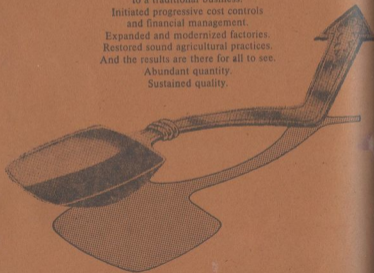


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**DRI Seminar on
'The October
Revolution &
Its Impact on
World
Civilization'
Proceedings : I**

Journal of Deendayal Research Institute

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Dear Reader :

Namaste !

The March issue of MANTHAN carried the nine Papers presented at our Feb. 13-14 seminar on 'The October Revolution & Its Impact on World Civilization'.

In this issue of MANTHAN, we carry the Proceedings of the Seminar on Feb. 13. On this occasion, Shri Sailen Ghosh, Research Director, DRI, spoke on 'The October Revolution : An Overview'. A very enlightening discussion followed. In the afternoon, Prof. M.L. Sondhi, JNU, initiated the discuss on 'October Revolution and Its Impact on World Politics'.

The next issue of MANTHAN will carry the Proceedings of the Seminar on Feb. 14. That day, Shri Subrata Banerjee (CPI) initiated the discussion on 'October Revolution : Its Impact on World Economy'. Dr. J.D. Sethi presided.

In the final session, Shri I.K. Gujral spoke on 'The Impact of October Revolution on Life and Culture in Russia and Abroad'.

We expect to compile the three issues of MANTHAN in book form. It will be a valuable contribution to an understanding of Russia and the October Revolution.

Brotherly yours,
'M'.

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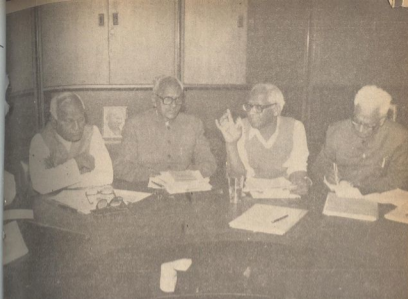
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*Shri Sallen Ghosh (third from left) presenting the first paper, 'October Revolution's
Lost Horizons'. Seated (L to R) Nana Deshmukh, Chairman, DRI,
Prof. Bimal Prasad, Chairman of the Seminar, and K.R. Malkani*

**1. The October Revolution :
An Overview**

K.R. MALKANI : I welcome you all to the Deendayal Research Institute. Many friends have not been able to attend because some of them are already booked elsewhere, some of them are out of town, some of them are out of the country. But we have received eleven papers. Five of these have already been posted to you and six you will find listed here.

Some friends have expressed pleasant surprise over the Deendayal Research Institute organising this seminar on the Impact of the October Revolution on World Civilization. But I think anybody who knows anything about India will not be surprised. Any educated Indian will not hesitate to discuss any thought. This is all I have to say.

May I now request Prof. Bimal Prasad to take the Chair.

BIMAL PRASAD : Thank you very much. And welcome to this important Seminar on the Impact of the Russian Revolution on World Civilization.

Shri Sailen Ghosh will now present a Paper on an "Overview of the October Revolution".

S.N. GHOSH—The title of my paper is "October Revolution's Lost Horizons". My friend, Mr. Nagarajan, was asking me: "Is it right to call it 'lost' in an absolute sense?" I told him that in the same manner as Milton had written *Paradise Lost* and then *Paradise Regained*, there is scope for regaining the horizons provided the requirements are met but the task is very, very difficult.

Now, here we are discussing the impact of the October Revolution. As I see it, the October Revolution smashed the autocracy of the Russian nobility. It created a large crack in the world capitalist system. It built up an economy which does not require large-scale armaments exports to escape from economic collapse; and it has given great confidence to the poor people of the world. It has helped national liberation movements all over the world. There are yet other positive achievements which I have described in my paper. I would, however, like you to reflect on one important question. The capitalist system is now in a crisis. There is tremendous amount of inequality as also high level of unemployment in the industrial countries. Yet, you would not find the workers in those countries aspiring for socialism. Why? Many people who try to find answers to their economic problems have rejected this kind of socialism. Those who sought human dignity and freedom from tyranny have also rejected this pattern of socialism. In the Soviet Union, in the name of socialism, many things were committed, which created a horror. They have almost made socialism a dirty word in the eyes of the workers of western countries. How did this happen?

I myself was a communist for 19 years. Why did I leave the party? I was not a disgruntled person and during the 32 years that have passed after my leaving the Communist party, I have reflected deeply on the problems. Even before I left, I could clearly see many of the inadequacies in the basic concepts of Marxism, Leninism and Stalinism. Otherwise I would not have left in 1957.

When I tried to find the reasons for the perversions of socialism, I came to certain conclusions. Here I am not going to state much on the positive aspects of Marxism because my purpose is to induce introspection on those aspects which have defeated the purpose. In any case, I have unreservedly stated the positive impact of the October Revolution and the achievements I have enumerated are not small. The person who wants reform has to highlight the errors and to explain why and how they came. Hence I would like to concentrate on analysis in this direction. In the beginning of my paper, I have given quotations from opinion polls in the Soviet Union. There you will find quite a few revealing facts. When the

Soviet citizens were asked if they did not feel themselves to be the masters of their locality, workshop or workplace, if they could influence the course of events in their region, town, or enterprise—and these, in my opinion, were the crucial questions—some 61 per cent said 'no': they clearly saw they were unable to influence events in their region, town or enterprise. So the people's opinion revealed a situation where the people's will does not count for much. Then, again, there are memories of horrors that still persist.

On the question of food also, you find a terrible mess. For long we have known that the Soviet people have a hankering for western goods and consumer durables. But about plain food they did not earlier have this kind of messy situation. That, too, has now developed. Such is the attainment in the vital sphere of people's food after 70 years of the Revolution. A relative of mine—a young boy who is my nephew—was recently in the Soviet Union for studies. He had received a Soviet scholarship. After staying there for five months he has come back for he found life unbearable and the behaviour-pattern oppressive. He found a situation where almost all the students are being forced to resort to some kind of blackmarketing or smuggling to maintain themselves. His vivid descriptions of the malpractices and also of threats horrify me. Not that I had no previous knowledge of these phenomena in the Soviet Union. But I never knew that these were near-universal. Moreover, I had thought that after the high-level exposure of malpractices, these things have been significantly reduced by corrective actions. I have now to admit that these things are still endemic. So I would just acknowledge the Soviet Union to be a great power and would give it all the credit therefor, but would not accept it as a socialist country.

Socialism *sans* human values is no socialism. If this is to be reckoned as a specimen of socialism, this is not something worthy of emulation. The ethos of the Soviet state is a negation of what socialism stands for. Take the question of equality of nations. In international seminars I have seen how, in the presence of the Soviet delegation, the delegates from the East European countries speak, tongue in cheek, with affectations of conformism, and not at all openly. What does this show? You may talk of equality but does this at all show equality of relationship? Certainly not.

Let us now see why this has happened. Many friends in the Marxist movement have tried to console themselves that this was the result of "personality cult" which developed during Stalin's time. The explanation does not satisfy me. In fact, in 1956, when this question was being discussed, I was still an active member of the Communist party and my questions were: Why could the personality cult develop? What was the social basis for the personality cult? The Soviet Union had started with the promise of a new civilisation where collective leadership and people's

where power became concentrated in the hands of the party and ultimately in one individual? Personality cult explanation is only an attempt to get away from genuine analysis. I agree basically with Mao's finding that the principal contradiction in the Soviet Union now is between the ruler and the ruled. Although I am no uncritical supporter of Mao or blind admirer of anybody—I criticise Mao on many things—I agree with this conclusion of his. Here Marx's one basic assumption needed re-examination. He had the idea that with the abolition of private property, the classes would disappear and this would provide the basis for socialism. Now, after the abolition of private property, there is a "power class", a class wielding absolutism of power, a class that combines in its hands both political power and economic power—the latter by virtue of the enterprises being owned and controlled by the State. This was a "power class" which, by becoming the possessor of both kinds of power, became a monstrosity, jettisoning people's liberties—and against which there was no redress. I realized this in 1956. That is why I left the then undivided Communist Party of India in 1957.

Now, how could this concentration of power come about? I do not put the whole blame on Stalin. Certainly I criticise him for his lust for power and atrocities but I do not put the whole blame on him. There are things whose roots can be traced to Lenin and certain other things whose roots are traceable to Marx and Engels. Therefore, my paper is devoted to laying bare the erroneous concepts of the founding fathers which are responsible for the eclipse of socialist and human values and the defeat of socialism. Many would wonder why I am seeking to convert this seminar on the impact of October Revolution into a forum for discussion on Marxism and Leninism. There is no escape from this because the loss of socialist horizons, the loss of humanist ethics were latent in certain omissions and ambiguities of Marx. These omissions and ambiguities gave scope for distortions later. When I talk of Marx's ambiguities, I give Marx credit for many things. I criticise the inadequacies of Marx in the spirit in which he, having been an admirer of Hegel, used to criticise Hegel. I must also say that the ambiguities in Marx are many, and some of them can be explained as results of his dialectical reasoning. Many great truths are really paradoxes: the contrarities can be understood in their proper contexts by diving into the soul of the statements. But if you study Marx's statements in the spirit in which uncritical devotees read their sacred texts, then, you do not try to judge what was said in which context, which aspect was correct in which situation and incorrect in which other situation. There is no doubt that Communists all over the world, including those in the Soviet Union, study Marx in this manner, unimaginatively, and therefore, fail to get over the problems posed by Marx's ambiguities. The paradoxes of great truths do not create conflicts when

these are tempered with the understanding that there is an underlying unifying principle of love. For, with this kind of approach, the validity of one statement could be seen in certain other situations. Mahatma Gandhi used to say, consistency is the virtue of asses. The inconsistencies in him could be explained in the light of the changing situations and the varying objects of love. But did Marx's writings lend themselves to readings with this understanding, with the governing and unifying principle of love? Marx and Engels began with humanism; their inspiration all throughout was humanism but they tried to give their pronouncements a garb of scientific exactitude. Although Engels had a greater propensity to giving this value-free scientific garb, Marx himself always avoided discussing ethics. When you shun ethics you strip your writings of the unifying principle of love. Then the ambiguities become unresolvable. Those who read these paradoxes as sacred texts are led into different directions, becoming prey to divergent approaches and conflicts.

In the first part of my paper, I have described the ambiguities in Marx. But before we discuss these ambiguities, Marx's one wrong assumption and one great omission need to be pointed out. The assumption was that with the abolition of private property, the ground becomes clear for socialist values. The great illusion was that—as I have already discussed—the disappearance of private ownership over the means of production would *ipso facto* mean disappearance of exploitative tendencies and emergence of a humanist culture. Let me then come to the great omission: nowhere in Marx's voluminous writings, there is any discussion of what is the essence of socialism, what are its values. Also, you do not find anywhere any picture of the future ordering of society for advance to socialism. There were, thus, no guidelines for those who intended to build a socialist society.

