionary party can

never be popular. To say the same thing differently, popularity is not the characteristic of a revolutionary organisation. A revolutionary party becomes a mass party when it really acts according to the impulses and sentiments of the masses. Such action on its part in a critical moment makes the masses feel that that is exactly what they want.

Let me illustrate by referring to an incident during the Russian Revolution of 1905. There was a general strike at St. Petersburg. The Prime Minister, Count Witte, issued a manifesto addressing the workers as "Brothers", and assuring them that "our Little Father the Tzar" would do everything for "his children." The document was likely to appeal to the sentiments of the masses, who were politically immature even when they were actually engaged in a revolutionary struggle. How to avoid that danger? The Soviet met to discuss the document and give a reply. Many drafts were made; but none was found quite satisfactory. Trotzky was present at the meeting—then an unknown journalist. Late in the night, when everybody seemed to be tired out by the long discussion, he stepped on the platform and sought the permission to read out a reply he had drafted. The document began with the sen-

tence: "We have nothing in common with you; you have no right to call us brothers." The draft was immediately approved with great acclamation. It expressed the general sentiment, submerged in political backwardness which was still prevalent among the masses of the workers. In a few days, Trozky was elected the President of the Soviet, which was leading the revolution.

Yet another instance from older history. It was during the French Revolution, in July 1789, the peasants were burning down feudal castles and seizing the estates; but the National Convention was still arguing whether feudal rights were to be abolished or not, and there was no end to that discussion. The Parisian masses gathered outside the Chamber of Deputies. At that juncture, Danton appeared on the scene. Addressing the crowd, he said: "Everything is alright; but what can you do without a leader? You need a leader who knows what you should do just now. And what you should do, is to go and inform the gentlemen inside that they will not be allowed to go out of the building before they have decreed the abolition of feudalism. Meanwhile, they can talk as much as they like." Besieged by the Parisian masses, the Convention made up its mind; feudalism



was abolished ; and Danton became the leader of the revolution.

Similarly, a political party becomes a mass party by virtue of acting collectively just as a Danton or a Trotzky did individually. How and when did the Bolshevik Party become a mass party? After the February Revolution, a crisis was maturing. In his famous April Thesis, Lenin described the development of the revolution, and pointed out the necessity of an insurrection. But the Central Committee of the party did not agree. Thereupon, Lenin wrote a series of articles in the party organ, explaining his point of view. In July, Lenin's Thesis was unanimously adopted by the Central Committee. Meanwhile, events had made it evident that Lenin gave expression to the urge of the masses. That is how a party becomes a mass party. In the midst of a crisis, a party can win the confidence, and become the leader, of the masses, provided that it is composed of real revolutionaries.

Who is a true revolutionary? Our discussion during these two weeks must have made that clear to you. It is not a blood-thirsty person who can stamp and shout. A revolutionary, of course, is a man of action ; but he must be also

able to think. And in our time, the ability to think is even a greater revolutionary asset.

Our long discussion about the relation of classes in the struggle for Indian freedom might have sounded all nonsense to a common man. He would say : What is all this theorising and hair-splitting? We want freedom ; every Indian is an Indian ; and therefore all Indians will fight to be free. Such a man may talk passionately about freedom ; but he may not be a revolutionary. A revolutionary is not deceived by appearances. He examines all the given factors of a situation, and in the light of that examination discovers the moving force of the revolution. He is concerned with such questions as : Where is the motive force of revolution most in operation? How will, in course of development, the relation between the various factors change? What will be the relation of classes in a revolutionary crisis? On what issue the crisis may mature, and how should one act in that crisis? Only on the merit of having clearly thought out all these questions, can a group of people come forward in a critical moment as the revolutionary party of the people and lead the people in the struggle. Until the crisis, the party may be only a handful of people. That does not matter at all. What matters is its ability to measure

the possibilities of a crisis, and suggest a plan of action and slogan suitable for the occasion. Only such slogan can catch the imagination of the masses, make them conscious of their power, and enthuse them with the determination to act. The influence of the party increases suddenly, by leaps and bounds, and a handful of people, who may have been unknown the day before, become a party of the masses, practically in no time.

Of course, that is a general picture of the process. Things may not always happen exactly that way. Even supreme efforts may fail. Intelligence does not altogether preclude miscalculation, and the anticipated development of events may be disturbed by unknown causes or by the intervention of new factors. Therefore, we do not believe in the fatalist doctrine of inevitability. However, once a revolutionary party is formed, it cannot simply wait for the favourable moment when it may become a mass party all on a sudden. It has also to foment the maturing of the revolutionary crisis. The experience gained in the process of fomenting the revolutionary crisis helps the revolutionary party to anticipate more clearly the nature of the crisis, and consequently, be itself more prepared to

seize the opportunity and give the movement the most correct turn in the crisis.

In our discussion this morning, some comrade said that, if we fixed four annas as monthly subscription, we could not get the masses in our party. That is no consideration. Because, we do not want that kind of membership. I make bold to say that five revolutionaries, of our standard, as crystallised in course of these two weeks' discussions, in each district, and we shall have created the subjective factor which will enable us to seize the opportunity which may be presented to us in the near future. Five members in a district will give a party of not more than ten thousand in the whole country. That is enough. I want to convey to you that conviction. Our defect is that many among ourselves have not yet qualified themselves. That is a bit of self-criticism, which is necessary at the conclusion of this Camp. You should not be insulted. But do take it to heart. If we were all fully qualified revolutionaries, then the subjective factor of the revolution would no longer be absent, and we would not be as helpless as we feel to-day.

Now then, all this shows that the presence of a revolutionary party is the decisive factor. That being the case, our fundamental task is to create

that party. We have applied ourselves to that task. We have succeeded to some extent. I hope the result of this camp will enable us to make greater progress.

Since we are living in a social atmosphere of the seventeenth or eighteenth century, the nature of our revolution will be very largely analogous to the revolutions of those earlier periods. There were no revolutionary parties at that time. Why do we then insist so much on the need of a revolutionary party? Because, though we are living under social and intellectual conditions of an earlier epoch, we nevertheless belong also to the twentieth century. Our assets belong to a past age, but our liabilities are modern. The antiquated nature of the assets make them an additional handicap. On the other hand, those opposed to our revolution belong to the twentieth century. They are equipped with all the weapons of the modern time. We must operate with material limited by the backward mental and social conditions. This tremendous disparity between the forces of revolution and counter-revolution can be bridged only by the emergence and operation of a revolutionary political party.

In earlier periods, revolutions could succeed as spontaneous revolts. That was mainly due to

the weakness of the established States. In those days, States were not very highly organised. They were easily undermined by a crisis in the economic structure of society. The economic crisis also created a mass discontent, and the States, not being highly organised, could not prevent the mass discontent from breaking out into spontaneous popular revolts.

The situation is not at all like that in our country to-day. There is a very highly organised State. It is equipped not only with the material and physical instruments of the twentieth century, but also with twentieth century brains. On the other hand, the weakness of the revolutionary forces is not the absence of arms, as generally believed. It is the absence of twentieth century brains. The revolutionary forces are still dominated by a sixteenth century mentality. But we are pitted against a machinery guided by twentieth century brains. There must be a match for that. Should we, then settle down and teach the people to develop their brains? That question does not arise for us. We know that things are as they are because the masses are living in their present conditions, and that their mentality will change only when those conditions will alter. That seems to be a vicious circle. How are we to

break out of it? It will be broken by the operation of a revolutionary political party. We cannot educate the millions and millions of the backward Indian masses; but we can educate some thousands of people who are already, at least partially, possessed of those physical and mental instruments which are also in the possession of the Imperialist State, and which are necessary to match our twentieth century opponents. There are many Indians possessed of twentieth century brains. Some of them have been enlisted in the service of the other Camp. But others can be enlisted in the service of the revolution. The problem, then, reduces itself to the creation of a brain-trust of the Indian Revolution, so to say.

But even that also will not completely solve the problem, which is complicated by the fact that we shall have to operate with the Indian masses as they are. They cannot be taken out of the sixteenth or seventeenth century intellectual atmosphere until after the revolution. It is true that they have their physical being in an environment of the twentieth century. But that also is only partially true. Indian economic life, as a whole, is subjected to modern imperialist exploitation, and capitalism of indigenous growth is also in operation. But agricultural economy, which embraces the vast bulk of the population,

remains very backward. Labour is performed and production takes place, mostly under mediaeval conditions. Even legally, feudal relations very largely govern the ownership of land, which is still the main means of production.

However, given the extreme poverty of the masses, and the harsh measures they are subjected to, spontaneous revolts can be easily brought about. Indeed, there have been cases of such revolts. But none of them led anywhere. It is not correct to say that every time the Indian masses wanted to march forward, on the road of revolutionary struggle, Gandhi and the Congress held them back. The fact is that the first blow of repression cowed them down, and Gandhi's doctrines persuaded them to submit. Then again, Gandhism could not influence the mass mind, unless there was a predisposition. The mediaeval mentality of the culturally backward masses makes them easy victims of the Gandhist propaganda.

This experience compels us to reject the fatalistic theory of a spontaneous development of revolution as propagated by all the other so-called leftist groups. With all its pompous verbiage, the theory essentially is: "Let us spin and pray (at the shrine of the Mahatma); once



the fat is on fire, something will happen by itself." It will not. The conditions for such a development are absent. The fatalistic mentality of the masses precludes the possibility of any serious spontaneous uprising. We have experienced the break-down of mass Satyagraha also. But assuming that, provoked by intensified exploitation and oppression, there was a spontaneous mass upheaval, it would be romantically optimistic to believe that it could withstand repression. No use counting upon the perspective of the Imperialist State breaking down under the impact of the development of the international situation. There is a good deal of idle speculation on this score. All illusions in that respect must be cleared away.

The defeat of England will not necessarily mean a collapse, and much less disappearance, of the Imperialist State in India. It must be borne in mind that the modern Imperialist State has a much wider base than the National States of olden times. Therefore, it is not likely to be seriously impaired by the events in any one country, not even in the Metropolis. This is no longer a theory. Holland has disappeared as an independent State. But the Dutch Empire remains. The defeat of Holland has not been followed by the disappearance of Dutch Im-

perialism. There is no reason to assume that it would be different in the case of the British Empire. On the contrary, thanks to its very wide base, the British Empire has a much greater chance of surviving a possible catastrophe in the Metropolis. England may be conquered by the Nazis, but the British Empire in India will not collapse in consequence thereof. The Imperialist State in India has a secure base in this country itself. It has an independent machinery of its own, and it possesses the power to defend itself against internal revolt, if not against a very formidable foreign attack. That machinery and that power will not be affected by whatever may happen in England. Therefore, in the near future, there does not seem to be any possibility of the third condition for a successful revolution maturing in India, namely, the breakdown of the established State. That cannot be expected to happen in India before she herself came directly within the range of military operations.