Now to the ambiguities. At many places Marx said or gave the idea that large-scale industrialisation of the western type is a precondition for socialism. I, for one, question that premise. But, in fairness to Marx I would say, Marx himself had stated that this premise had no universal validity and that in making this formulation, he had only the West European situation in view. In my paper I have given quotations from Marx-Engels correspondence wherein they clarified these. Yet, the trend of their thought has left such an impact and created such an orientation that this clarificatory statement has just been passed over. I would barely touch upon the other ambiguities, for these have been dealt with at length in my paper. The ambiguities which I would emphasise here are two. They lay (i) in the theory of base and superstructure; (ii) in the concept of alienation, particularly the kind of 'alienation' which arises from factory production based on division of labour.

On the issue of base and superstructure, the base is the material basis of the society, and the politico-juridical system and the thought and cultural patterns are the superstructure. Now, what is the relative weight you give to the base and the superstructure? The base is necessarily primary. The material basis of the society, which at times in Marx's writings, comes to be equated with the economic basis, is regarded as the determining factor, and the superstructure is regarded as some kind of a dome built thereon. Hence superstructure is regarded as of subsidiary importance. Of course, in a later period, after Marx's death, Engels said as follows in clarification: "Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that the younger people lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it, and we had not always had the time, the place or the opportunity to give the other factors involved in this interaction their due." On another occasion, Engels explained that in their concept, the economic relations comprise the geographical basis on which they operate and the external environment which surrounds the society, and "even the race is itself an economic factor". If the geographical situation, the external environment, and even the race could be included in the economic factor, then certainly a party functionary's privilege to deny me a job or to penalise me can certainly be regarded as an economic factor. This should also mean that the privileged party functionaries in a soviet society can constitute an economic class in unequal relationship with the rest of society.

On the question of the role of ideas, which belong to the superstructure, Marx said at several places that 'idea becomes a force when it grips the masses'. If idea could thus gain the weight of a force, i.e. a material force, then, in a given situation, it ought to have the same importance as the base. But Marx nowhere admitted this explicitly. Hence there was the ambiguity—acknowledging at some places that ideas, as a force, are as important as the material base, and yet assigning consciousness a derivative role definitionally. The harm it did was much more than ordinary ambiguities could inflict. In all soviet-led countries, the importance of simple and ecological living and the "society-before-self" ideal received scant attention. The task of remoulding people as socialists from the depths of their being and as obvious contrasts to the self-serving, acquisitive people of the capitalist world has been neglected everywhere. If the leaders of the so-called socialist countries thought that they could go ahead with economic development in terms of GNP and that a more egalitarian distribution system would *ipso facto* nurture socialist values in future, the roots of their illusion lay in this ambiguity in the theory regarding the base and the superstructure.

I would like to share with you a story which cast a spell on my life, moulded my thinking about socialism and fed my emotions. When I joined the communist movement in the late thirties, a book by Dyson Carter

related this story. A western delegation—I do not now remember, from which country or in which year—went to the Soviet Union and enquired from an innovator of an instrument, 'what do you get from it?' He said, "oil". The delegates asked again, "what do you get from it?" Again, he said 'oil'. They said 'No, no, you have not understood our question. What do you get from this innovation?' Again, he said 'oil', for the thought of any personal gain did not cross his mind. This, I thought, was the real submergence of the individual interest in social interest. This is how I became attracted to socialism. Today, this kind of feeling is rare in the Soviet Union. There, it is all selfishness, as in the capitalist societies. Hence the socialist values are lost from life. By and large, the individuals in allegedly socialist countries hanker after personal enjoyment in the same manner as their counterparts in capitalist countries do. This is what happens when you disregard the superstructure. I trace the root of this neglect to the Marxist formulation which gives primacy to the material, mostly economic, base in all situations.

Now, let us come to the theory of alienation. Here Marx has given a wonderful analysis of the effects of a factory kind of division of labour as distinct from division of labour under simple cooperation. I take my hats off to Marx for his incisive analysis of these effects. About division of labour in manufacturing process, he said that this is sub-division of man, fragmentation of man, assassination of man. If one remembers this observation of Marx and compares it with what has been happening in the USA, the USSR and East European countries, he would find man is being fragmented and assassinated in like manner under both these systems. In 1984, while attending a seminar on 'Man and Nature' in Bulgaria, I had an occasion to encounter a vice-president of the Soviet Academy of Sciences who was bragging about having developed a new kind of civilization in the Soviet Union. What is the distinguishing feature of your civilisation, I asked. "Your concept of life style is the same as in USA. Your factory production technology is the same as in the USA or West Europe. Your transportation, energy use pattern and concept of consumption are as wasteful as in the capitalist countries. You plump for the same kind of eco-destructive farming techniques as in the capitalist countries. Your wasteful indulgence in plastic bags and cartons which are discarded after a single use adds to the heaps of non-biodegradable rubbish as in the capitalist countries. How, then, is yours a new pattern of civilization? It is another pattern of governance, that is all. Marx had said that large manufacturing processes carry farthest the social separation of branches of labour and thus attack the individual at the roots of his life. You have totally disregarded this as the capitalist countries have done. How, then, are you Marxists?" He had no answer to any of

these questions. But, in fairness to him, I must say that Marx himself, at another place, said something which is incompatible with his above statement regarding sub-division and assassination of man. His ambiguity in this case was irreconcilable. The same kind of ambiguity and incompatibility is found in his formulations about existence and consciousness. For lack of time I would not like to elaborate on Marx's other ambiguities or inadequacies in analysis. I would request all of you to refer to my paper wherein I have raised several other questions.

I would now come straight to the root cause of the lack of clarity on the dictatorship of the proletariat. In a monograph on Marx, published in 1975, David McLellan said that the word 'dictatorship' did not have the same connotation for Marx as it does have now-a-days. He says that Marx associated the word principally with the Roman office of *dictatura* where all power was legally concentrated in the hands of a single man during a limited period of time in a time of crisis. Irrespective of whether McLellan was right or wrong, there is no doubt that Marx intended the dictatorship of proletariat to be a short-lived process, for an emergency period. Engels pointed out that it was 'nearest to democracy in a republic' in a class-divided society. Lenin, too, pointed out that the soul of dictatorship was 'socialist democracy'. Forgetting all these guiding principles, the Soviet leaders wielding dictatorial power came to equate the dictatorship of proletariat with the dictatorship of party. How it came about has been explained in the paper. I would emphasise a point in criticism of Marx himself. But before doing this, I would say that in India we have a very valid philosophy 'hate the sin, not the sinner.' Its parallel would be 'scorn exploitation, not the exploiter'. If the West does not accept this philosophy, it will be the West which will be the loser for it. If you try to prolong a coercive process even in the name of suppressing the exploiters, you come to internalise coercion. It takes hold of you, it nestles within you. In the USSR, it nestled within the party, within the state apparatus, within the top leadership structure. Coercive propensity inexorably took possession of Stalin for oppressing his old comrades and his own family members. The oppressor came to oppress a part of his own self.

Why do I blame Marx for this debacle in the USSR? It is because Marx had imbibed only the masculine concept of power, and the masculine concept of conquest. My friend Nagarajan, who is present here, told me something very interesting. He said that Goldsmith was among the very few westerners who could conceive of 'stooping to conquer'. Conquering a person by loving him while trying to rid him of his sins, conquering by arousing in him a new emotion, a new human-ness—this concept did not find any place in Marxism although Marx at one point came nearest to it

when he brilliantly intuited that the working class can emancipate itself only by emancipating all classes. Now, how could it emancipate all classes, by smashing them? It needed to have an attitude of utmost persuasion, of winning over by setting examples, and by showing the way to superior bliss of illumined existence which feels happy in sharing with others. Gandhiji expressed a similar sentiment very nicely when he said: "We want not only the freedom of India. We also want to free the British working people, and we want to free the British imperialists from their own debasement." A philosophy like this could have given a different orientation—a humanist orientation—to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Therein lay the possibility of practising the utmost possible democracy in a class-divided society, which Engels and Lenin had visualised and yet was completely disregarded by their successors. This vision did not reach most of the communist activists because there was no such exposition in the original theory. The deficiency was in philosophic articulation itself. Besides, Marx the humanist, the person with deep fellow-feeling for the poor, relied overwhelmingly on the application of force on class enemies. He seems to have been a stranger to the philosophy that coercion on others breeds coercion within.

Marx's attitude towards religion, too, weakened the forces of reform. Marx had felt that religion merely promoted a sense of pre-destination i.e. a feeling of pre-determination of man's fate by an external power. Feurbach exercising appreciable imagination, had written logically that if men appropriate for themselves the attributes which they project to God, they would be in a better position to restore to themselves the essence of their existence as human beings. Marx, exasperated by the hypocritical practitioners of religion, called it the opium of the people—an opium which lulls people to sleep, so that exploiters can carry on their exploitation merrily. This statement is true of most of the religions in their degraded phases. But Marx erred in overlooking the positive side of religion. He could have pointed out that whatever divides the people is irreligion and whatever devalues man's freedom of conscience is mockery of religion. Marx did not realize that religion has an essential function in man's life, that religion can never be eliminated by force, that efforts at its elimination help only its corrupted versions to stick even more tenaciously. Efforts to bypass religion mean (i) abandoning the most convenient use of scriptural authorities to counter their own benighted followers and (ii) neglecting the task of reinterpreting the texts to divine in today's conditions the most effective ways to re-establish amity, solidarity, piety and moral behaviour. Railing against religious texts often becomes counterproductive; their imaginative reinter-pretation is always the most productive for ethical restoration and against unscrupulous exploitation of religion.

Marx did not realize that without a transcendental frame of reference, the materialist man would quarrel even more. People who are true worshippers of the transcendent and believers in the immanent (The Being within oneself) are unable to be servile to any ruler or, for that matter, to any power on earth. The flattery and servility which is now so pervasive in the Soviet Union is the result of the abolition of the transcendental frame of reference. Worship of power has taken its place. The question needed to be asked is: What is religion?

Religion is what integrates the head and the heart, the individual and the society, the sense of justice and the feeling of compassion. Hence religion in this sense will always exist. Anything which stirs the soul is religion. It might not begin as a religion. Many of the religions which exist today began as movements of social reform and upliftment of spirit and later came to be codified as religion. If you abolish religion, some other religion—maybe, a grossly materialist religion—will take its place. In one sense, Marxism which once stirred the souls of millions, became a religion and it is now in its degenerate phase. The kind of anti-religion which Marx preached, has impeded the building of bridges between the humanists of dialectical materialist hue and the spiritualist lovers of God and man. Together, they could have resisted evil much better.

So, there are many inadequate and even erroneous concepts in Marxism. Besides, there are many distortions of Marxism. One such distortion was imputing to Marx the economic determinism of the historical process, which he cannot really be accused of.

Now, let me come to certain errors of Lenin which further deflected the communist movement from its objectives. Lenin developed a theory that the working class, left to itself, would be limited to some kind of trade union consciousness and, therefore, the socialist consciousness would have to be injected from outside and that is the job of the middle-class intellectuals and activists. This Leninist theory somehow contradicts Marx's position that the working class, being at the bottom of society, holds in its bosom the sufferings of the entire humanity and, therefore, it is only the proletariat which can redeem itself by emancipating all classes. Marx held that the working class derived its consciousness from life's experience. Lenin did not share this perception. This, however, was not merely a question of contradiction between the two ideologues. When you seek to inject consciousness from the outside, you tend to create the cadre as a stratum outside the class, and also to create a condition whereby the party alone is legitimised to speak on behalf of the working class. This was in fact the genesis of the party domination which was exploited later by Stalin for exercising dictatorship over the proletariat.

Lenin can be accused of two other things. He defined socialism as 'Soviets plus electricity'. If you define socialism merely in terms of economic production and administrative structure, you forget the task of remoulding the Soviet people, of building a new culture, a new style of life. The Soviet neglect of these tasks was not incidental. It flowed from the lacunae in the theories of both Marx and Lenin. Moreover, his idea that electricity, generated in any manner, was beneficial, was not correct. But I will not blame Lenin for not understanding this. Only a person who was too far ahead of his time—a person like Gandhi, who saw the need for ecological technology and human-scale technology—could understand this.

Then, it was Lenin who thought of giving battle to the imperialists in the latter's own kind of technology. This was an error whose enormous potential for defeating the socialist objective was not grasped by Lenin and is not grasped even now by the Marxists in general. In Marx's time, Darwin had just developed a knowledge which was liberating from the tyranny of Judeo-Christian theology. Before him, in the 16th and 17th centuries, Galileo and Copernicus had developed a knowledge of science which, too, was liberating. Hence Marx and Engels were dazzled by the prevailing pattern of science and did not go deep into its philosophy and methods. Even then, Engels knew that this method of studying Nature in parts, was fraught with the danger of missing the wood for the trees. Marx, too, could perceive that natural science would have to lose its 'one-sidedly materialist orientation' in order to be integrated in a total interpretation of man and society. These statements of Marx and Engels were no more than a mild awareness of limitations of science. However, they had no idea of the eco-destructive and life-destruction-oriented nature of science guided by the prevailing philosophy and method of science. Hence, to them this science was on the whole benign. It is for this reason that Marx and Engels, who had challenged the prevailing concepts of economics, history and philosophy, did not challenge this pattern of science. Because they did not challenge it, Marxists the world over took it for granted: (i) that science has only one method—the reductionist method, (ii) that there was nothing inherently wrong in this pattern of science, (iii) that whatever wrongs are happening are due to rulers who put science to wrong use, and (iv) that all these evils will disappear when they come to power. That this kind of reductionist science has built-in fragmentation of knowledge, destruction of human values, destruction of eco-system, creeping chemical holocaust and threats of nuclear holocausts is not grasped by Marxists, even though it is becoming obvious to common people that if you allow this kind of science and nature-conquering technology to continue, it will destroy man and all other living species. When man's very existence is in peril, what use is socialism? In our country today, if I say that there is no need for pesticide factory, the nuclear power plant etc., the Marxists will not respond. They feel, since

the Soviet Union does it, there is no evil in it. If a person is sincere and imbibes the spirit of enquiry of Marx today, he will have to examine deeply the nature of this ruling pattern of science and technology. It would then be clear that acceptance of the nature-conquering pattern of technology on the US and West European pattern has derailed the Soviet Union, derailed the concept of socialism and built up centralised authoritarianism. So long as nature-conquering technology prevails, there is no relief from elitism, corporate centralism or statist centralism and eco-destruction. Hence all these omissions, ambiguities, misconceptions and distortions have undermined the basis of socialism.

There is yet another important question. When Lenin enunciated the principles of party organisation, Rosa Luxemburg criticised it. She had found from experience that if you build a kind of rigid centralism in the party, then that centralist party becomes a slave of the central committee, so much so that even when the latter takes a wrong policy, the whole party switches to that. During the First World War, she was opposed to German Social Democratic Party's participation in the war effort, for the German government was waging an imperialist war. But the German party's top leadership resolved to support the war effort and the party ranks joined it. This experience had taught her the effects of centralism. Therefore, she was critical of Lenin's centralist principle of party organisation. She said Lenin's organizational principle would make the central committee the nucleus and all other units, just tools. Lenin at that time thought that by instituting the principle of 'democratic centralism', he would avert the danger that had befallen the German party. 'It is not merely centralism, it is democratic centralism', Lenin said. But it was Lenin's wishful thinking, it was self-deception. From my own experience I have found how democracy gets knocked out and only centralism remains. This has happened in every communist party. Because centralism became the dominant factor, democracy within the party had to be recessive. The question is: Why did Lenin emphasise centralism so much? This is because the party was conceived as a military formation for waging a war in which discipline was most important. Had it been conceived as an organisation to wage other kinds of battles too—namely, for new ideas, new culture etc.—the importance of democracy and free expression of views, however heretical, would have been recognised. So while we all blame Stalin alone for his wrong doings, it was all these misconceptions that facilitated his tyranny.

Now, coming to Gorbachev, we see that he is trying to change the system. But overhauling this system in favour of democracy and freedom is a tremendous task because the systemic force is opposed to his objectives. The military force and all other forces are either wholly or partially against his goal. However, an American journal 'Problems of Com-

munist', seems to be correct when it says that each class is, in a certain sense, against it and in a certain other sense in favour of it. Therefore, I would not say that the attainment of Gorbachev's objective is impossible. I would, however, say that it is as difficult as—or perhaps more difficult than—making a revolution. We all have a stake in the success of this initiative. If it can be made a success, perhaps all will not be lost. But it depends on reviews of the basic theories as suggested earlier during this discussion. Only changes in the basic concepts, changes in the principles of party organisation, changes in the pattern of science and technology, measures for decentralisation in accord with ecological principles, can generate a powerful people's movement in the Soviet Union and in East European countries and their supportive movements all over the world. Only then can the horizons be regained.

CHAIRMAN: So, this* will be the instrument for regaining the paradise.

S.N. GHOSH:—I would say, a firm understanding of the errors of the original concepts is absolutely essential. There is no evidence as yet of this understanding. Without this understanding, without a correct perspective, there will be no basis for a powerful people's movement within the Soviet Union or without. If this is not sought, if Gorbachev seeks infusion of democracy merely through administrative measures within the existing conceptual framework, he and his supporters will be out.

CHAIRMAN: The paper is before us. Now it is open for discussion. Mr. Bardhan, I am sure you would like to join the issue.

A.B. BARDHAN: That does not mean that I want to be Batsman No. 2.

PRADIP BOSE: Well, then, let me be Batsman No. 2. My paper is "Soviet Communism—A New Civilisation". And I have tried to come to the conclusion that it is not a new civilisation. Now what is a new civilisation? Many of you know that Sydney and Beatrice Webb who were the founders of the British Fabian Society, were the foremost proponents of Marxism in Britain. Towards the end of their lives in 1930s, they went to the Soviet Union in 1932-33 and then wrote in 1935 two volumes "Soviet Communism—A New Civilisation?": And when it was reprinted in 1937, they decided to omit the question mark. So, they more or less said that it was a new civilisation.

After their return from Russia, Beatrice Webb wrote on 20th July, 1932, that the Soviet Government "represents a new civilization and a new culture with a new outlook on life, involving a new pattern of behaviour in the individual and his relations to the community—all of which I

believe is destined to spread to many other countries in the course of the next hundred years."

They found in the Soviet Constitution the tripod of political democracy, vocational organisation and consumers' co-operatives. They approved the presence, as the dominant and decisive force, of a religious order, the Communist Party, with its strict discipline, with its vows of obedience and poverty. Though not requiring chastity, the communists are expected to be puritans in their personal conduct, not to waste energy, time or wealth on sex, food or drink.

Communists, not only in the Soviet Union, but all over the world, fully agreed with their analysis and certainly with their conclusions. So this is the definition of New Civilisation that I have taken for assessing the Soviet society today. Now since the Marxists-Leninists of the Soviet Union are believers in the theory of economic determinism, which gives primary importance to economic factors, let us look at the record of the Soviet Union as an economic entity. In the late 1950s and early '60s the Soviet Union was the second biggest economic power in the world, after the United States. And the Soviet economy was growing at such a pace that Khrushchev used to tell USA confidently, "we will bury you", by economic performance. This was the kind of confidence that they had. In 1961 the Soviet Party Congress talked of the 20-year economic plan. By 1980 it was hoped that the Soviet Union will outstrip all the capitalist countries, including the United States of America, in their production of goods and services. But actually the gap between USA and USSR has grown wider and EEC and Japan have gone far ahead of Russia. Some observers consider that the present weakness of the Soviet economy has reached a new historic dimension and it is no longer capable of getting out of the rut while at the same time maintaining its traditional framework of policies. The lack of discipline, corruption, fraud and the country's worst ill, alcoholism, are eating up the vitals of the economy. The country is suffering from the handicaps of inefficient central planning, poor quality products, inadequate use of production capacity, misuse of natural resources, excessive damage to the environment, low productivity and the slow introduction of new technologies.

What is happening now in Glasnost is that all these ills are no longer brushed under the carpet, as has been done for nearly six decades, but are coming out in the open. Such revelations have shattered the positive image of the first model workers' state which had been meticulously projected over the years by the efficient propaganda machinery.

Now, so far as the political life is concerned, it is a little more difficult. When Lenin and his Bolshevik Party dissolved the popularly elected Constituent Assembly by force of arms and suppressed all other

political viewpoints and parties, including those which were socialistically inclined, in order to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, there were stringent criticisms of his policies both from the right wing and the left wing of the international socialist movement.

Now, Mr. Ghosh mentioned about Rosa Luxemburg. Rosa Luxemburg was killed, by the Nazis, and while she was in prison she was writing her essay on the Russian Revolution. Rosa Luxemburg, speaking for the radicals, while extending enthusiastic support to the Russian revolution, strongly criticised what she called the Lenin-Trotsky dictatorship. In her essay on Russian revolution she wrote: "Lenin and Trotsky decided on dictatorship in contradistinction to democracy and thereby in favour of dictatorship of the bourgeois model." She continued: "But socialist democracy is not something which begins only in the promised land after the foundations of socialist economy are created. It does not come as a sort of Christmas gift for the worthy people, who, in the interim, have loyally supported a handful of socialist dictators. Soviet democracy begins simultaneously with the beginning of the destruction of the class rule and the construction of socialism. It begins at the very moment of seizure of power by the socialist party."

Rosa Luxemburg argued that in an atmosphere of complete suppression of democratic rights in Russia, it would not be possible to preserve democracy within the ruling Communist Party. She made the prediction—and this was absolutely prophetic—that the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia would soon be transformed into the dictatorship of the Communist Party, which in its turn would become the dictatorship of the Politbureau and eventually lead to the dictatorship of one personality. This is what Dr. Rosa Luxemburg wrote. Now, Sir, within ten years,—she wrote in 1919—in 1927 Trotsky was defeated, and in 1929 Trotsky left the country as a major rival of Stalin and from 1928 onwards Stalin became the dictator of the Soviet Union.