A State breaks down in the midst of a crisis which expresses itself in various ways. Firstly, economic; then, political; and ultimately, a military defeat. All those events together may create a revolutionary situation. Europe is heading in that direction, although it would be

foolhardy to hazard a prophesy even regarding the future of Europe. In any case, nothing like that can be expected in India in the near future. There is no sign of any economic crisis; on the contrary, war means good business, which will certainly enlist the services of a powerful class of Indians for the established State. That will be a guarantee against any serious political crisis. The deadlock created by Congress non-cooperation does not in the least impede the functioning of the State machinery. Even mass civil disobedience will fail to bring about a political crisis of the nature which may contribute to the creation of a revolutionary situation. There may be a certain amount of nervousness, but nothing more serious need be apprehended or expected.

Therefore, assuming that Britain will be defeated in this war, it is not permissible to anticipate that the Imperialist State in India will break down. It will be weakened only to the extent of being isolated from the Metropolis. That will be no weakening, much less a break-down. Because, for all practical purposes, the Imperialist State in India is an independent power. For defending itself, particularly against an internal revolt, it does not count upon any help from England. In addition to the might of its own

machinery, it relies rather upon the support of the upper strata of the Indian people. In any serious political crisis, threatening the existence of the established regime, the class differentiation inside India will be sharpened. A larger section of the Indian people will rally round the Imperialist State, because it is the bulwark not only of colonial economy, but also of all the reactionary interests in Indian society. Consequently, in a crisis, the Imperialist State in India may be reinforced rather than break down.

For all these considerations, it is idle to hope that, just as the Romans, when they were pressed elsewhere, left England and England became free, similarly, if England would be attacked by the Nazis, all Englishmen will go back to England, and India will gain her freedom. That is not going to happen. Because, the Englishmen in India do not give a damn for England, except sentimentally. Their property and interests are in India. In an emergency, they would declare themselves all Indians, and defend India against the Indians as well as against foreign invaders, if they could; or come to terms with the latter, irrespective of whatever they might do to the 'home country.'

Nevertheless, in the event of such a drastic development in England and elsewhere, the

political regime in India will be weakened to some extent. There will be some dislocation of the State machinery— during the period of transition to new adjustments. That will be an opportunity; nothing more. Completely cut off from the Metropolis, and threatened with invasion, the British rulers of India will be thrown entirely on their own resources which alone cannot possibly help them in such an emergency. That much weakening will be there. But even in that case, a spontaneous uprising is not likely to succeed. The immediate result of that emergency will be a change in the relation of forces in India. The Indian people fighting for freedom will no longer have to combat an international power. They will have to deal with an 'Indian' State, because then the Imperialist State will make no delay in reinforcing itself with the co-operation of the upper classes of the Indian population. Then it will pay to make concessions which are denied to-day.

Therefore, the task of the revolutionary party in India is more difficult than of revolutions in other countries, even of the Russian Revolution. It will not be enough for our party to estimate all the forces, find out their real relations, and as those relations will change in course of time, to

foresee how the crisis itself will develop, what may be the relation of forces in the crisis, and thus to be able to come forward in the critical moment with slogans and demands which will find a response from the masses, and secure their support over-night, so to say. We shall have to do much more than that. We shall have to organise the forces of revolution, not simply to agitate them, or even to incite them up to a blind fury. Instead of agitation and appeal to emotion and chances, we should rely upon organisation, intelligence and planned action.

The general nature of the organisation, in a political sense, has already been discussed. It has been concretely outlined in the Manifesto to be issued on behalf of the League of Radical Congressmen. By attaching supreme importance to organisation, we do not propose to do what I have characterised as not possible, namely, organise the masses as such. We want to organise a revolutionary leadership of the masses, intellectually as well as politically. The party we propose to organise may be numerically small. But it must be far-flung, and spiritually connected with the masses, so to say. Equipped with the advantages, available to the revolutionary of the twentieth century, we shall apply ourselves to the problems of a revo-

lution which must take place in the social and intellectual atmosphere of an earlier epoch. On the other hand, we shall be fully aware of the difficulties which result from the great disparity between the might and resources of a highly organised twentieth century State and the potential power of a people handicapped not only by material, but also spiritual backwardness. This disparity, which itself is an objective factor, may decisively influence the course of the Indian Revolution, and compel the revolutionary party to adjust its tactics and strategy to the peculiarities of the situation.

Let us have a rough picture of past revolutions. There is a political crisis, marked by spontaneous upheavals here and there. Some more or less organised groups try to take command. None of them possess a country-wide organisation. Its forces are unevenly distributed. In one or a few important places—the nerve-centres of the country, so to say,—it succeeds in capturing power. The whole machinery of the State crumbles. The struggle for power spreads. The revolution enters the stage of civil war. which may be long or short, its outcome not always certain.

Can we picture such a thing happening in our country? Not except in imagination, and

then the imagination would be simply fantastic, not a realistic, reasonable, anticipation of physical or political events.

That was the way of revolutions which took place before the rise of the modern State with its highly organised machinery of repression. It is true that the impending Indian Revolution, socially as well as historically, belongs to the category of the older revolutions. But it is also true that chronologically it will take place in an entirely different epoch. It will have to face a highly organised modern State, which is not likely to break down so easily as the corrupt, narrow-based feudal States of olden times. Since the collapse of the established political regime is the decisive condition for a revolution to succeed, and since that condition cannot be expected to be created in India, as in the case of past revolutions, the ways of the Indian Revolution are bound to be different. Its battles are more likely to begin in the periphery, and then gradually close in on central places. Gathering strength in course of that process, the forces of revolution will finally be the master of the situation.

Therefore, our party must be organised not only in a few important places, but in as many places as possible. We need not have a



party unit in every village. But we must have a party organisation in every district. Everyone of these organisations should be an epitome of the whole party, so that in any critical moment it will be able to act independently as the leader of local events. Hence the necessity of building up our party as a spiritual community. In the Inaugural Address I explained what that means. It will not be a religious order, but a band of revolutionaries working with a common purpose, intelligently conceived, and guided by collective thinking. If they can all learn to think alike, they will always act in the same manner. And likeness of thought will result from an intelligently agreed common approach to all problems.

Now we can take up the crucial question about the capture of power. There is much, too much, talk about it; but all loose talk. Unless the antiquated theory of spontaneity is discarded, the problem cannot be properly posed in the specific Indian setting. We suggested the idea of the Constituent Assembly as the practical approach to the problem of capturing power. The idea became popular, but was completely misunderstood. The National Front group, for example, maintained that the Constituent Assembly can rise only after the

capture of power. That is begging the crucial question. Mechanically speaking, it will rise after the revolution. But our view, that the capture of power cannot take place in India in consequence of a spontaneous upheaval, poses the problem in an entirely different setting. A mechanical reading of the history of this or that revolution does not help us. In India, capture of power must be an organised process. It cannot be a sudden event. There must, therefore, be an instrument for directing that process. To create that instrument is the fundamental problem of the Indian Revolution.

In the past, the revolutionary movements spread out from the centre. In the French Revolution, power was captured in Paris, and then the feudal structure of society was pulled down. In the case of the Russian Revolution, power was captured in Petrograd and Moscow, and the whole established system collapsed. That is not possible in India. The disparity of forces is so great that the idea of any uprising of the Indian people and of their capturing power in Calcutta or Delhi or Bombay is simply inconceivable. Here, the process will most probably be in the reverse direction. The movement will gather strength on the periphery, and then converge on the centre. Therefore, I

have been always laying emphasis on the importance of the seven lakhs of villages. The process must begin there; and we must begin with forging the instrument for that purpose. The people will not understand if we talk to them in terms of power and organs for capturing it. There comes the role of the party. We must judge realistically what sort of an organisation can be created under the given circumstances. Due consideration should be given not only to the prevailing political conditions and the supreme concern of the masses with the grievances of their daily life, but also to the psychological factor. The organisation should serve the immediate purpose of mobilising the masses on issues uppermost in their mind; at the same time, it should be so constructed as to become the basic units of the future Democratic State. The seven lakhs of villages are to be organised units which will constitute the foundation of the State. That will be a new type of democracy. As social atoms, so to say, individuals cannot exercise any political right, much less power. Consequently, political rights become mere formalities, a legal fiction, for all practical purposes. Revolutions radiating from the centre could confer on the people only that sort of political rights. Real power

remains beyond the reach of the people. We want the masses to take the initiative, so that in course of time power will be really captured by themselves.

All these fundamental considerations persuaded me to attach so much importance to the Congress organisation. The Congress Committees could serve the purpose of promoting the immediate interests of the masses and thereby become centres of mass mobilisation. If they were organised with that purpose, they could easily become the type of organisation we visualised. Under the guidance of a few, capable of seeing ahead, of anticipating the development of events, and of acting differently in different situations, the Congress Committees could become organs of far-reaching popular efforts. For several years, we tried our best to build up the Congress in that way, as a really democratic organisation, which is required to solve the peculiar problems of the Indian Revolution. It was an uphill task. The organisational machinery of the Congress, functioning as the instrument of a reactionary clique, systematically and deliberately destroyed democracy inside the organisation. The so-called constructive programme was the expression of a positively reactionary social

philosophy hidden behind the threadbare veil of pseudo-humanitarianism. It served the purpose of making the average Congress worker blind to the realities of the situation and disregard the urgent demands of the masses. Instead of mobilising the masses in a progressively developing struggle against the intolerable conditions of their daily life, the Congress Committees became instruments for doping them with the fraudulent patent medicines of Gandhism. Instead of making the masses conscious of their collective power to alter the conditions of their life, the Congress Committees promoted their predisposition to entrust their welfare in the hands of others supposed to be better qualified than themselves. The masses were not to take any initiative. They had simply to believe in the miraculous power of the Mahatma, and in the fulness of time there would be a heaven on earth. Meanwhile, they were to work and pray and spin.