Lenin had said that "complete democracy...can be achieved only when (a) the capitalists have disappeared, (b) when there are no classes, and (c) when the people become accustomed to observing the elementary rules of the society without being forced." The question may now be asked whether after seventy years of communism these preconditions of democracy, laid down by Lenin, have been achieved in the Soviet Union; if they have, then what is the condition of democracy today? The capitalists and also the landlords disappeared from the Soviet Union many decades ago. The rulers of the Soviet Union today say that there are no more classes, as the Soviet State now belongs to the whole people. It is to be assumed that after seventy years of Soviet education the people have at least been taught to observe the elementary rules of society without

compulsion. There ought now to be, according to Lenin's prognostications, a full-fledged democracy in the Soviet Union which should be on a much higher level than that of bourgeois democracy grossly stained by class exploitation.

That this has already been achieved was the official Soviet assumption till recently. Under Gorbachev, however, the lack of democracy is being cautiously discussed and some steps are being taken to overcome some of its obvious deficiencies. The freedom of the press, for which working class movement from the time of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels had fought valiantly, has been, and still is, non-existent in the Soviet Union. The press is strictly controlled by the ruling party and the Government. So also are the other media like radio and television. The trade union movement has none of the autonomy for which Lenin had pleaded in the early '20s on the ground that even though the State is controlled by the working class party, it has bureaucratic distortions and an autonomous trade union movement should have the right to counter these trends. The ruling party itself, with its system of democratic centralism provides the leadership with the capability to manipulate the party and it became a one-man show under the leadership of Stalin.

Now Gorbachev has come forward with the daring proposal that there should be more than one candidate in a constituency, who should of course be suitably approved by the ruling communist party. If this happens it will be an epoch-making advance for Soviet democracy. It is curious that after seventy years of communist rule even the limited democratic rights and civil liberties which are enjoyed in bourgeois democracies have not been given to the Soviet people.

The greatest illusion was that industrialisation and collectivisation and the destruction of capitalist ownership would result in a classless society. In 1936, when the new Constitution was promulgated, Stalin announced that the exploiting class had ceased to exist. The capitalists and other classes of ancient origin had in fact been destroyed, but a new class previously unknown to history, had been created. For instance, every one in the Soviet Union knows that high party and state officials have access to special shops, where goods unobtainable by ordinary citizens, can be bought at low prices, but so far nobody has dared to mention openly such a blatant discrimination.

What is significant and intriguing is that after seventy years of communism, and despite vast revolutionary changes bringing about impressive economic development and cultural advancement, the Soviet Union has not been able to shake off some of the darker sides of its Czarist heritage. The most positive achievements of the Soviet Union have been

the spread of education and development of a welfare state. But, at the end of the 20th century these are no longer any distinctive achievements. Western Europe, for instance, has built up highly developed welfare states without sacrificing any of the basic human and democratic rights. That is why the appeal of Soviet communism as a new civilisation with its welfarism combined with autocracy, has been steadily eroded in all industrially advanced countries.

Now I will just tell you about the social life and then conclude. Webb's rightly observed that a new civilization and a new culture would call for "an immense step forward in the development of a better human nature". The Marxist-Leninist ideologists believed that given the appropriate economic, social and political structure, man was eventually perfectible and a new Soviet man or woman, freed from the vices of earlier exploitative societies, would eventually emerge. Now I will only quote B.N. Yeltsin, an up-and-coming leader, Moscow Party Secretary, and a candidate-member of the Politbureau, who has now been thrown out. When asked at the Congress, why, after so many years, had the roots of bureaucratism, social injustice and abuses not been eradicated, he said, when discussing matters of social justice with workers, he found that there was blunt talk about special benefits enjoyed by the leaders. Such benefits, including special shops, he said, should be abolished, where they are not justified.

The new class has enjoyed their special privileges for so long that it will be very difficult to persuade it to relinquish them. Meanwhile, alcoholism has completely eroded the Soviet Union, the Soviet entrepreneur. I will conclude with just two or three points: The Soviet Union is far from being the ideal society it is often made out to be by communist propaganda; the Soviet Union has serious structural problems in tackling its political, economic and social life; and Gorbachev has an unenviable task in his efforts to reform Soviet society. I will end with John Strachey, one-time Marxist ideologue-turned-democratic-socialist theoretician, who, in his classic summing up of the Soviet experiment said: "The means have been terrible, but the result, commonplace." I am afraid that Mr. Bardhan's Paper is only a poem of love of Russia. Cuba would not be communist without Russian Roubles.

CHAIRMAN: Now we will take up another paper, Malkaniji's.

MALKANI: Sir, I will not read the paper. I will only make a few remarks. I agree with Mr. Ghosh but I also disagree with him. He has been a staunch communist. He expected something much from communist Russia. He does not find his expectations fulfilled. He is therefore disappointed. I have not been a communist. I am even supposed to be some

kind of an anti-communist. I find something happening there. I give credit to them for that. It is just like this glass of water here. Dada expected the glass to be full, he finds it is not full, he says it is "half-empty". I expected it to be empty, I find it half empty, and I say that the glass is "half-full".

How do we view the Russian revolution? You see, revolutions come like storms. Nobody can "stage" a revolution. The socio-economic and political situation calls for it; just as low atmospheric pressure calls for high winds, these revolutions come. Some people are happy when revolutions come, some others are unhappy. But you cannot help revolutions. On the whole, I think it is good that these revolutions come. Some kind of a fresh breeze comes in and fresh thinking takes place. Some kind of an alternative, it may not be a model alternative, but an alternative, a different set of values, emerges. We find many things missing in Russia. We know that their agriculture is weak, freedom is not ample, etc. I need not go into all their achievements either. But we should not overlook them. Health-wise, education-wise, they have done damn good. Why not recognise that? Just think of the crime wave in the USA. I have not been to Russia but I understand that you do not have that kind of crime there. Why not concede that? These are all plus points.

But we are forgetting one thing: just because revolution comes to Russia, it does not mean that Russia completely changes. Just because Gandhi arose in India, every Indian did not become Gandhian. India remains India. Gandhis come and go, Lenins come and go, Napoleons come and go. You see, the more we change, the more we remain the same. The mass of the people, their whole background, their geography, their history, that is very much at work. That is much more important than a great leader or a big revolution. Geography and history are the major premises. A revolution which might make a lot of noise, is comparatively a minor affair when it comes to the life of a nation. Some friends talk of the social security in Western Europe. But we cannot compare Western European countries with Russia at all for two reasons. All these Western countries have had empires.

One Voice—No, Sweden did not have one.

MALKANI: All Western Europe profited by the British and French and Dutch empires. They were all benefiting by rich trade between themselves. Germany did not have much of an empire, but it benefited by British and French imperial prosperity.

So, we cannot compare the two. They were great empires or their partners were great empires. So they profited by their trade, by

their industry, by their science and technology, by everything. The industrial revolution took place in England immediately after the East India Company got the Diwani of Bengal. There was a causal relationship between the two developments. Even France took great advantage of this. The steam engine was developed first in England. And the railway system in France was laid by Englishmen. To this day, while road traffic in France moves on the right, the railways drive on the left, as in UK! The French railways drive on the left—as per British practice—because these were built by Englishmen.

Also, between small countries and big countries, there is a world of difference. A country like Russia or China or India is huge. There is a lot of diversity in these big countries. They move slowly—like convoys. You see, England and France and Germany and Japan, they are very unilingual, very homogeneous, small countries. They can shoot around in any direction, like a bullet. But a big country has to carry large numbers of diverse peoples with itself. This also accounts for the slowness of the pace of large countries. The big countries have advantages. They have large size. They have large population. For this reason they have greater stability. But they cannot acquire the same speed as a small country.

All things considered, it was in nobody's hands either to promote the October Revolution or to stop it. Perhaps it was a good thing that it happened. This has given us an alternate value system and, as I have said in my paper, there are many aspects of a civilisation. They are all incomplete. There is something good about the American civilisation. There is something good about the Russian civilisation. Russia gives you much more social security than any other country of its size and historic development. And America gives you liberty, perhaps too much of it, bordering on licence. So, what we really need is a system which will combine both, social security and freedom. Whether this is really possible, God alone knows. That is all I have to say.

CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Mr. Malkani.

NAGARAJAN: He will have first-class place in the CPI (M). (Laughter).

CHAIRMAN: I am glad that Mr. Malkani was persuaded to speak. Now the stage is set for a discussion. We now have more or less a thorough idea of the shortcomings of the Soviet society and civilisation or whatever you may call it. Thanks to Mr. Malkani's intervention about achievements and political perspective and social perspective, against which the achievements have to be seen.

MR. BARDHAN : Mr. Chairman and friends, I very much welcome the stimulating discussion that is taking place. I appreciate the points that were put forward by both Mr. Ghosh and Mr. Malkani. But I am sorry to say that Mr. Pradip Bose's analysis was very negative, and very unhistorical also in many respects. To give only one example: In the latest peroration of yours, Mr. Bose, you said something about Cuba, and you tried to show that Cuba exists as a State by being subsidised by the Soviet Union. Now, firstly, if that were so, Cuba would not have become a shining star for the whole of Latin America. Whether one likes it or not, the fact remains that Cuba is inspiring revolutionary ferment in many Latin American countries. Maybe, America exaggerates it and sees Cuba's hands everywhere. Cuba's hands may not be everywhere, but the fact remains that its inspiration is there behind the revolutionary ferment in Latin America. That would not have been so if the Latin Americans had thought of Cuba only as a subsidised State.

Secondly, it is unhistorical because it forgets that Cuba had a mono-culture economy, totally dependent on sugarcane, and it could easily be choked off by its sugar not being purchased by the west, which was its main market. One knows what happened to Cuba as a result of the blockade and one also knows as to why Cuba had to be supplied even rice. It is now slowly trying to overcome its mono-culture economy. So, when one discusses all these things, one has to take into account the history of the nation, the situation in which it found itself, the level of development that was there and why certain things took place there, and took place along a certain path.

Mr. Malkani may not claim to be a Communist. But I think the question that he raised calls for a reply. Unlike Mr. Ghosh, I am a very unrepentant Communist, and also a friend of the Soviet Union. In all my 47 years of association with the Communist Party, and with the Soviet Union, never for a moment did I consider it a paradise, never for a moment. I never had a starry-eyed picture of the developments in the Soviet Union. I never thought, and I say it very frankly, that everything was fine in the Soviet Union and that a new civilisation, in the sense in which you are talking about it today, had already been established in the Soviet Union. Nothing of the sort. It is my understanding that a revolution can be made in a matter of days,—you remember perhaps that famous book, "Ten Days That Shook The World"—preceded, of course, by a lot of developments, both objective and subjective; the building of the socialist system may be a matter of decades; but the creation of a "socialist man"—a man of new values, a new man who appeals to our aesthetic and ethical sense, a different type of a man than the sort that we see today, is a matter of centuries.

Seventy years may be a long period in the life of man; but 70 years is only a moment in history. The Soviet Union has a long way to go before it really becomes that sort of a new civilisation which you are presuming, and from which angle you are trying to judge it. I am not saying it only today because Gorbachev has said so many things frankly. I wrote a book in reply to the well-known journalist, Nilkanth Khadilkar. He had written that book, "Practical Socialism". He went to the Soviet Union, saw the Soviet Union and came back a great admirer. I could have no quarrel with him on that account. But he also came back with one conclusion, namely : The Soviet society can go only thus far and no farther. What was the main reason he gave ? It was that man suffers from the six evils ('Shadripu'). And since man is prey to these six inherent evils, therefore there is no possibility at all of building what is known as Communism, where people will work according to their capacity and get according to their needs. That presumes a different kind of man. Even advanced socialism presumes a different type of man. That is what he wrote.

In reply to that I had based myself on Marx, and written about the alienation of man, and how this alienation would go, disappear, not automatically with a Socialist Revolution and a Socialist system, but after a prolonged period. Socialism had only created favourable conditions for eventually ending the alienation of Man.

I have been to the Soviet Union. I could also see that there is corruption, there is black-marketing. There are several things; happening round the corner. But I did not go there to find out all these things, nor did I go there, expecting a paradise, and then coming back disappointed. Let us ask the question : After 70 years, why is it that tonnes of books are still being written about the Soviet Union, not only by friends but even by foes ? Why is it that you and I are discussing the same thing here today ? If the results were commonplace, if all the sacrifices were not worth their while, and if the conclusion that you have come to is that it is a most inefficient system, a bureaucratic system, an economy that has failed, a society whose politics is questionable, one which is suffering from several other maladies, then why should we discuss it at all ? It means something has taken place that has turned you towards socialism, and for the solution of several problems. Not all the problems have been solved in the Soviet Union, not all the questions have been answered. But undoubtedly, certain new trends, certain new forces, have been unleashed. A new system has come into being. Mr. Bose has said, that my paper was a poetry of love. I did not write a poem of love. I was only pointing out the changes that have taken place since 1917. For instance, 1917 October Revolution set the road towards a change of the old system. The existing capitalist system, whatever it is, is not something that you can idealise. It is not something to which you are committed.

It is not an ideal system in the world. Everybody wants a change, whether you call it socialism or not. You want a system, where you would like to see that many of the material and spiritual needs of man are being met. Therefore, according to me, if October Revolution has set a new road for a social change and showed that a new social system can be established, you cannot but hail it. That was done by October Revolution, and I think that was one of the biggest inspirations for many people, for the exploited peoples of the world.

Secondly, the Soviet Union, and its leader, Lenin, set into motion trends in dependent countries, enslaved countries, for their freedom. This is not just a claim. This has been stated in so many words by the leaders of the national liberation movements of our time. In my paper, I have quoted both from India as also from China and Vietnam and many other countries, that the October Revolution brought inspiration to them, and gave them hope that imperialism can be destroyed, that if such an autocratic power as Czarism can go, then British imperialism also can go. That hope was created. Thirdly, we know there was something known as the rise of fascism and even if some people were misled in the earlier days about what fascism really meant, that was not the case later. That fascist power was destroyed by the Soviet Union. That did create certain favourable conditions for the national liberation movement. It is now accepted that after the defeat of fascism in 1945, precisely after that, we see from 1946 onwards, all the colonial countries started getting liberated one after the other. And finally, 100 countries have got liberated: it was like a chain-reaction. I am not saying that the Soviet Union went there and liberated them. By no means. We in India have liberated ourselves. The Chinese people have liberated themselves. But the October Revolution served as a catalyst. I think, I will not be misunderstood if I say that. Therefore, all these things have taken place as a result of the October Revolution, and it is here that I see its impact on world civilization. If this is not understood, if this is not appreciated, then I think we will fall into the trap of what they call anti-Sovietism.

Many of the things which you have said, many of the facts which have been brought to light, nobody can deny them. But here also I would like to point out that perhaps it is only in the Soviet Union that we see examples of open admission of blunders. Despite limitations on the freedom of the Press, all these criticisms are openly coming out. Mr. Ghosh will agree with me that there is a saying of Lenin, that revolution advances by criticising itself; and no revolution perhaps has criticised itself at different stages so ruthlessly as the Soviet Revolution has done in the course of the past 70 years. After all, whether it is Khrushchev or Gorbachev, they are the products of the same Revolution, and they are try-

ing to correct the evils that have crept in, and to reform what needs to be reformed. They have been very harsh in criticism. Show me any other example in the world where such open criticism is there. Sometimes, some of us sitting in our party offices feel, 'YEH NA HUYA HOTTA, TO ACHHA HOTTA', because some of the things appear to be very unpleasant. It does not give you a very good face.

Now, what is the comparison with Japanese or American advance, or West German advance for that matter? That is what I mean when I say you are being unhistorical. People talk about economic advance in America. Mind you, America is a country which never saw a war, excepting the last civil war. Everytime war was fought on somebody else's territory, and they only benefited from it by selling arms and other things. But the Soviet Union is a country which has been devastated by wars. Somebody else came and devastated their country, and the country had again to be rebuilt. There is no comparison, therefore, with the economic progress of the Soviet Union in that sense. I happened to go to Japan. The Japanese workers are more modest about their economic achievements than some of us. We asked: "tell us something about your great achievements." They said: "It was fortunate for us that the Peace Treaty forbade Japan to spend on armaments and defence. That helped us to concentrate all resources on economic development." Please remember that the Soviet Union is bearing a terribly heavy burden of defence preparedness, of nuclear armaments. It has to because it is the main target of imperialists. I can tell you that not only from humanistic reasons, not only because socialism does not want war, and stands for peace, but also because nuclear arms can ruin the world, and are a big drain on the Soviet economy, that they want to scrap it. You cannot improve the condition of the people. You cannot meet their needs if you go on like this. This is a big argument for nuclear disarmament. Now Japan was not required to spend on armaments. I asked them about their advance in electronics industry. They said, "We were cut off from the main resource of iron ore and other raw materials, on the basis of which we could have built traditional industries. So, we thought that this is something which we can do." They got technology from America, absorbed it, adapted it to their needs, improved upon it, so that by now they are on the top as far as electronics industry is concerned. So, when we want to compare the economy of one country with another, it is best to know about the respective geography, history and specific characteristics of all these countries.

Incidentally, though the Soviet Union is a country which is very vast, on almost two-thirds of its land surface, nothing grows and, in the remaining one-third, except Ukraine, perhaps it is impossible to have more than one crop. So, when we talk about their agriculture, we must

also know what is the fertility of their soil. How much of it is under permafrost; other vast areas are desert. It might be rich in minerals and other resources but, from the point of view of agricultural resources, it is not. I think, all these things should be taken into account.

Now, I agree with one point that Mr. Ghosh made. It is the personality cult which does not explain many of the errors that took place in the Soviet Union. Even we, inside our party, used to discuss what is this personality cult? After all, personality cult must have come about as a result of certain phenomenon that is there, certain circumstances that are there. It does not explain everything and surely one person cannot be held responsible for all these things. Stalin was a man who, for 30 years, continued to lead the State. The country could not have withstood Hitler on the basis of a backward economy and a demoralised nation, — a nation which, incidentally, is multinational. I remember when I was in the Soviet Union. I asked why the Volga Germans and the Crimean Tartars were transported out during the war. They said, imagine yourself a marshal, with these people in the rear. The Germans are advancing. There is a German-speaking population behind the lines. It is a life and death struggle. You are not always sure as to what will be the reaction of these people. Was it good? Was it good for the people? It was not good for the people. Was it necessary militarily? It is difficult to say. By hind-sight, people can say anything, but the General who is commanding the army at that stage, will see it in a different light. If tomorrow Pakistan advances in India, and if I were a commanding General on that front, I would like to see that quite a big area in Amritsar and Gurdaspur in the border region is vacated by people, so that I do not have people supplying information to the Pakistan army from my rear. I think some of these things should be understood in their historical context. Otherwise, you will never be able to come to grips with these problems.

Incidentally, about trade union consciousness versus socialist consciousness, socialist thought is an advanced social science. It is the summation of all sciences that have preceded it, all knowledge that you have acquired till today. That cannot be easily acquired by a worker who is working on the bench. That can be done by people who have the advantage of acquiring that science, and therefore they had to go into the working class from outside.

In short, what I want to say is that if the Soviet Union is to be judged, it should be judged from the following angle. Firstly, we will have to accept that it did bring about a change in the entire geo-politics of the world. It created a new socialist system. At that time, there was only one socialist revolution and nobody knew what would be the fate of that revolution.

Today, socialism continues to be an attractive idea for vast sections of people in the world. After all, if everything that Mr. Bose said was right, then how could socialism continue to be an attractive idea for vast sections of the people of this world even now? Because they want to change the capitalist system.

ONE VOICE : In the third world only.

BARDHAN : Countries belonging to Africa, Asia, and Latin America have big Communist movements. I would not bother about Western Europe so much because in many countries there are big Communist parties. We in India know how difficult it is to get more than 4 per cent votes in so many States. But, for instance, in Italy, if the Communist Party is not able to get more than 30 per cent vote today, and if it loses even 1 per cent and the total comes down to 29 per cent, it is as if heavens are falling. In France, too, despite the fact that Communist Party has gone down considerably, the Communist Party still has 12 per cent vote. CPI and CPI (M) both together are not able to get that much vote in this part of the world. Therefore, I would say that in Western Europe also, it has its own attraction even at this stage. This is all I want to say.

NANA DESHMUKH : It appears to me that everybody has expressed his views here. This Seminar which we have organised, from its very name it appears that the impact of Russian Revolution was there not only on any particular country but on humanity as a whole. In fact, we want to discuss that the Russian Revolution which took place had certain goals before itself. What was the impact of that Revolution on human civilisation? We cannot limit ourselves to what is the position in Russia today. We have gathered here particularly to assess the effect of Russian Revolution on the world. These days, due to development of science and technology, the world has become so small that any incident which takes place in any corner of the globe, has its impact on humanity, whether for better or for worse. As a matter of fact, the main task of this seminar is to see what has been the impact of the Russian Revolution on humanity, and from that point of view, what is happening in Russia, that too will come up for discussion, but in a limited way, to a limited extent.

And it is beyond the shadow of doubt and we have to admit that the Russian Revolution has had great impact on the thinking of mankind. There could be shortcomings in that, there could be good things in that, there could be bad things in that. Our objective is not to discuss Russia only but what have been the effects of this Revolution. Whether it had good effects or bad effects, that we can consider, but the impact of this Revolution on mankind, if we can discuss that, then I think, the purpose

of this Seminar would be fulfilled and if our views are expressed, keeping that point in view, then it would be more appropriate and we would be able to achieve the purpose for which this Seminar has been organised.

JAYASHEKAR : I would like to make some observations on some of the issues under discussion so far. One point that emerges strongly from the discussion so far is that the Soviet Union has made significant achievements in a number of fields such as industrial development, consumption, employment, education and health. No body can deny the fact that the Soviet Union has a number of achievements to its credit. But these achievements will have to be looked at in a slightly different way when we are discussing the impact of the October Revolution on civilisation. True, the Soviet citizens have received free education, health facilities and employment. The question that would arise in our mind is whether such benefits could not have been secured without a revolution. More importantly, whether the masses in the Soviet Union bargained or mortgaged their dignity and their freedom of speech and action for guaranteed low-paid jobs or some moderate material benefits. I do believe that people take part in historical events like revolution for something more than material gains. They lay down their lives for higher or nobler goals which can be described as human freedom and dignity. Has the October Revolution realised these goals for the Soviet masses? An answer to this question is very crucial, if we have to evaluate the impact of October Revolution elsewhere.