With such a spirit and such a leadership firmly in the saddle, thanks to the command of the services of a large army of paid functionaries, it would be a miracle if the Congress could be transformed into the organ for the revolutionary struggle of the masses. Nevertheless, we persevered. But now there is no

sense in doing so. The reactionary clique controlling the machinery is destroying the Congress as a mass organisation. The Satyagraha movement serves no other purpose. The Congress Committees are being dissolved by order from above. Resistance to this attack on democracy cannot succeed because Congress propaganda prevented the growth of political consciousness among the masses. The Congress rank and file was deliberately kept in political backwardness, paralysed by the cultivated blind faith in the Mahatma and his lieutenants. Those who wanted to defend the democratic right of the primary membership, therefore, could not get the active support of the latter, who could be swayed easily by the demagogic appeal for confidence in the Mahatma.

The Satyagraha Committees, which are replacing the democratically elected Congress Committees, can not be the organs of a mass struggle. The Congress, which attracted us, has ceased to exist. We have been trying to build up the primary Congress Committees, so that they might become instruments for the capture of power by the masses in a revolutionary crisis. Just when the crisis appears to be round the corner, they are being destroyed. It is diffi-

cult to resist the belief that there is some method in this madness. Perhaps it is for the very reason that they could serve a revolutionary purpose that the Congress Committees are being destroyed by the leaders.

However, what are we going to do? We have discarded the traditional way of agitating for, and precipitating, "political general strikes" etc., expecting that something will come out of it somehow. That is not the way of the Indian Revolution. I am of the opinion that in our time in no country can a revolution succeed with those methods which were effective under other conditions of a different time. Different methods must be found for the changed conditions of a different epoch.

Every revolution creates its specific instruments. The rise in India of the unprecedented organisational phenomenon called the Congress was not fortuitous. Nor was it conjured up by any *mantra* of the Mahatma. It was the creation of the peculiarities of the Indian situation. It indicates what form of organisation can solve the problems of the Indian Revolution. The masses have shown what they need, even not knowing it themselves. That is how they assert their sovereignty.

A spontaneous mass upheaval and a

frontal attack for the capture of power being out of the question under the given conditions of our country, the masses found a different way instinctively, as it were. That is why we characterised the Congress as a creation of the masses. Only those who know how to follow the masses can lead them and become the party of the masses. Those who can follow the masses intelligently alone can lead the masses correctly. How is it possible to follow and lead at the same time? By giving a conscious expression to the unconscious urge of the masses. By some spontaneous action, they indicate the urge. The organisers of revolution travel the indicated way, and thus they follow the masses. But at the same time, by giving a more concrete form and intelligent expression to the urge of the masses, they become the leaders of the masses. The Congress neither followed nor led the masses. Unwillingly, to some extent, it did follow. That is the secret of its rapid growth. But unable to appreciate the significance of mass instinct, it could not lead the masses, and ultimately destroyed the organisation created by the masses.

It has to be recreated. But not exactly on the model of the Congress organisation. While



undertaking the task of solving the crucial problem of the Indian Revolution, we must bear in mind the difference between organisation and mobilisation. The masses of the people cannot be organised. They can only be mobilised for a definite purpose. The Congress as a whole could never be a functioning mass organisation. There were two things in the Congress: a pyramidal structure of Committees and a horizontal mass of membership. The Committees could be the instruments for mass mobilisation. They constituted the organisation. As soon as they were dissolved, the mass membership of the Congress automatically vanished. The organisation we want to create, therefore, should be like the pyramidal structure of the Congress; formal enrolment of politically sleeping, often physically non-existing members *en masse*, is not necessary. There must be focal points around which mass mobilisation could take place in the proper time. In the beginning, the mobilisation cannot be on a country-wide scale. There must be local actions, and there may not be a uniform development. The new organisation will not be based in the big cities. Its activity will not consist in making innumerable speeches by perambulating agitators.

The centres of mass mobilisation should be created where the masses are; in course of time, there should be one such centre in each village. They will be composed of active political workers, fully conversant with the nature of the task, and qualified to tackle it. The number of such workers is bound to be limited. They will constitute our party. The local units will be the pivots of the structure of our party.

Armies are recruited, drilled and dispersed. The entire army of a nation is not kept under arms all the time. The standing army is always small. Mobilisation of all the forces takes place only when there is a necessity for military action. Similarly, political mobilisation also takes place whenever there is a necessity for political action. The work of political propaganda and agitation will be carried on not spasmodically, but continuously, by the local party units; it will be like recruiting, drilling and otherwise training a political army. Gradually, everywhere there will be a corps of officers and a potential army, to be mobilised for action when the appropriate time will come. With such a decentralised army, scattered all over the country, it will be a practical proposition to tackle the problem of captur-

ing power. All romantic notions about it must be discarded. The task must be accomplished over a whole period of time, and capture of power by the masses must be visualised as a process which might be longer or shorter, according to the combination of circumstances.

That is organising a revolution. It does not mean organisation of the masses. That cannot be done, just as a whole nation cannot become its standing army. Nor can the masses be kept in a perpetual state of mobilisation. Mobilisation is a temporary state. Having mobilised the masses, you must lead them in some action; otherwise, there is bound to be demoralisation, and for the next time mobilisation itself would be a more difficult proposition. But propaganda, political education and training of the corps of officers, can be carried on continuously over a long period of time, thus creating the condition for the mobilisation of the masses in the most favourable moment, when some decisive action can be undertaken.

The party of the masses should be able to anticipate the moment. It could do so only if it had a correct appreciation of the given relation of forces which, in its turn, could be done only on the basis of a realistic, scientific—as against wishful, analysis of the situation. Only

then the party can be prepared with such slogans as will find a response during a crisis, and consequently it will be possible to mobilise the largest number of people in an effective, fruitful action.

But we have to begin from the very beginning. Before we can have units of our party all over the country, the central nucleus must be there. The educators must educate themselves first. Simply enthused by all sorts of romantic ideas, they may make a lot of noise, deceiving the unwary and scaring the chicken-hearted; but nothing serious and abiding will be accomplished. Therefore, we must hold our souls in patience. We are still to create what is called the cadre of the party. The most difficult task is to take the first step. If that is in the right direction, success is guaranteed. Now we are a few, relatively; let everyone of us first grasp the nature of our problems; know how they should be approached; have a clear idea of their possible solution. Once that is done, the rest will follow more easily.

You may be depressed by the fact that our ideas do not spread rapidly. Instead of getting pessimistic, we must enquire why that is so, assuming that it is really so. We have to carry on in the face of great difficulties. In a vast

country like India, propaganda on a large scale is a very costly business. We have no money. We cannot expect to have it, unless we are ready to change our ideas. If we do that, then we will cease to be ourselves. Nevertheless, we have been making some headway. Our ideas are spreading in all directions. Don't forget that Marxism was introduced in this country by the pioneers of our party. There are unmistakable signs of the thinking sections of the people getting influenced by our propaganda. The slowness of the spread of our ideas is not due to any defect inherent in them; nor are the people to be blamed. They are not to be held responsible for the prejudices, and general cultural backwardness, which obstruct the spread of our ideas. The greatest obstacle to the propagation of ideas is the confusion in the mind of the propagators themselves. If I am not clear about my ideas, I can only transfer my confusion to others when I try to impart ideas. The propagandist should have the pride of craftsmanship. His wares must be manufactured and polished and finished with the greatest care. He should be ashamed of dealing in borrowed or stolen goods. Of course, they must learn from others, and then teach what they have learned. But learning

must not be mechanical. It must be intelligent. Ideas formed on the basis of the experience of others, in other countries, under different circumstances, often in different epochs, cannot serve our purpose, unless we are capable of adjusting them to the conditions under which they are to be applied by us. In other words, we should be able to do original thinking, necessary to elaborate, enrich, amplify, old ideas with the aid of new experiences made by others as well as by ourselves.

Marxist propaganda in our country has generally been so ineffective because the things said are silly and senseless, and therefore can not go farther than creating temporary enthusiasm in loafers and idle youths. They do not create conviction in the minds of intelligent people, nor do they make any abiding impression, generally.

The next point to be borne in mind by propagandists is the necessity of differentiating political workers from the masses. For the large masses of the people, following a political party, or involved in a political movement, politics is not a daily occupation, even if it is a matter of life and death for them. Wife and children and bread and clothes, are the predominant concern of their lives. Therefore, they cannot be

kept in a state of political effervescence for any length of time. They can be persuaded to have standing interest in a reformist movement, touching the daily needs of their lives. But as regards bigger problems, having no apparent direct bearing on their daily life, the enthusiasm of the masses is bound to be temporary. Therefore, propaganda in the serious sense cannot go very far among the masses. They can only be agitated and mobilised for action. Propaganda must be carried on in a limited circle. Its object should be to educate political workers, who will know on what issues the masses can be moved, and when and how they can be mobilised for action. Mass mobilisation can take place only as a prelude to some decisive large-scale action. It is the function of the party of the masses to judge the situation, anticipate events and plan the possible action.

This, however, does not mean that no political propaganda should be done among the masses. Far from it. I only wanted to lay emphasis on the necessity of educating the educators, and also to differentiate between political education and political consciousness. The masses must be raised to a minimum level of political consciousness before they can be mobilised for any decisive political action. But

the political consciousness on their part will result primarily from the experience which they will gain in course of daily activities to be initiated and guided by the party. They can be mobilised for capturing political power only when they have realised the necessity of doing so. That realisation will result from their own experience. The function of the party is to help them make the experience.

At the same time, it should be remembered that the question of the political power can never present itself so acutely to the masses in general as to the party. Otherwise, there would be no need for the party. The party will be constantly working for *the capture of political power by masses*, knowing that otherwise democratic freedom cannot be established and the readjustment of social relations, indispensable for promoting general prosperity and welfare of the masses, cannot take place. But the masses cannot do that. They are too engrossed with their immediate problems to work with the vision of a brighter future. That is done for them by the party, and therefore the party becomes the party of the masses. The party must repeatedly tell the masses that they need political power, and can get it only by acting collectively. The function of the party is



to develop in the people a militant democratic consciousness, to help them co-operatively function in organised democratic bodies and to guide them through propaganda and participation in their struggle to build up a free society of their own. False appeals and pointless mass-mobilisation cannot serve the purpose.

I shall tell you a story—a true one. I returned to India after sixteen years abroad. On reaching Bombay at the end of 1930, I was naturally very anxious to have a closer look at the proletariat of that premier industrial city of the country. While abroad, I had not only heard much about their revolutionary class consciousness, but written about it also. Just a year before, I had read some reports of the Bombay proletariat setting up Soviets, and the workers of Sholapur capturing and holding the city for seven days! On my arrival in Bombay I learned from some friends, who were working in the mill areas, that the same afternoon there was to be a great mass meeting there. I went to the place all alone. The sight was altogether disappointing. A couple of thousand workers were squatting on a triangular piece of ground, being addressed by a speaker who was gesticulating, and shouting at the top of his voice. Well, I had attended and address-

ed mass meetings in other countries. But masses, who were said to be marching on the road to revolution, squatting in a meeting—that was an unprecedented sight. Squatting masses won't make a revolution. The speaker was evidently trying to impart to the audience his revolutionary fervour; obviously he was not succeeding. But equally obviously, he was altogether oblivious of that depressing fact. I came closer to find that most of the audience were dozing or actually sleeping. The only sign of life was thin wisps of bidi smoke here and there. It was six o'clock in the evening; they had been working in the usual stuffy atmosphere of Indian mills all the day. And when they came to work, the stomach of most of them was not particularly full. The hard work, heat and hunger naturally had taken all energy out of them. They simply wanted to go home, have something to eat and fall asleep. Why did they come to the meeting, then? Some enthusiasts had persuaded them to stop for a moment on the wayside. With some, it was a matter of curiosity.

If you keep on continuously, in a mechanical way, with such meetings, processions and demonstrations, they lose all meaning. That becomes a sterile process. Yet, the entire poli-

tical life of our country consists of this kind of activity. That explains its remarkable sterility.

Reports of people attending Congress meetings and demonstrations in hundreds of thousands had aroused great expectations in me while I was abroad. There, the revolution is believed to be just around the corner when on the slightest provocation hundreds of thousands of people could be brought out in the streets. The first experience in Bombay and similar experience later on convinced me how delusive was the picture imagined from the newspaper reports of large meetings and demonstrations. They were not political events. They had no more revolutionary significance than the mass pilgrimages which have taken place in this country from time immemorial. Only, on these occasions, new gods are worshipped.

Abiding revolutionary work is propaganda, which lays the foundation for other activities. People must have an idea of what it is all about before they can act intelligently—with a purpose. Agitation is also necessary in the beginning of a movement in order to create an atmosphere. But at that stage, agitation cannot lead to any political action. It only does the spade-work,

so to say. The field is to be ploughed for sowing, which is done through propaganda. Its object is to make the masses feel their subconscious urge, and develop the will to act in pursuance thereof. Only then can the masses be mobilised for decisive action.

In previous revolutions, there was nobody to fix the time. Circumstances matured, and the masses somehow revolted; in the midst of that spontaneous revolt, some people came forward—in the French Revolution, some individuals, and in the Russian Revolution, a political party. In India things are not likely to happen that way. Here, we shall have to prepare the masses. We shall have to create in them a mentality which will respond to revolutionary agitation at the critical moment. On the other hand, we shall have to build up the revolutionary party.

In addition, we shall have to do another thing. In our time, a spontaneous revolt cannot succeed. It has to be an organised movement. But the organisation can only be a framework, because a mass movement cannot be continuous. The framework has to be created by a political party. Having created it, the creators must be there to protect it. Simultaneously, we shall carry on our propaganda,

so that, as soon as the time comes, the recruited and trained soldiers can be immediately "called to arms," so to say, and corps of officers will be ready throughout the country. That will be mass mobilisation. Having called the trained and drilled masses to the colours, it will be possible for us to lead the masses ahead in an effective and fruitful struggle.

We expected the Congress Committees to serve as the instruments for the capture of power by the masses. They are being destroyed. All our efforts to save them have not succeeded. We shall continue our efforts as long as there is any hope. But should the leaders of the Congress destroy it organisationally, there would be no alternative for us but to create another instrument. We have suggested People's Councils. They can be created by utilising the atmosphere which is still there. The Congress Committees, created by the people, cannot be simply destroyed from to-day to to-morrow, even by the order of the most powerful High Command. In any case, the idea has gained ground that the people can come together and elect committees of their own, through which their demands can be pressed. This idea developed to a very high level during the period of Congress Ministries.

That was the positive gain, and only for that it was worthwhile to accept Ministries. During that time, everywhere the masses looked upon the Congress Committees as their Government, distinct from the local units of the Imperialist State. But the Congress leaders discouraged that tendency, which was pregnant with great possibilities. If it developed, we might have made an undreamt of advance towards capture of power by the people. However, the idea is still there. From their own experience, the people have learned that they can create organs of their organised power. We may be able to resurrect those local organs of power created by the masses. Whether we shall be able to resurrect them as the basic units of a reconstructed and reorientated Congress, or whether we shall have to do that in the form of People's Councils or something else, will be decided in course of time. Meanwhile, we shall tackle the fundamental problem of the revolution—the problem of building up the party which will organise and lead the revolution.

In India, the revolution cannot take place in consequence of a spontaneous mass upheaval. It must be an organised process. From now on, we shall have to create the moulds, through which, at the critical moment, the mass

movement will find an organised expression. That is the specific task of our revolution, and we have discussed it at some length. An idea about those moulds results from our analysis of the forces in operation and of their inter-action. In the light of the same analysis, it is possible to visualise approximately the social composition of that structure. And the structure of the instrument for the capture of power will predetermine the nature of the State which will be the depository of popular power. It will not be a parliamentary democratic State based on atomised individuals, theoretically possessed of the right of sovereignty, but actually powerless and helpless. The conditions not only of our country, but of the epoch in which the Indian Revolution takes place, create the necessity of giving an organised shape to mass revolt. That necessity, in its turn, will create an entirely different basis of the State which will grow out of the revolution. The basis will not be atomised individuals, but organised units. The specific problems of our revolution and their solution will result in the creation of a type of new State, which represent a higher form of democracy and establish a regime of greater freedom.

In conclusion, I shall draw your attention

to one particular point. The underlying idea of our discussions is this: We are confronted with peculiar problems. We cannot accept any model. We are breaking new ground.

Agitation, propaganda and organisation are common features of all revolutions. But at every stage, the Indian Revolution will take a different form. Unless we can appreciate the specific nature of the problems, and find correct approaches to them, they will remain baffling.

Take for instance the idea of Constituent Assembly. The Congress leaders have accepted it. But what have they made out of it? We need not dispute their sincerity. It is a question of an intelligent approach. They may talk about the Constituent Assembly. But they simply do not know how it is going to come about, and what function it will perform. Consequently, it has become simply another meaningless slogan. They say that all the outstanding problems of Indian political life will be solved as soon as the Government will accept the demand for the election of a Constituent Assembly by universal suffrage. But how that election is going to take place? Can it ever take place? Supposing it does take place somehow, who will guide the deliberations of such an unwidely heterogeneous body.



and what will it do? All these practical questions are of supreme importance. They cannot be answered by those who are sublimely ignorant of the peculiar problems of the Indian Revolution.

Therefore, having discussed a whole variety of theoretical and practical questions, it was necessary to concentrate our attention at the last moment on the specific problems of the Indian Revolution. I have tried only to indicate the approach to it. But as I told you in the beginning, there is a whole complex of problems involved. Therefore, it was not possible for me to treat the questions extensively. Perhaps, many things are not yet quite straightened out. But at least we should go back from this Camp with thoughts awakened in us, and knowing that we shall have to act in a certain way. If that much has been achieved, our time and energy have not been wasted.

We are living in a period of wars and revolutions. To-day, it seems as if time is against us, as if it is simply impossible to do anything. But the course of events may turn, and a new and more hopeful perspective open before us. We shall have to work with a long as well as with a short perspective, and must be able to adjust and readjust our line of action

to changed circumstances. A correct understanding of the problem is the essential condition for its solution, and in order to be correctly understood, the problem must be stated clearly. I have tried only to do that. The solution will require collective efforts. Let us prepare to make them.

## THE HISTORY OF REVOLUTION

The subject cannot be dealt with in one lecture. A series of lectures would be necessary for the purpose. Therefore, I shall not be able to give anything like a detailed description even of the great revolutions which marked the history of the world ever since the beginning of civilisation. This lecture will be devoted rather to the fundamental principle of revolution, and the problems involved in what is known as revolution.

A review of history from that point of view is of particular interest to us, because we are living in an age of revolution. Of course, we have our peculiar problems. The revolution in our country will not be an imitation of revolutions which took place in other countries. Yet, revolutions as events in history occur according to certain laws. Nothing happens unless it is necessary.

Because a revolution is necessary for the progress and welfare of the Indian people, there must be some who can foresee that necessity and herald the coming of the event. They are called revolutionaries. We are privileged

to do that. We are revolutionaries. We herald the coming of a revolution. Therefore, it is but natural that we should be hated and feared by all who are afraid of revolution, because it will deprive them of their privileges which stand in the way to the progress and welfare of the entire people.

It is evident from the study of human history that, from time to time, great changes take place in the process of social, political and intellectual evolution. In the past, violent outbursts and fierce clashes were associated with those turning points of history. The forces making for progress, in the beginning, grow within the established order of things. If nothing stood in the way of changes necessary for continuous progress and general welfare, there would be no cause for such outbursts and clashes. But the experience of history is that forces making for progress and greater freedom are eventually cramped by the limitations of the established order. Therefore, the removal of these latter becomes necessary for general welfare. Until now there has been no instance of the established order liquidating itself voluntarily, so as to open the way to further progress. The changes consequently involved violent

outbursts and fierce clashes. They are called revolutions.

Similar outbursts, sudden jumps or violent changes occur even in the physical processes of the inanimate world. Take for instance such a common phenomenon as steam. We know that water is transformed into steam when heat is applied to it. But it is not generally realised that the transformation is not gradual, all the way through; it represents a revolution in an apparently gradual physical process. Heat is applied to water, and steam is generated. It appears to be a gradual process. In reality, it is not; at a certain stage, there is a violent outburst which is inherent, and therefore unavoidable, in the process of generating steam. When the temperature of the water reaches a point, its surface is disturbed by a commotion which is caused by a clash with the pressure of air. The commotion does not remain confined to the surface; it affects the entire volume of water, in the process of becoming steam. If a lid is placed on the vessel, in which the water is being boiled, it is thrown off; and if it is held tight, there is an explosion. That is a revolution on a small scale.

As heat is applied to water, there begins the process of its being transformed to some-

thing new. Up to a certain point, the process can take place within the limits of the vessel. But finally, it can no longer be accommodated within the limits. It throws off the lid. If there is no lid, the violence of the process is less evident. In an open vessel, the water would boil peacefully; but boiling water is very much different from placid water. The physical event of boiling represents a clash with air pressure. The lid being an artificial obstruction, so to say, the event of boiling makes itself manifest with a greater outburst of violence. If the water is boiled in a hermetically sealed vessel, there will be an explosion. The greater the obstruction to the process of change, the more manifest is the violence inherent in it.