The second point I would like to make relates to the new man under socialism. It has been argued that advanced socialism is a necessary condition for creating a new man and such a new man has not come into existence in the Soviet Union. But, is it not a pre-condition to have a new man even to advance towards socialism? You cannot have a new man only after advanced socialism is established. Unless you have the new man in embryonic form when you are moving towards socialism, you just cannot achieve socialism. The failure of October Revolution in creating a new man is important. The October Revolution was expected to make its impact on civilisation through the new man. After all, the significance of this revolution was not in the creation of material conditions of a new civilisation. This is because material progress could be achieved in other ways also.

It has been argued that the new man could not come into existence because of certain distortions in the Soviet development. These distortions, it is contended, are explained by the geography of the Soviet Union, the disabilities that it imposes on the country, civil war, and wars imposed by outside powers. In my view this is too simplistic an explanation of the

distortions in Soviet socialism. The fathers of the October Revolution were aware of the geographic constraints and the powerful enemies of socialism. Yet they aimed very high. This brings us back to the question as to what happened to those goals. Here I come to Sailen Babu's paper.

I am in agreement with him when he says that we cannot simply understand the distortions in the October Revolution in terms of personality cult. We cannot blame only Marx or Lenin or Stalin. We definitely cannot blame Marx because he had not focused on socialism, except making some vague statements about the kind of society that will come into existence after capitalism undergoes self-destruction. However, Lenin to some extent, and Stalin to a very large extent, had made their contributions to distorted development of socialism. Socialism has been under debate for almost half a century and at a very intense level in the last twenty-five to thirty years. Yet neither Khrushchev nor Gorbachev is prepared to go beyond the personality cult. Gorbachev, like Khrushchev, is simply blaming Brezhnev and Stalin for all the deficiencies of the Soviet society. He is not prepared to go into the socio-economic courses which brought into existence Stalinism and sustained it over a long period. Without going into socio-economic forces that brought the Stalinist system into existence, we cannot understand the personality cult. It is necessary to identify these forces for both Marxists and non-Marxists; especially for Marxists who intend to establish socialism in other countries.

The long process of unravelling of Stalinism began sometime ago under Khrushchev. Now that process is being deepened under Gorbachev, who has set up commissions to investigate the crimes of Stalin. However, Stalin's major crimes are already well known. For instance, Stalinist terror, sending millions of people to labour camps and psychiatric wards, and liquidation of most of the brilliant military generals who were mainly responsible for winning the Great Patriotic War, are a familiar story. Of significance from our point of view is what happened to the revolutionaries. It is said that a revolution devours the revolutionaries. In the Soviet Union, during and after the October Revolution, a large number of surviving revolutionaries became victims of Stalin's paranoia. Now the interesting question is: who became the decision-makers in the Soviet society at the critical phase of its development? Stalin based his decisions on the advice and information supplied by others. Who were his advisers? Who were his planners? What were their social antecedents? What were their motivations? We have no answer to these questions. We do not know whether Stalin and his advisers were believers in communism. It is revealing to note that in a recent Shatrov's play "Onwards, Onwards", Lenin expresses doubts about Stalin's socialist beliefs. There

fore, unless we have convincing answers to the above questions, we will not know why the October Revolution was put on a track which took it in an unintended direction.

Another thing that emerges from recent writings of R.W. Davies of Birmingham and from the debates in Soviet literature is that there was an enormous misunderstanding about the nature of the revolution and the way the socialist society can be reconstructed in the Soviet Union. In the 1920's and 1930's the Soviet leaders and their advisers thought that socialist reconstruction was a simple affair. Maybe this misunderstanding was due to lack of competence on the part of those who came to power after the revolution. However, in the context of our discussion today the important question is whether those who are now interested in putting back the October Revolution on the right track, have a proper understanding of the problems involved in socialist reconstruction. My own paper deals with this issue and we will have an opportunity to discuss it later.

What are the possibilities of the October Revolution regaining its horizons under Gorbachev? I have my doubts about this possibility. If we look at what Gorbachev has already initiated and analyse the debates that are going on among the intellectuals in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, it appears that none of the proposals for reform of the socialist societies have anything to do with socialism. Almost all the talking is about how to use the capitalist instruments to strengthen the socialist countries. If this is what is happening in theory and practice, how is socialism going to regain itself through reform? A careful analysis of Gorbachev's present reforms suggests that they may not succeed. Therefore, it is possible that Gorbachev will come out with more radical reforms by mid-1990's. If Gorbachev has to save today's Soviet Union, he will have to rely on the proven techniques or capitalist methods because alternatives are just not available. If October Revolution is to regain its lost horizons, socialist solutions must be found for the difficult problems facing the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. But the "new thinking"—and all other efforts in these countries—is in the opposite direction. Therefore there is a doubt. It is possible that someone like Lenin would re-emerge and put the Revolution back on the rails. Let us keep our mind open on the issue.

The last point I wish to make is on the impact of October Revolution on national liberation movements in the world. In my opinion, the impact is exaggerated. While we can concede that it had some influence on national liberation struggles, in was not the only influence. There is every reason to believe that the Indian Revolution had a much stronger influence on these struggles than the October Revolution. Leaders of

liberation movements in the Third World would happily accept this proposition. It is unfortunate that our Government which spends large amounts of money to propagate the Soviet cause has not found the time or the money to find out the impact of Indian Revolution on others. I cannot recall a major seminar or discussion or a study funded by our Government in this important area. Let us hope our communist friends would undertake a comparative analysis of the impact of Indian and Russian revolutions on the liberation struggles around the world.

SUBRATA BANERJEE : I would like to raise a few issues. Some theoretical questions that have been raised by my friend Sailen Gosh. First, he objects to what he calls replicating or copying the industrial development of the capitalist world by the Soviet Union. The question is, can we visualise a backward country being able to stand up against highly industrialised countries for a very long time? In such a situation, even without following the pattern in which the industrial revolution has taken place in certain countries, there is need to secure the advantages provided by the use of science and technology and the advantages of the industrial revolution. This is what the Soviet Union did.

The other question raised is the basic question about Marxist humanism, which makes it possible for the socialist system to correct its mistakes. After all, Marx analysed capitalist society and came to the conclusion that the ultimate beyond this is communism. He did not claim to be an astrologer able to work out and define and describe the sort of society that would grow out of the womb of capitalism. He could not work out the details of its structure and form and all that. The only example he had before him was the Paris Commune. He could not possibly go beyond as a social scientist. What the Soviet Union attempted was an experiment. That is why it has been correctly described as the Soviet experiment by many. It has had no model to follow. Today, we talk of the Chinese model, the Cuban model and on the other side the American model, the Japanese model. Even today there is really no model for the direction of change that is being undertaken in the Soviet Union. It is a model that it is trying to work out for itself.

The Soviet Union has made mistakes in the past. It is likely to make mistakes during this experiment too. The main thing to understand is that the building of socialism and communism in the Soviet Union is a pioneering effort with no pre-determined models to fall back upon.

The other point made is that the emphasis of the Marxists has been on the base, forgetting the superstructure, and this is what has disillusioned my friend. This is a very personal experience. I too have a personal response. As a child, poverty used to worry me. It was an instinctive

humanistic feeling born of my family environment. It was only when I came to Marx that I found the answer to my question. It was really the basic humanism of Marx that took him to examine the system, to question its values and in the process he returned to humanism at a higher level. This is the complete circle of the evolution of Marxist humanism.

When you talk of the base and superstructure, you warn against determinism. No proper Marxist is an economic determinist. But at the same time, the question is on what support of a base do you build the superstructure? Without a foundation you cannot build a house. The remoulding of man does not take place automatically. One has to make concerted efforts for it. That is what Marxism is about in the ultimate analysis. You have to understand the laws of nature, use and adapt them and help consciously the process of change according to those laws.

What has happened is that a conscious effort has not been made to remould man in the Soviet Union. But remoulding of man is a very difficult task. Take our own country. Do you mean to say that the type of peasants we have today are the same as we had 40 years ago? No, he is not that sort of a peasant. Today he puts on a switch and water starts flowing into his fields. Is he the same peasant who had to wait for the rains? Yet, today, he still remains intellectually, mentally, backward. He is not the new man of new India. To remould him, a conscious effort has to be made to make him a new man to realise that science and technology has enabled him to change his whole destiny. This is really a question of ideology.

Let me give a personal experience. My very first contact with Marxism made me feel here is a key that opens all doors to understanding society in all its diverse dimensions. To me at that stage the worker, by virtue of being a worker, was a revolutionary. Then it was Marx who taught me the importance of consciousness, the combination of the experience of labour and life and ideology. Ideology helps answer the questions that arise in a man's mind and this consciousness changes him from a mere worker to a revolutionary.

Now you talk of corruption in the Soviet Union, of various social evils. Hence you come to the conclusion that there has been no change. Where is the socialist man? Let me give you a somewhat non-political example. Very recently I took along my wife on her first visit to the Soviet Union. She is not a Marxist. She is certainly pro-communist, broadly speaking, because of her life with me. She came back and wrote to her friend, who too is no communist, about the experiences in the Soviet Union. The response of this lady was: "So a black man is respected today, at least in some parts of the world!"

You say that the Soviet Union is a country where the human being has no dignity. If the human being himself has no dignity in the Soviet Union, how can he give dignity to a black man?

The other point is about science and technology. It has been said that it is a disintegrating factor. The reality is that science and technology has reached such a level today that fragmentation of the world cannot allow humankind to realise to the full its benefits. Integration alone can do so. This integration cannot be brought about by the capitalist system which is itself disintegrating. Look at the fight that is going on between Japan and Germany or among the USA, Japan and Germany or the fight being waged on our own soil to capture a huge market.

Mr. Bose has been talking about the decline in the growth rates in the Soviet Union. He was talking about the mid-seventies. This is also the period Gorbachev has been talking about. There was no decline in the growth rates in the previous years. In fact, in 60 years, despite the civil war, the fourteen powers' intervention and Nazi aggression, the Soviet Union has achieved what it took the entire advanced capitalist world 300 years to achieve. And the Soviet Union had no colonies to rape. It was the outcaste of the capitalist world as far as technological and economic exchanges were concerned. This is history. Let us not forget this history.

I am critical of the fact that from the Thirties onwards the Soviet Union became somewhat inward-looking and even autarkic. If this had not been so, whatever the reasons, the impact of the October Revolution on the world economy would probably have been much greater. The fact remains that the Soviet Union has received very little or no assistance from anybody over a long period of time. The entire socialist community has grown on the basis of what the Soviet Union has achieved. As the Soviet Union rightly points out it has had no colonies to provide employment for its people, and yet there is full employment, while unemployment is rampant in the capitalist world.

Even in America technology is going down, except in armaments-related areas. The USA is living on money borrowed from other countries of the world and on the drain from the developing countries through trade, aid, investments and so on. Internal contradictions within the world capitalist system are increasing and even today the USA is trying to control not only the developing countries, but even the life styles of the advanced capitalist countries and dictate terms to them.