That law governing physical processes is operative also in the process of the evolution of society, which is a part of the physical world. Changes necessary for progress, eventually reach a point when they are obstructed. If social evolution is not to stop at that point, the obstruction must be removed. Removal means violence for the thing removed. The violence of the act of that necessary removal, however, is determined by the tenacity of the obstruction. If it is like a tight lid of a vessel

of boiling water, it is thrown off in a similar way. In any case, just as the rise of the temperature of a volume of water creates a commotion affecting the entire volume, just so does a human community experience a commotion whenever new forces are generated within its structure. The commotion develops and culminates according to its law, which is only an extension of the law governing all physical processes. If your aesthetic sense is outraged by the rowdyism of boiling water, you shall have to do without steam. What would, then, happen to modern civilisation? The opposition to the idea of revolution means that social evolution should go that far and no farther. Therefore, opponents of revolution are enemies of progress. You can condemn revolution with just as much justification as you can condemn the water for throwing off the lid of the vessel in which it boils.

There are not many Indians who would maintain that everything is alright in this country; that no changes are necessary for the Indian people to live as civilised human beings, and prosper and progress in all walks of life. Everybody is complaining. The shopkeeper cannot make a decent profit; the mill owner makes the same complaint; and it is worse with

the workers and peasants. People complain when the workers and peasants demonstrate against their intolerable condition. They think it is a nuisance. Those who are a little better off also complain, although they do not make a "nuisance" of themselves. But, then, the others are in a much more uncomfortable position. They simply cannot tolerate it any more. They feel the sting of hunger. Consequently, they come forward, and give expression to the general urge—a desire which is shared by the entire people, in a greater or lesser degree.

One law of revolution is that it does not take place, unless the welfare of the *entire* society requires a radical change in the established order of things. One particular section of society, which feels the urge more strongly than the rest, expresses what is generally felt, and ultimately becomes the standard-bearer of the revolution, because its particular interest is identical with the interest and welfare of the society as a whole. Therefore, don't be indignant with the poor coolies for disturbing the beauty and tranquility of the Mall. They are simply going ahead on a way which you must all travel, if you want to live like human beings. Most of you may find some pleasure in joining the promenade on the Mall; but how many of



you belong to the fortunate few who are free from the cares and worries of life?

Nevertheless, history teaches us that, whenever a revolution was a necessity, only a small group of people felt it before the rest. They had to come forward as the pioneers. Yet, they were subjected always not only to persecution, tyranny and oppression, but were often looked down upon as morally depraved, inferior human beings, moved by selfishness and thirst for blood.

The fate of Christ is the fate of all revolutionaries. The cross is the fate of all pioneers of progress. It may take various forms. You do not know how many thousands of revolutionaries have been crucified. The cross has only taken different shapes. More civilised forms of crucification have been invented. Christ was crucified; but the spirit of Christ lived, and the powerful Roman Empire, whose vanity was satisfied by the crucification of Christ, crumbled before the tremendous movement created by the spirit of Christianity. Like the early Christians, the revolutionaries may be only a handful to-day. We may be crucified in different ways; but we represent the spirit of the time. And that spirit will sweep away

everything that stands in the way to the progress and happiness of the Indian people.

People think that revolution is a sort of new-fangled sport. The mischief started with the Russian Revolution; and others are now imitating. Those who know a little more of history say that it started with the French Revolution; that the mischief began only in the eighteenth century, and before then humanity was a happy family. That is entirely a wrong idea of history. If I were to give the description of the history in one sentence, I would say that the history of the human race is the history of revolutions. Therefore, I said in the beginning that I could not give you that history in one lecture. I shall do no more than point out some outstanding events of human history which can be properly appreciated and understood only when we know that they were great revolutions.

Let us begin at home. It is perhaps true that India has experienced fewer revolutions than any other country. But it is a question whether that is a matter of pride or shame or regret. I think it is rather a matter of shame. Such a big country, taking pride in its long history and ancient culture, yet, time and again conquered, devastated and enslaved by any

free-booter who took it into its head to come this way—is that not a matter of shame? How are we to explain that most outstanding fact of Indian history during the last one thousand years? The explanation, rather apologies, given by the nationalist historians, do not convince the sociologist, the student who studies history as a science, not as a conglomeration of fortuitous happenings, but as a casual chain of events. The imposing structure of India cracked and crumbled under the blow of one foreign invasion after another, because it was superannuated; for one reason or another, its occupants could not keep it repaired by reinforcing it from time to time with necessary additions and alterations.

The infrequency of revolutions in Indian history is an indication that the process of social evolution was not free; the process must have been obstructed; it was a stunted growth, in which all the potentialities of a human community were not unfolded. But the potentialities are still there, and they are going to find expression. The stored up energy, which might have expressed itself in a number of revolutions in the past, is going to take the form of a tremendous outburst, in what will perhaps be the greatest revolution the world has ever ex-

perienced; and in consequence of that revolution, India may revert to the best tradition of her history.

India did experience one of the greatest revolutions of history. That was the rise of Buddhism. It was certainly one of the greatest revolutions of the ancient time,—perhaps one of the greatest of all times. That revolution was defeated. All the subsequent misfortunes of India can be ultimately traced to that original misfortune of having killed one of the greatest revolutions of human history. Ever since, India had to atone for that monumental sin of our forefathers. That crime vitiated the whole subsequent periods of history. It condemned Indian society to an age-long stagnation, and centuries of political slavery. The more heinous a crime, the more severe the *prayaschitta* prescribed by the Shastras. More than a thousand years of suffering and humiliation have been the *prayaschitta* for the crime of our forefathers destroying Buddhism. But it is not yet complete. The old mischief must be undone. For that purpose, we shall have to carry through another revolution which will be counted among the greatest in history. It will be much more than a simple change of political regime. It will have to pull down the hoary

structure of Indian society which is rotten through and through, breeding the deadly disease of spiritual degeneration. Having cleared away the stinking debris and suffocating atmosphere, it will build a new order, based on such a broad conception of freedom as may set an example to the world. We shall be able to do that if we can draw our inspiration from the one great revolution experienced in ancient India.

That is not a fantastic dream; nor is it the bragging of a humbug. I shall explain how India is destined to experience once again one of the greatest revolutions of all times.

During the last thousand years, when India lived a life of shame, humiliation and stagnation, other parts of the world experienced no less than three revolutions, marking three successive stages of human progress. India also must make that experience, if she is to come abreast with the advanced members of the human family. Should that take a thousand years, others would during that time march much farther ahead, and the process of human progress accelerates in proportion to its advance. So, in order to catch up with the time lost, India must live in a few years the life lived by others over a period of a thousand years.

We shall have still to free Indian society from the most antiquated ideas and fossilised institutions. Then, we shall have to free it from the mediaeval feudal relations and mode of production which place serious handicaps to the economic development of the country. Finally, we shall have to free the Indian masses from the latest form of bondage, namely, capitalist exploitation. We shall have to fight it in its most highly developed form—Imperialism; and very probably its most brutal expression—Fascism—will also have to be combatted. The revolution, which we are heralding, is thus not only one revolution, but really three revolutions which took place over a period of a thousand years, experienced by many generations, in other parts of the world. All the great historical tasks performed by these three revolutions shall have to be performed in our country, perhaps in one generation or even less. That is probably the most tremendous task ever set to any human community. The magnitude of the task will be evident to us when we study the history of revolutions, and from that study get a clear idea of the nature of the various types of revolutions which are still outstanding in our country.

We have three different sets of problems..

They cannot be solved singly. We simply cannot separate them. They are interwoven. And their solution is so complex that even history cannot help us. Because, such complications have never happened in history.

Many of you may be surprised to hear that the rise of Buddhism was a great revolution. It was a religious movement; what could that have to do with revolution? Even avowed revolutionaries conceive a revolution as a purely political affair; associate it with rowdyism, violence, bloodshed. Those who go farther and regard revolution as a social event also are often blinded by a narrow and superficial view of social values. The fundamental defect is the failure or inability to have a historical sense of values. Owing to that defect, it is not realised that, in certain epochs, religion was the instrument of revolution. Moreover, one religion might be more revolutionary than another religion. For a whole period of history, mankind could think only in terms of religion. During that period, great social or even political forces expressed themselves through religious movements.

Every department of human life is subject to revolutions. Because life is a part of nature, which itself experiences an endless series of

revolutions in the physical as well as biological processes. Every revolution affects the entire scope of human activities. The revolutions of our time, inspired by science and materialist philosophy, affect the spiritual and moral aspects of human activity also. There was a time when religion and the so-called supernatural things were foremost in the minds of people. They lived as we do; but they lived in an atmosphere in which predominance was given to religion, faith, belief, God and supernatural things. Consequently, a revolution in that period was largely a religious movement—a movement to introduce a change in the beliefs, ideas, patterns of thought and institutions of religion. All the revolutions of the ancient time were largely religious movements. As a matter of fact, the so-called world-religions were all born of great revolutions. Buddhism was a revolution. Christianity rose as a revolution. And so did Islam. In China, the religion which was overwhelmed later on by Confucianism, namely, Taoism, was also a revolutionary movement. The motive force of all those revolutions was revolt against the priesthood of the primitive natural religion. Hinduism is a natural religion.

In the first lecture, I told you how the



efforts of primitive human beings to explain physical phenomena ended in the creation of God; how every physical phenomenon was attributed to a particular god; how one god was believed to create the rain, another the storm, another make the sun shine. so on and so forth.

Our existence on this earth is subjected to those phenomena. Hence the desire to find some ways and means for anticipating and controlling them. Natural religion is born out of that desire. Once gods were created for the convenience of man, some approach to them must be discovered. Agents of the gods appeared on earth. They could propitiate the gods.

Some days ago, there was a storm. The peasants must have thought that God was angry; all the fruits were destroyed—God must have been very angry, indeed. Having created gods, the primitive man proceeded to bargain with them, to propitiate them with offerings. That had to be done through the agents of the gods, who by virtue of their strategic position, grew up into a very powerful class. When, in course of time, man grew wiser, he found out that, acting as the agents of gods, the priests had occupied a dominating place in society. In order to maintain their domination, the priest-

hood stood on the way to the free development of other classes. The latter, therefore, wanted to remove them. In the process of that removal some of the greatest revolutions in human history took place.

The priesthood of natural religion had a social function. Therefore, it came into being and held sway for such a long time. Surplus product is the lever of progress. A community begins its march towards civilisation only when it can produce something more than what is necessary for its bare maintenance. The surplus produced by individual members of the community must be pooled in order to become what subsequently came to be known as national wealth. In primitive society, the gods' agencies on earth, kept by the priests, served as the pooling stations. Accumulation of the social surplus takes place through different channels in different periods of history. In the earliest time, offering to the gods served as the channel. The priests were the administrators of the process—the bankers, so to say, of that period. They not only acted as agents of the gods, but also came to be the custodians, virtual possessors, of the social surplus which was absorbed by the periodical offerings to the gods prescribed by religion. That was very profit-

able for the agents of gods. They extracted more and more. One god was very angry one day : therefore, he must be offered not one, but three goats or fowls or something else. The agents of the god could not possibly eat all those offerings. The surplus began to accumulate in their possession, and consequently, thanks to their control of the entire national wealth of the time, they became the rulers of society. That might not have been so bad in itself, if the priests could have delivered the gods, and make the gods do what was desired in return for the offerings. If that was possible, there would have been no dissatisfaction against the priests, and consequently there would be no revolution, and incidentally the sciences of meteorology and astronomy would not have developed. Because, relying upon the good faith of the gods, man on earth would not have found it necessary to observe the movement of heavenly bodies and such other natural phenomena as wind, rainfall, etc.

In course of time, the productivity of labour increased, and the surplus produced by the community correspondingly grew. The result was the development of a new form of social activity—trade. Surplus produced by individuals in distant parts had to be exchang-

ed. A new class of people appeared on the social scene to perform that function. That was, of course, not done as a public duty. The exchange of surplus products among the producers themselves became a source of income for people engaged in that new department of social activity. They naturally desired that the volume of goods exchanged should increase. The larger the trade, the more the profit. But in those olden days, countries were small, and the productivity of human labour limited. Therefore, surplus produce was almost stationary. A considerable part of it went as offering to the gods. If that stopped, there would be more to be exchanged, and trade would expand. There was, thus, a competition between the priesthood and the new class of traders.

It was antagonistic to the interests of the trading class that the social surplus should accumulate in the possession of the priesthood. The accumulation took place not as tribute to the priesthood, but as offering to the gods. Therefore, the gods had to be dethroned if the priesthood was to be removed from their privileged position. The institution of bringing offerings to the gods should disappear.

To provide a channel for the accumulation

of the social surplus, was a useful function. At least a portion of the wealth accumulated in the possession of the priesthood was spent for common use, such as charities, construction of roads for the pilgrims, etc. But the major part remained idle. Surplus produce cannot be the lever of progress unless it becomes the agency for stimulating larger production. In other words, wealth must circulate. The channel for that was opened up by trade. The class of people engaged in that new branch of social life would directly assume the administration and virtual possession of the surplus produce—without the pretence of any godly intervention. Moreover, they gave something in exchange for the goods taken over from the producer. In return for the things given as offering to the gods, the producers got nothing more tangible than hope and consolation. The trader offered them something more tangible. Consequently, an increasing part of the surplus produce went to him. There remained less to be given as offerings to the gods. Naturally, the agents of the gods did not like the new development. That was a conflict which led to great revolutions.

The merchant class made a most important contribution to human progress. By their

very existence, they had to travel. Travel makes man think. Travelling over long distances, particularly, over seas, helped them to discover the physical causes of the observed natural phenomena. Their mental horizon began to broaden. Real philosophy was first created by them out of the necessity of removing the agents of God from the function of administering the social surplus. They were the first to attempt an explanation of natural phenomena in physical terms. If natural phenomena, such as rain, storm, lightning, sunshine, etc. could be explained without the assumption of the existence of super-natural beings behind them, the function of the priesthood would be superfluous. It would no longer be necessary to placate or propitiate the gods by bribing their agents on earth. Grains, goats, cattle and other things, given as offering to the gods, would serve no longer any useful purpose.

The first attempt at a rational explanation of nature gradually undermined the domination of the priesthood. A great revolution took place. Revolt against the priesthood was the lever of all progress over a whole period which was thus ushered in. That revolt, however, ultimately led to the establishment of a new

religion. It could not be otherwise. The physical knowledge of that epoch was very inadequate. Therefore, philosophical thought was entirely speculative. Physical theories were *ad-hoc* hypotheses. Consequently, metaphysical assumptions crept back.

Man by nature is an enquirer, a rationalist. Possessed of a highly developed brain, he is compelled to reason. If a rationalist had to admit that he cannot explain a phenomenon, he would either cease to be a rationalist, or go mad. Failing to explain natural phenomena in a more rationalist way, the early rationalists had to make metaphysical assumptions as hypotheses, which have a place in rationalist thought. Given the limited store of knowledge of those days, religion was a rationalist device.

Therefore, even when the priesthood of natural religion was very largely discredited, a new form of religion had to be created. It was monotheism. The primitive heavenly republic of a galaxy of gods had to be abolished in favour of either a unitary republic or a universal Kingdom of God. The gods of the natural religion were superseded by a universal principle, conceived differently in different countries. With an impersonal god, priesthood ceased to be a necessary social institution. The weaken-

ing of the hold of the all-powerful institution of priesthood was a great revolution.

In ancient India also, the gods did not solve the difficulties of man. Enquiry into the cause of the world began quite early. The Upanishads represent a fragmentary record of that enquiry, which must have challenged the foundation of the Vedic natural religion, and the power of its priesthood. But the trading class must have been very weak. One of the misfortunes of India was that invariably, in every critical period, the revolutionary class was not equal to the revolutionary task set to it by history. The ideology of the revolution in the ancient time was formulated by members of the priestly ruling class. There was a conflict between two sections of the priesthood. Naturally, that conflict could not have such a dynamic development as in ancient Greece, for example, although approximately a similar development had been going on almost simultaneously in both the countries.

However, the speculations which undermined the foundation of the Vedic natural religion eventually crystallised into the earlier schools of Hindu philosophy, namely, the Vaisheshik and Sankhya systems, which heralded the Buddhist revolution. It was a



revolt against the social domination of the priestly class, the Brahmans. It went even farther than similar revolutions of the epoch in other countries. It threatened religion itself by denying the existence of God. It was a premature thought,—much too ahead of time. In the utter absence of positive knowledge about the structure and laws of nature, mankind could not possibly do without some metaphysical hypothesis. Religion was a spiritual as well as a social necessity. The apparent sweepingness of the original Buddhist thought was really its weakness. It represented the tendency of social dissolution instead of showing the way to a reconstruction.

Although the trading class was weak, nevertheless they were the backbone of the revolution. The founder of Buddhism hailed from the warrior class, which was also challenging the supremacy of the priesthood. Later on again, Buddhism found patrons among the warrior class. But the five hundred original followers of Buddha were all traders. For about seven hundred years, Buddhism swept the country. Practically no record of what happened during that period exists. The following counter-revolution tried to efface that shameful chapter from the history of this land

of religion. But it could not restore what had been destroyed by the revolution, namely, the Vedic society. The liquidation of that antiquated social order remained the achievement of the revolution. By pulling down the Gods of natural religion, and disputing the belief in any God, Buddhism destroyed the moral and spiritual foundation of the social order which consequently collapsed.

The coalition of the warrior and trading classes undertook the reconstruction of society. They must have succeeded to a great extent. Otherwise, Buddhism could not flourish for such a long time. But the fundamental weakness of the revolution began to tell in course of time. It seems that the supremacy was captured by the warrior class, and the driving force of the revolution, namely, the trader, was pushed to the background. Consequently, the Buddhist society must have been a rather top-heavy structure, which reached its climax in the Empires of Ashoka and Chandragupta. Being dominated by the warrior class, it was of a feudal character, which must have placed restrictions on the expansion of trade.

The profession of the warrior class, when it is continuously and extensively practised, disorganises and ruins national economy. On

the other hand, revolutionary wars had to be waged against kingdoms and principalities which protected Brahmanism. Ashoka was the Napoleon of ancient India. He established Buddhism as the State religion of a vast Empire. But in the process of founding that Empire, the social foundation of the revolution was almost completely sapped. Impoverishment of the masses, caused by prolonged civil wars, prevented the growth of the trading class. At the same time, destitution drove the masses to seek consolation in a new religion in which Buddhism eventually degenerated. The Buddhist State was a primitive feudal structure; therefore, it could not stand without the collaboration of a priesthood. That was also supplied by Buddhist monasticism, which incorporated the tendency of social dissolution, also represented by Buddhism. That tendency ultimately brought about the collapse of Buddhism, and prepared the ground for the Brahmanical counter-revolution.

Two tendencies are to be noticed in all revolutions of the ancient time; one of reconstruction, and the other of dissolution. In a way, that is true with every revolution. The exhaustion of all the progressive possibilities of an established social system places revolution

on the order of the day. The self-same cause may also lead to a dissolution of the old order. As a matter of fact, dissolution is its immediate effect. Reconstruction may or may not take place. That depends on the strength of the forces laying down the foundation of a new social order already within the framework of the old.

In Buddhism, the dissolving tendency was stronger than the tendency of reconstruction because of the weakness of the trading class. The revolution shook the foundation of the Vedic society; Brahmanical domination was swept away. But as soon as the stage of social reconstruction was reached, the weakness of the revolution became evident. The basic tendency of the dissolution of the exhausted social order gained ascendancy. Instead of being inspired by the positive doctrines of Buddhism, and applying themselves to the uphill task of building a new social order under the difficult circumstances, a growing number of people were swayed by its negative aspect, adopted the line of least resistance, and preferred to run away from the problems of an all-shattering social and spiritual crisis—in quest of Nirvana. As soon as the Buddhist society was threatened by the conflict of the two ten-

dencies inherent in the crisis, out of which it had sprung, a conflict it might have overcome if left undisturbed, the defeated but not destroyed forces of counter-revolution went over to the offensive. Itself in a severe crisis, brought about by its internal conflict, Buddhist society could not withstand the fierce attack of Brahmanical reaction.