The question of the withering away of the state has been raised. Nowhere does Marx or Lenin say that as soon as the revolution takes

place the state will be dissolved. After all you are living in a world with powerful states; a single nation or a group of nations cannot survive by just letting the state wither away.

I was once involved with an advertising agency. It was a cooperative structure. We tried to keep the wage differences low and survive, unlike other agencies in a capitalist market economy. We learnt from our mistake only a few years later. We had become something of an absurdity and had to adhere to the basic laws of the market to survive.

Now coming to dignity, freedom of action and low wages. Low wages, yes. But take the wage as a component of the entire life style in the Soviet Union. What about the low house rent, electricity charges, various services, education, health facilities, holiday homes and so on? If you care to study the Soviet budget you will see the amount of money that goes into social services. The standard of living is certainly not as high as in the advanced capitalist countries or even in our own country for certain people. And there is no abject poverty. No slums. No ghettos.

It has been said that the Soviet people have received nothing after the revolution and yet, during the Second World War, the Russians laid down their lives without a murmur. You had no fifth columns as in other parts of the world. Where did this patriotism come from? Patriotism does not come merely from a love for the land one is born in. It comes also from the loyalty to the society which gives you something that you need and are proud of.

You say that the new man is the pre-condition to the advance to socialism. First, those who brought about the revolution were new men, different from the old society. Secondly, those who built the new society in the Soviet Union were new men. Thirdly, it is absurd to expect every human being in a country to change suddenly and become a socialist one day and then start building socialism. Parallel growth, yes. But that is a question of a dialectical relationship. Man goes on changing in the process of building socialism and the process of building socialism changes its builder. And so the process goes on. They are not two inter-related processes, but an integrated process.

To come to the present day. What Gorbachev is discussing today is not Stalin's crimes or Brezhnev's crimes. These are of course being discussed on a wide scale in the media, not merely in the press, but even in films and plays. What is being really discussed are the mistakes made. When certain technological changes take place, certain structural changes also take place in society. If these changes are not recognised and institu-

tionalised contradictions develop. It was believed that because such contradictions in a socialist society are not antagonistic, they get resolved by themselves. This is not true. It is now being realised after a long time that such unresolved contradictions cause crises, very different in their nature from the capitalist crisis. What is being sharply debated is this failure to carry out the necessary changes in society, political structures, administrative structures, management structures, economic institutions, cultural patterns and so on. It is not a question of the denigration of Stalin, or the replacement of one set of weaknesses by another or one set of characters by another. The entire system is under scrutiny.

The question of the introduction of capitalist instruments in Soviet society has been raised. This is very strange indeed. Way back in the twenties when Lenin introduced the new economic policy, he admitted that he was introducing capitalist elements, but what he was building with the help of capitalist forms, technology, management structures, was an altogether different type of socio-political and economic system and structure—socialism. This was possible because the proletariat was in possession of the state, the infrastructures and the economic resources of the country. This was immediately after the civil war and a disastrous famine which had left the country devastated and in ruins, and capitalist elements still survived within the country. History is on record that capitalism was destroyed in Russia and socialism won.

Today the situation is entirely different. It is a socialist state which is introducing certain elements which are common to capitalism, and even foreign capitalists in the joint sector. That does not change the system which has already been strongly entrenched. The market under socialism cannot possibly have all the features of the capitalist market.

Take the question of individual entrepreneurship. It is immediately confused in our country with private capitalism. He is no capitalist. He employs no wage labourer. Would you call a cobbler in our country or an electrical mechanic working on his own, a capitalist? Such mistaken understandings should be cleared up at the very outset if our discussions have to have any meaning.

ASHOK MODAK : I want to make three points. The first point is regarding the problem of alienation of workers. Actually, even before the October Revolution in Russia, capitalism was familiar with this particular problem. I feel that the world expected that the revolution in Russia would put an end to it. Now when the Soviet leaders themselves say that they have not been able to put a stop to this feeling of alienation, a very pertinent question arises: whether the whole experiment which

was going on for 70 years or so, has delivered the right goods. That is point number 1.

Secondly, do we find a kind of dilution of utopia over this period of seven decades? I will just refer to certain land-marks. It was in 1936 that Stalin came out with his own constitution known as Stalin's constitution. At that time, Communists all over the world boasted of the achievements of the Soviet Union and in fact persons like George Bernard Shaw and many others, also carried this glamorous impression of the Soviet Union. But let me refer to the year 1956, when in the 20th CPSU Congress, Khrushchev came and submitted his report at the secret Party Congress and literally undertook the campaign of de-Stalinisation. Later, in 1961, that is at the 22nd Party Congress, he submitted the Third Party Programme. There Khrushchev gave us an assurance that within two decades, capitalist society would be overtaken by the Soviet system. In fact, when he went to USA, he told them that their grandsons would be living under the shadow of communism. After dismissing Khrushchev in October 1964, when Brezhnev came in, he had to dilute the whole concept. He came with the concept of 'developed socialism.' In other words, somehow, he also realised that the whole party programme was quite romantic, utopian, over-ambitious and, therefore, it was not possible for them to achieve the ideal. But he assured them that they were living under "developed socialism". And now, in the report presented by Mikhail Gorbachov to the 27th Party Congress, and in the new edition of the Party programme, I find a totally different title given to the present stage of socialism. They say that, at present, theirs is the stage of "upgradation of socialism". They no longer call it even "developed socialism".

It was in 1977 that Brezhnev presented a new constitution. At that time, right from housing etc., much was assured. If we read the speech delivered by Brezhnev at that particular time, we find a unique type of confidence in his party. Here they were giving not only the right but also the provision to fulfil that particular right. Later Brezhnev said that they were not in a position to give housing to every family. Not only that, he was not able to say when these requirements of housing etc. would be fulfilled. I am constrained to say that there is an end of even the dilution of utopia in that particular sense. Let me refer to one other evidence. Soviet writings now convey that they, somehow, rely upon very simplistic equations. And what are those simplistic equations? These are that by nationalising the means of production, we would be able to put a full-stop to the alienation on the part of the labourers. They say that the whole process is not so simple, not so easy.

Secondly, they say that, well, we have definitely resolved the problem of unemployment. It does not mean that they have solved all the problems

pertaining to employment. The problems of suitable employment and low labour productivity etc. remain.

Thirdly, they say the Soviet Union never experienced price rise. Now they admit the end of that illusion also. Under camouflage of stable prices, they over-estimate cash balances at the disposal of the people, and under-estimate the real cost of production of goods and services. My friend, Comrade Bardhan has stated that the Soviet Union is the only country which encourages criticism of the past. In fact, a thought occurs to my mind, whether criticism itself is a scapegoat. First they commit mistakes. Later on, they admit those mistakes and, for that, they want us to go on appreciating them and applauding them! The uniqueness of Gorbachov lies in the fact that he has hinted at continuing troubles faced by the Soviet people. Khrushchev criticised Stalin. Brezhnev criticised Khrushchev. I call it de-Khrushchevisation. Now Gorbachov has come and started de-Brezhnevisation. The present leader criticising his predecessor, has become a continuing feature of the Soviet Union. There is one difference: Khrushchev put the whole blame on Stalin. But Gorbachov says he won't blame Stalin alone.

Excessive insistence or reliance on the machinery of the state for these seven decades has resulted in some problems, difficulties and inadequacies. Time has come for all of us to think whether the excessive reliance on the state can deliver the goods. After the death of Stalin, leaders like Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Gorbachov have started, you can say, expediting the whole process of transition from state to society, from power to authority. And I, for one, welcome this particular process.

IMTIAZ AHMED: I have only very brief observations to make. Throughout the discussion, some kind of equivalence was being established between the October Revolution and the Soviet Union. A point which I think was underscored by the Chairman earlier and it is likely to create problems because if you really do this, then you put the Soviet Union in the strait-jacket of having the obligation to elucidate and work out that October Revolution, that vision of the October Revolution and if the Soviet Union were to abandon that vision, then, in fact, that vision has itself to be shelved; and if the Soviet Union continues to be the carrier of that vision, then, in fact, we would have the kind of debate that you have—the rates of crime and the remarkable achievements that the Soviet Union has made. I think, therefore, there is a case for treating the October Revolution on its own terms rather than equating the Soviet Union with the October Revolution.

The second point is that it is in the nature of every revolution, including the industrial revolution, to hold out high on utopia. And I think if one were to look at the world around, there was at one

time only one rather than two visions, or two major perceptions, of a temporal, non-transcendental vision, that we find in modernisation and in socialist theory. Then there are other kinds of perspectives that are available, the Islamic, the Hindu, the Buddhist and so on, all of which are transcendental. But the submission I want to make is that it is inherent in the nature of all revolutionary perspectives, either transcendental or non-transcendental, to be both centralising and homogenising. So that when Islam comes into existence or when Buddhism comes into existence, it seeks to unfold itself into a centralising, homogenising, vision of the world. It launches itself as if it were homogenising the world in its Islamic vision or in its Buddhist vision or in its Hindu vision or in its Christian vision. They are all transcendental. The only non-transcendental forms that we encounter are to be found in modernisation. One is the vision of the great centralising and homogenising tendency called modernisation—of which the biggest carrier today is USA, whereas, in fact, historically, that vision is essentially European. The other vision, the other great centralising and homogenising perspective that we have is the communist or the socialist vision.

I would, therefore, think that, in fact, whatever the achievements or failures of the Soviet Union, that in a sense does not really tell upon the nature of the vision itself. But I have one question because so many times a reference is being made to Gorbachov and others. I am not an expert on the Soviet Union. I have visited Soviet Union only as a tourist and I have not had the kind of insightful trips that some of you have had. But let me make this point that even if tomorrow, Gorbachov's reforms were to indicate to us that the Soviet Union has retreated from the great socialist vision of centralisation and homogenisation, it still does not actually defeat the inherent centralising homogenising vision inherent in the Soviet Union. Therefore, I am a little disturbed by this tendency to equate the Soviet Union with the October Revolution. I think it is this point that Mr. Malkani had argued, namely that it has given us a definite vision.

I conclude, therefore, by making one submission that during the great deal that has been said here, it has been made out that the vision of the October Revolution has failed. Actually, I would say both the non-transcendental temporal visions of the world have failed, and it is, therefore, as a result of this that we see all around us a reversion, a tendency to revert to a transcendental vision of the world. In other words, the rise of various kinds of fundamentalism are in fact efforts for a new temporal vision of the world. I think it is not that the Soviet Union alone has failed. It is not even that modernisation theory has failed. When I happened to go to Yugoslavia, at one time, most of the questions they were asking were about the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Yugoslavia. I think, therefore, in fact, not only the October Revolution and the paradigm on which it is

based seems to be inadequate, but even the western modernisation paradigm seems to be inadequate. Therefore we, as members of humanity, do not really have a very significant choice to make between western modernisation and the socialist perspectives.