In order to defeat Buddhism and re-establish their authority, the Brahmans threw overboard the philosophical outcome of their own early speculation, fragmentarily recorded in the Upanishads, and went back thousand years—to the Vedas. If there is little record of the achievements of the Buddhist revolution, there is still less of the destruction done by the counter-revolution. The fierce clash between a revolution in a crisis and counter-revolution on the offensive must have thrown society into a great turmoil, in the midst of which primitive man, yet unconscious of his power to remake the world, naturally sought protection from, and consolation in, the faith in super-human agencies. The hope of a better life on this earth, even in some other birth, was more alluring than the perspective of getting merged in the great void. The desire to live is the essence of human nature. Brahmanism appealed to

that desire. Return to the worship of the gods, they will look after your troubles and tribulations on this earth—and reward you in the after-life if you do not again deviate from the path of *dharma*. That was the appeal of the Brahmans. *Dharma* meant observance of social regulations as codified by Manu with the object of stabilising the basis of Brahmanical counter-revolution.

Human society in despair must have a consolation. That came from God,—the almost discarded God. The priests, being the agents of God, returned to power. Sankaracharya was their leader. He is glorified as the greatest product of Indian culture. He was not only one of the greatest thinkers of India, but of the whole world. He was one of the greatest theologians of all time. But socially, he was a calamity. He was the ideologist of the counter-revolution which was the blackest chapter and greatest misfortune of Indian history. He celebrated the *sradh* of Buddhism and since that funeral ceremony the history of India has been such a stunted growth as stultified and prevented the generation of revolutionary forces for a long time to come. That effect is in operation even to-day. Of course, there were occasional shake-ups; but every

time they took place under the impact of foreign invasion. During the last thousand years Indian society experienced revolutionary changes invariably through the instrumentality of foreign invasions. That peculiarity of modern Indian history was the consequence of the fact that, within its stunted structure, forces making for the periodically necessary revolutions never could grow strong enough; but unless there was some shakeup from time to time, Indian society would die out.

The first was the Muslim invasion. Islam itself had risen out of a revolution. Ultimately, it came to India, and succeeded in the beginning as a revolutionary force. It is said that it offered the Indian people a choice between the Koran and the sword. But it is not generally known that there was another alternative. Once the Koran was accepted, those making that choice immediately became members of a brotherhood, on a footing of equality with the rest of its membership. Was it really cowardice to accept that offer? Was it not rather a great temptation? After the fall of Buddhism, the Indian masses were subjected to the tyranny of Brahmanical reaction; the lower classes were in such a position that, when the message of Islam came, saying that they could

become equal members of a powerful brotherhood by accepting the Koran, they were only too happy to welcome it. That is why Islam succeeded. Otherwise, a few hundred invaders from Arabia could not have conquered India.

Similar was it with the British, who came later on. On that occasion, India was conquered not by foreigners, but by the Indians, for the foreigners. Unless due importance is attached to that fact, no explanation of the British conquest of India can have any historical value. And why did a considerable section of the Indian people help the British to conquer India? Because the condition of the country was such as cried aloud for radical changes. But sufficiently strong forces did not grow inside the country to bring about those necessary changes. The revolutionary forces, being not strong enough to assert themselves, allied themselves with the foreign power which, for its own interests, was engaged in the task of pulling down a decayed political regime and antiquated social institutions. Scientific students of history, therefore, have appreciated the British conquest of India as a revolutionary event. But revolutions taking place by proxy, as it were, can produce only negative results..



The positive achievements of the partially accomplished revolutions still remain to be made

I have roughly described one of the earliest revolutions, a revolution taking place in the form of the rise of a new religion. It would be very interesting to describe also the rise of Christianity, of Islam and of other great world religions. But that is not possible in one lecture.

Now we pass over to the second stage of revolutions. After the dissolution of primitive civilisation, society was established on the basis of a new set of relations, which subsisted for more than a thousand years. They constituted the Middle Age. Then the world entered into a new epoch of revolutions.

The French Revolution was not an accident. It was not an isolated event. It was part of a whole process. The period of revolution, which culminated in the French Revolution, actually began as far back as the fourteenth century, even earlier. The germs of the bourgeois revolution, which undermined religion, as well as overthrew feudalism, sprouted in the Christian monasteries. The process continued for several hundred years before it broke out into momentous events which took place much earlier than the French Revolution. The latter,

generally believed to be the beginning of a period of mischievous events in Europe, was preceded by great revolutions in England as well as the American Revolution. England had experienced political revolution even earlier. The Magna Charta was the result of a revolution. On the Continent of Europe, great revolutionary outbreaks had occurred during three hundred years before the process culminated in the French Revolution. The most outstanding among them were: the foundation of the Italian Republics; the heretical movement and uprising in central and eastern Europe; the German Peasant War; and the rise of the Dutch Republic.

Once again, the standard-bearer of the revolution was the trading class. The new conflict, however, was with the feudal landlords—spiritual as well as temporal. During the Middle Age, a class of temporal landlords had grown and had replaced the priesthood as the ruling class, although the latter, now representing the religion which had risen on the ruins of the ancient natural religion, also shared power. The revolt was against the feudal-sacredotal alliance. But in the meantime, the trading class had also undergone a change. They were no longer satisfied with exchanging commodities produ-

ced by others, but had come to be interested in the process of production itself. The world entered into the period of the second revolution, when the trading class began to become something more than mere traders; when it began to become the industrial class, and as such introduced new means in the process of production.

In the earlier stages of social evolution, land was the main means of production. By far the largest bulk of human labour was performed on land. Of course, other necessities had also to be supplied; therefore, a part of labour was otherwise employed. But by and large, industries were subsidiary to agriculture. Eventually, in course of the Middle Age, there was a shifting, and a part of labour came to be employed in industries, completely separated from agriculture.

Those new industries produced exclusively for exchange. Therefore, they could not do without the trading class. In course of time the latter took the production of commodities also in hand, and developed into a new class, entirely different from the ancient or mediaeval traders. They were the standard-bearers of the revolution which liquidated the Middle Age and ushered in the era of modern civilisation. The new revolutionary class was composed of all

engaged in the process of production of commodities for exchange—artisans, industrial labourers, traders as well as owners of primitive industrial plants. The conflict was between that new class and the class which owned land, still the main means of production, and as such absorbed the bulk of labour.

The new conflict was also about the possession of social surplus. The peasants toiled and produced, but were left with barely enough necessary for their maintainance. All the rest went to the owners of the land. The bulk of society remained on what is called the subsistence level. But new industries were growing: new things were being produced; they had to be sold. Who would buy them when the bulk of people had nothing more than what was needed for their bare maintenance? The landlords could not absorb all the manufactured commodities. If some part of the surplus produce remained with the peasants, they would be able to buy industrial goods.

Therefore, the trading and industrial class came forward as the liberator of the peasantry. They proposed to liberate the peasants from serfdom. They became the standard-bearers of a revolution, because their interests coincided with the interests of an overwhelming

majority of the population. The abolition of a ruinous form of ownership in the main means of production and, at the same time, the introduction of a new mode of production, were the conditions for social progress.

It was no longer a conflict about the possession and division of the given social surplus. It was now a question of increasing it as the basis for further social progress. Labour being the source of all wealth, its displacement from one branch to another branch of production was the condition for increased production, and consequently for a larger margin of surplus. The new branch of production was manufacture. Its growth attracted labour away from agriculture, which process, necessary for the progress of society as a whole, nevertheless, meant an encroachment upon the preserves of the land-owning class. Their monopoly of the surplus produce, indeed, the control of the entire production, was threatened. That monopolist control resulted from the fact that the great bulk of labour was performed on land owned by them. If labour was shifted from agriculture to another branch of industry, the control of which was not conditional upon the ownership of land, a part of the surplus produce would inevitably pass on to the possession of the new

class. It would increase in proportion to the growth of the manufacturing industry. The land-owning class would consequently lose their dominating position. But society as a whole could not progress, labour could not produce more, social surplus could not expand, the lever of social progress could not gather more strength unless the land-owning class was deposed from their privileged position. A revolution became necessary.

That revolution matured in Europe from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century. That was the most instructive, most eventful, most fruitful and perhaps the most brilliant period of human history. Because, it was then that the European humanity developed another revolutionary force, which will remain a revolutionary force, transcending the limits of space and time. That is modern science.

The bourgeoisie could not carry through the revolution, they could not free themselves from past traditions and promote the cause of human freedom another step ahead, except by developing science. The task, begun by the merchant princes and rebellious priests in the earlier stages of social evolution, the task of building up a philosophy, could not be accomplished by those pioneers, owing to the back-

wardness of physical knowledge. In course of time, that deficiency disappeared; by the sixteenth century, physical knowledge attained a sufficiently high level. It enabled the new revolutionary class to equip themselves with a philosophy which could completely dispense with the assumption of super-natural forces beyond human control. And knowledge gave power. The application of the discoveries of science to man's daily activities, to the process of production, helped the development of the new means of production, and proportionately undermined the position and power of the feudal landowners.

If you want to read the real history of revolution, read the history of modern science. I know no better chapter in the history revolution. Time permitting, I would have presented to you a picture of the most fascinating pageant of the rise of modern science. As it is, I should only advise you to bear the following in mind, while studying the history of revolutions. Please note, I say study, not read. Leonardo da Vinci, Roger Bacon, Copernicus, Galileo, Newton and their like were all great revolutionaries. Without the great physicists and physiocrats of the eighteenth century, there would be no French Revolution. Marxism is the product of

the development of science from Newton to Darwin.

Yet another lesson of the history of revolutions is the part played by religion in the drama of human evolution in the past. Buddha, Christ and Mohammad were standard-bearers of revolutions. Even in the earlier stages of the bourgeois revolution, which liquidated the religious mode of thought, religion was a powerful factor. The philosophy created by the pioneers of the bourgeoisie with the aid of modern science was tremendously revolutionary, because it dispensed with the necessity of making metaphysical assumptions for the administration of worldly affairs. Yet, on the other hand, it is also true that, in the earlier stages of the bourgeois revolution, religion played an important role. The peasantry was still swayed by religion. They still thought in terms of religion and faith. Only a small section of the urban population, those working with the new means of production with modern machinery, could possibly think in different terms, and come under the influence of modern science. But even amongst them, only a few outgrew the religious tradition. On the whole, the great bulk of the population remained completely



unaffected by modern science, and consequently under the domination of the religious mode of thought and of the priesthood. Yet, peasant revolts were the characteristic feature of the earlier stages of the bourgeois revolution. The success even of the French Revolution was guaranteed by the action of the peasantry. Then, there was the Peasant War in Germany, and Watt Tyler's revolt in England. Even the heretics of eastern and central Europe were backed up by the peasantry. They represent the revolt against the Church hierarchy and episcopal power and privileges as a whole. A section of the priesthood revolted against the priesthood as a class. That was a highly interesting chapter in the history of revolution. I should not pass over it without saying a few words.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, the Christian Church, and particularly the monasteries, became the centres of education. They were also the centres of economic life, otherwise suffocated in the midst of the chaos in the country at large. Handicrafts developed in those economic oases. Modern science also was originally cultivated almost exclusively in the seclusion of the monasteries. Practically all the pioneers of modern science were Chris-

tian monks. To that extent, the monasteries served an objectively revolutionary purpose. Naturally, the Church authorities would not tolerate that, and soon tried to put a check on it. Monks and priests devoted to studies in the quiet of their monasteries, began to raise challenging questions, which confronted them in the pursuit of their studies. When such questions were discouraged, they began to challenge the Church authorities themselves. For making scientific discoveries or holding scientific views, learned priests as well as laymen were condemned as heretics. Those martyrs to the cause of modern science were the pioneers of the bourgeois revolution. Many of them were priests. But they heralded the rise of materialist philosophy. They were priests, but they sounded the deathknell of God and religion.

The motive force of that movement, in its initial stages, was the growing discontent of the peasantry. The priesthood had ceased to be the ruling class. But it shared power with the landlords. In the Middle Age, the Church was the biggest landlord. The heretical movement was a revolt against the spiritual landlords. The bourgeoisie had not as yet appeared on the scene, although the bourgeois

revolution was already on the order of the day. It was on the march under the leadership of rebellious clergymen, in the form of peasant revolts. A rising class can cast its shadow ahead, and can exercise ideological hegemony over a revolutionary struggle, even before its own definite constitution as a class. In that period, it operates often through strange instruments, such as the priests rebelling against the misuse of power by the Church authorities, and through peasants driven to exasperation by the exactions both of the temporal and spiritual owners of land.

I wonder how much you know about the German Peasant War. Libraries have been written about it. It was a religious movement. All its leaders were clergymen. Even its radical section, the Anabaptists, was led by Muenzer, also a clergyman. Yet, he was the first man to talk of Communism. In that early stage, bourgeois revolution developed in a still more interesting way. You must have read about the Reformation. But it was more than a reformation of the Christian Church. It was a stage of the bourgeois revolution.

Until science helped the construction of a philosophy free from all metaphysical assumptions, religion lingered in the minds of men,

and ultimately everybody had to appeal to some metaphysical or super-natural or divine sanction. But man makes gods, not only after his own image but also to suit his purpose. The God of the Roman Church was the patron and protector of feudal society. The rebels against it, therefore, could not swear by that God. Since they were not yet in the position to do without a God, they proposed to reform the Church so that divine patronage might be withheld from feudal absolutism. They declared that the God of the Catholics was a reactionary God, an old-fashioned God. They were advanced people and wanted a more civilised, a more progressive God—even a republican God. But the God's agent sat in Rome, and there was the Holy Roman Empire. Practically the whole of Europe was one Empire in those days, and its ruler had to go to the God's agent in Rome and kneel at his feet before the Pope would put the crown upon his head. Only then he could be the Emperor.

The idea of reforming the God, therefore, meant the desire to get rid of his agent, the Pope. The peasantry was still religious, and believed in the God and his priests. If they were told that God was wrong and must go, they would not listen. So, they were told that

God was good and all that, but his managing agents on earth were bad.

There is a notion that England is a country where everything developed peacefully, legitimately and constitutionally. English history is supposed to prove that revolutions are not necessary. Therefore, we are told that we should imitate the Englishman and, if we could send enough Indian youths to Eton and Harrow, India would also learn how to do without revolutions. That may or may not be. I should certainly like my decayed teeth pulled out painlessly. But English history certainly does not teach us how to do without revolutions. On the contrary, it teaches us a good deal about revolutions. A very bloody revolution took place in England before the French Revolution. The English beheaded a king long before the French or the barbarous Russians imitated. Those facts are overlooked, because the English Revolution was an intensely religious movement. It was a continuation of the Reformation. The revolutionaries were the Puritans. They wanted to revive old Christian virtues. The clergy had become extremely rich and lived in luxury and opulence, while the masses, from whom those riches were extorted, lived in abject poverty,

and the lower clergy was not allowed to share in the luxuries. The latter, therefore, revolted, maintaining that that dignitaries of the Church did not observe Christian virtues. They said : Just think how Christ and his apostles lived ; we must live like them in voluntary poverty and purity. They meant to condemn the higher clergy in the eyes of the people, because they were dissatisfied. But when the peasants became too rebellious, they tried to check them. If peasants remained peaceful and did not go too far, the land could pass quietly from the hands of the Church to the possession of the bourgeoisie. To keep the peasants peaceful, the new class set up a new managing agency of God, which sanctioned the transfer of the property in land from the feudal aristocracy to the bourgeoisie. But that did not work. Even before Cromwell, the process became violent. In England, the bourgeois revolution was begun by Henry VIII, who confiscated Church properties. That was the foundation of the English bourgeoisie.

When all these historical facts are pointed out, it is still argued that occasional revolutions may be inevitable. But why commit so much violence against the ruling classes? Why cannot they be removed peacefully? The answer

is found also in the history of revolutions. Why are kings or tyrants killed? In no revolution there was ever any plan to kill any individual. The English king, for instance, was simply deposed. Nobody wanted to do him any more harm. He could have lived quietly. But he won't do that. He wanted to leave the country stealthily, so that from abroad he could organise an attack on the country. Only then he had to meet his fate. Even when he was brought before the Parliament, there was a fierce debate. Many of the Roundhead Puritans themselves did not want to kill the king. But there were others who pointed out that the king was not an individual, that he was the emblem of a system, and that as long as the emblem remained, the forces desiring the revival of that system would surely crystallise around him. As long as the king lived, it was in his nature to organise the forces of counter-revolution and to enlist the support of other countries for the invasion of England. Therefore, the king had to go.

The same happened during the French Revolution. The French were even more civil with their king after he was removed from power. They called him 'citizen', and as a citizen he could have lived and commanded

their affection. But he also wanted to run away. In Paris he was a prisoner. But, on the other side of the frontier, he could count upon the support of other Empires with whose help the revolution in France could be overwhelmed. Evidently, he was a great danger for the revolution. It was like a surgical operation. A diseased limb threatening to poison the whole system has to be cut off. A surgical operation also implies violence. But nobody sermonises against it. Revolution is a surgical operation on the body of society. A surgical operation becomes necessary when the social system is so ill that it cannot be cured without cutting off the diseased limb. As a surgical operation, it is bound to involve a certain amount of pain.

Just as the process of water boiling and becoming steam could be peaceful if there was no lid pressed hard on the vessel, just so the transformation of society so as to readjust itself to new forces generated within its own structure, could be peaceful if there was not a factor which benefitted from the old system, and therefore opposed its renovation, even if that meant an improvement for the whole society. As a matter of fact, for a long time, the forces of revolution do develop peace-



fully. Ultimately, their further growth is not possible within the framework of the old order. If the latter does not disappear peacefully, a clash becomes inevitable. A careful reading of the history of revolutions reveals the fact that violence is committed first by those who are against revolution. The attack always comes from the side of the enemies of revolution. The forces of revolution grow; they gather larger and larger support; consequently, the upholders of the old order get terrified. Being in possession of power, they naturally wish to maintain themselves through the application of force. What is known as revolutionary violence, is really a reaction to the commission of violence against the process of necessary social change. A reaction to an action is a very natural thing. Therefore, revolutionary violence is very natural.

A detailed description of the position at the time of the revolutions in different countries would make the point very clear. Unfortunately, facts of history are not dispassionately studied and much less recorded. Hence the prejudice and misgiving about revolution. An extensive reading of the history of revolutions, therefore, is very necessary, and I hope that

this lecture will arouse in you interest for that study.

In our time, we have entered into another stage of revolution. The antagonisms underlying this new revolution have been discussed in terms of class relations, in terms of exploiters and exploited, of the oppressed peoples and Imperialism. All that is true. But in conclusion, I want to point out another antagonism which underlies the present revolutionary phase.

Modern science was a creation of the bourgeoisie. It was the most powerful instrument. It has brought about a revolution not only in our mode of life, but also in our mode of thought. The spread of scientific knowledge, therefore, is the most powerful factor of revolution. Science has endowed man with the power to progress almost without any limit. Even to-day, the world is full of poverty and all sorts of other miseries. But it is not generally realised that, thanks to scientific knowledge, the world is already in possession of an industrial machinery which, if fully worked, can provide the entire human race with everything that is necessary and desirable; and for that, no adult man or woman anywhere in the world need to work more than four hours a

day. Yet, people are actually working ten and even fifteen hours, and starvation and backwardness is rather the law than exception.

Why is that so? Human creativeness, human genius, has created a powerful lever of progress. To-day, man has the power to remake the world in the literal sense. But that power humanity is not in a position to wield freely. This contradiction—the possession of power and the inability to wield it—underlies the revolution which is necessary in our time. People think in terms of capital and labour, as if revolutionaries were a gang of selfish people fighting for a few annas for themselves. But a true revolutionary is not ashamed of declaring that he is not fighting merely for wages; that he is fighting even for the welfare of those who are against revolution. Because, they are also a part of humanity. The revolutionaries of to-day are fighting for the liberation of mankind. The revolution of our epoch will, for the first time, conquer spiritual freedom for humanity.

That being the picture of the revolution which is outstanding to-day, who would call himself a civilised man, an educated person, a progressive spirit caring for justice and fairness, and yet would be ashamed or afraid of

calling himself a revolutionary ! None with a grain of decency can help being a revolutionary in these days. Only the foolishly selfish, only those who cannot see outside their own pockets, are afraid of revolution. Revolution has ceased to be the concern only of a few people. More than ever before, it has become a necessity for the progress of humanity as a whole.

The human conquest of nature has given us the power to remake the world, to face the greatest of difficulties and break them down. That tremendous conquest is the achievement of accumulated human labour performed during the ages. It is the result of the continued efforts of man for freedom and progress, efforts that begun at the very dawn of human existence. This power belongs to us all. And as this power is bound to revolutionise the world, every one is a revolutionary. A man can claim a share in human heritage only when he comes forward and says : I realise that the world must be re-made, and feel that humanity to-day possesses the power to do so. Therefore, let us have the courage and determination to accomplish what must be done in order to open up before mankind the endless vista of freedom and progress, the kind of

which was never even dreamt of before. That is the inspiration we must draw from a study of the history of revolutions.

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