GHOSH : I would not like to measure Soviet achievements with Malkaniji's yardstick. Acceptance of "half-empty or half-full" analogy will be demeaning the yardstick. It is like saying, I expected my son to be a lumpen proletariat but he has become a lower division clerk, so he has come up better. As for myself, I did expect the Soviet Union to come up as a socialist country because that was the promise of the revolution. Hence I will not like to debase the standard of judging it. I am prepared to keep my tests in a low profile. I need not, therefore, ask if it has achieved socialism. Let us even concede that the building of full-fledged socialism amid adverse circumstances may take more time. But the key question is : Is the direction right ? Is the Soviet Union throwing up better human beings—better types of people than during the Czarist times? The evidence shows it is not. If a train starts from Delhi and its engine is headed towards Calcutta and somebody keeps on proclaiming that given some more time, it will reach Jammu, it will be self-deception. I have sought to point out that the Soviet Union has so far been moving in a wrong direction. This way, it will never usher in socialist values. I have said that Marxist humanism, as the frame of reference, is the Soviet land's saving grace. But then, it requires reviewing of Marxian theories very critically. If this is not done, Gorbachov cannot achieve success. He may then be forced to quit. I do not rule out such an unwelcome prospect. If one simply welcomes Gorbachov's initiative but does not give this essential pointer regarding the need for review of theories, it will not be an aid to his success. Gorbachevian initiative, without a re-examination of Marx's and Lenin's theories vis-a-vis their objectives, will not be able to forge ahead. For the prevalence of confusion in ideology will leave enough ground for his opponents to mount a powerful counter-thrust in favour of the *status quo*. It is not merely a question of introduction of democracy. It is a question of a fresh look at the total frame of reference, a quest for a new spectrum of values and for restructuring the society. Unless Gorbachov and his supporters address themselves to these fundamental questions, they will not succeed.

Then, I come to Subrata Babu's point that man has changed everywhere. The question is not of change in technical skill, not of adeptness in handling gadgets. When we talk of man, the question ought to be : has man become better than the type of man there was in that society, seventy or forty years back ?

BARDHAN : He has not said that man has become better.

GHOSH : Man has become worse, more selfish, both in India and in the Soviet Union as also in the capitalist countries. I can understand people in India becoming increasingly occupied with self-interest because we are building a capitalist society ; our socialist verbiage cannot hide it. When we find that the Soviet people have become more acquisitive and selfish, does this not show that the USSR, too, has been building the reverse of socialism ?

Intiaz has said that both modernism and socialism have failed. He takes modernism and socialism as two distinct categories, which these are not. Modernism is the over-riding ideology; capitalism and state-centred socialism are its two off-shoots with certain variations. The difference between capitalism and what is being paraded as socialism is superficial : their difference lies merely in the system of governance. They do not represent two different civilizational orders. Both American capitalism and Soviet socialism come under the same pattern of modernism. In my paper I have quoted Sakharov who is totally in agreement with this view. Between the Soviet Union and the USA, there is no qualitative difference in the concept of life-style or in the structure of core values. The life-style of both is wasteful of natural resources and the dominant values of both are authoritarian. Both aspire for the same kind of modernism and increasing complexities in every sphere. Their factory production processes are the same; chemicalised farming techniques the same; energy-use pattern the same; transportation patterns the same. Both seek to conquer nature; both tend to be more possessive. Both capitalism and Soviet socialism come under the same pattern of nature-conquering modernism. Both are bound to fail.

The defeat of Marxism was ensured the moment it was grafted on to what are euphemistically called "modern science and technology" and what in reality are fragmented science and life-destruction-oriented technology. This science and technology avowedly aim at conquering Nature. To many, this kind of science has become sacrosanct. In fact, this is fraught with utmost disaster and is going to prove a threat to our survival. It takes a little time to reveal its anti-life character but it is patently anti-poor and pro-elite from the start. Nature-manipulating technology serves the propertied classes and blurs inexpensive, natural solutions.

Now, I come to Subrata Babu's point that integration alone can enable mankind to realize to the full the benefits of science and technology. He seems to believe that prior integration is possible through the Soviet brand of socialism, even if the nature of science and technology remains what it is now. My contention is, with the given kind of science and technology, there will be increasing divisiveness between my neighbour and myself, between the rural rich and the rural poor, between the urban rich and the urban poor, between the town and the countryside and between the nations. Even if all the countries become converts to the prevailing pattern

of nature-conquering, reductionist science and technology, there will still be conflicts between the nations and accentuation of conflicts within the countries. The so-called modern science and technology are the bases of social imperialism. The integration that they promote is only at the superficial level, by forcing on everybody the outpourings of centralised media and affording the chances of mixing with other people through long-distance transport systems. But the substance of life withers under the impact of this kind of science and technology. The kind of industrialism that it breeds, the kind of commercialism that it injects in every sphere of life, the pauperisation of the masses that it creates, the destruction of native culture that it causes, serve only to disintegrate each society from within. What to talk of integrating mankind to reap their benefits ?

Integration requires a holistic philosophy and a holistic science. Reductionist science and nature-conquering technology run counter to the integrative principle. Let me clarify that holistic science does not demand dismantling of everything that reductionist science has built up. It considers the latter highly insufficient and misleading, particularly in respect of living systems—plant and animal kingdoms, soil systems with their teeming microbial population. Because this pattern of science lays utmost emphasis on piecemeal studies of minutest parts, it tends to disregard the integrative linkages; and its prescriptions disrupt ecological resources, i.e. the life-support system. Reductionist science and organismic science need to complement each other, for these two together make holistic science. But that kind of science is not being pursued today. Blind worship of fragmented science, which is dangerous to life processes, must stop. Reverence for this kind of science banishes the reverence for Nature. Without reverence for Nature, you cannot build a better society anywhere, let alone integrate mankind. One major reason for the failure of Soviet socialism is lack of this understanding.

Let us see what Nature is and why we must have reverence for its way of working. Nature is the sum of forces at work in the physical world—the sum of physical and biological processes. It is Nature which ordains the co-evolving of interrelated objects and their constituents. In Nature, if there is change in one thing, many other things change in adaptation. Can any human being, any scientist, ordain the change of so many things in automatic adjustment at the same time as Nature does ? No creature can do this. Hence reverence for Nature's order, for Nature's own way of working is the basic requirement. Unfortunately, the "modern scientists" are more eager to "manage" Nature than to understand Nature. Subrata Babu's integration of mankind is impossible of attainment without the cement, which the understanding of Nature's own technology alone can provide. Disrupt Nature's technology, and the relation between man and man will disintegrate. It is not in the interest of capitalists to recognise this. But the Marxists, too, are yet to grasp this.

Before I come to other points, I would like to dissociate myself with one observation of Pradip Babu. He says that the pace of Soviet economic decline since the mid-70s has been spectacular and that the EEC community which had been behind the Soviet Union in the sixties, is now far ahead of the Soviet Union. I would not like to judge any country's economic performance merely in terms of the rate of growth of GNP or per capita income. The armaments are considered a positive factor in GNP. These are regarded as income. Have I to conclude that a country producing larger scales of armaments and earning high incomes therefrom has made more progress in economic development? I would not like to pass a judgement on the level or rate of development without knowing the break-up of the GNP and the kind of benefits to the people.

Then, about Mr. Bose's other point regarding humanist values. When you affirm the prevalence of humanist values in western societies, should you overlook that these values are reserved for their countrymen? Their relations with the people of other countries are based on exploitation, through unequal exchanges. This kind of "humanism" which is based on increasing exports of arms and promoting quarrels between other countries to create larger and larger demands for armaments is perversion of humanism. Therefore, I will not concede that the West European societies are higher in the scale of human values.

Subrata Babu has said that without industrialisation the country remains backward and cannot stand up against highly industrialised countries. Yes, industrialisation is necessary. But of what type? The same types of industries which the West has promoted? Do we not need to judge which kinds of industries are to be promoted and which are to be avoided? And should the same high-entropy processes and the same scale be adopted? I can tell you that within a decade or so, you will find that this kind of industrialisation has become a source of disaster. Even the West will have to change their pattern. They are now in mortal fear of carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere. If we continue with this pattern, we will breathe only polluted air and drink undrinkable water. Will this give us strength? Can even the West survive on this pattern? The concept of development needs to be changed radically in favour of ecologically sound development.

I find that Pradip Babu and Subrata Babu, who differ vastly on their evaluation of the Soviet Union, agree on one point that this pattern of industrialisation on the Western model is desirable. I differ radically from this view. I call the Western type of development mal-development and I blame the USSR for having emulated this model without thinking independently about its own requirements. I partially concede that the Soviet Union's defence requirements deflected it from thinking originally. But

I also underline that the blinkers had their roots in Marx's and Lenin's theories. They did not have any idea that there could be some other kind of science, other kind of technology, other kind of industrial process or farming technology.

Dr. Jayashekar has rightly said that there cannot be a socialist man without socialist values. That is a point I would request Mr. Bardhan to see.

BARDHAN : I will answer that

GHOSH : In the Soviet Union, I find more of corruption, more black marketing, more of flattery and servility than we ever expected from a socialist society.

BARDHAN : Then you should have gone to America to see its scale. You can see it in India too.

GHOSH : I am not surprised at the enormity of corruption, black-marketing, sycophancy in India because here, under a peculiar mix of patterns, we are reaping the worst of both the worlds. But when you say that the Soviet Union is experimenting, you must say experiment on what premise, and for how long? Where is the spirit of inquiry to unravel how the concentration of combined political and economic power and the given pattern of science and technology are working?

I disagree with Dr. Jayashekar on one point. He is willing to trace the faults only to Stalin and Lenin but refuses to fault Marx on any count. Let me ask : is it correct to blame Stalin for everything? I agree that if Lenin had lived longer, he would have corrected many mistakes and many concepts. But we have to judge the theories as he left them. Stalin was no doubt hungry for power and he did not appreciate the importance that Lenin gave to worker-peasant alliance. But will you stop with these statements? Malkiniji says that if NEP (Lenin's New Economic Policy) had continued, things would have been better. Is it so simple? During the time that the NEP was in progress, was there not a growing enrichment of rich peasants at the expense of the poor farmers? Was there not pauperisation of the small producers and artisans while a few factories were flourishing? What was the light that Marxian theory shed on Stalin in this situation? Stalin had imbibed from Marx that peasants are basically reactionary and unreliable. He had also learnt from Marx that large-scale development of mammoth industries was the key to socialism. Therefore, if capital accumulation by oppressing the "reactionary" farmers appeared to him as a salvage operation, you cannot blame him alone without blaming the

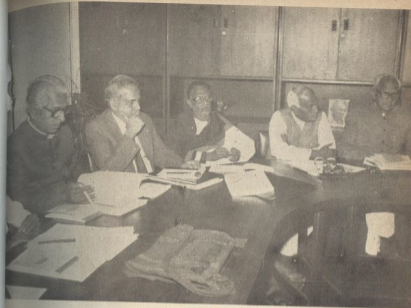
mentor. This reveals the disastrous consequences of lop-sided theory, particularly when the theory is treated as a sacred text.

Subrata Babu has said that Marx talked of base and superstructure but his basic concern was analysis of the capitalist economy. There is no disagreement on this point. There is also no disagreement on the point that Marx's basic trait was humanism. It is this humanism that inspired him to do all the painstaking analyses despite tremendous hardships. But it will be wrong to overlook a basic dichotomy in Marxian approach. Although humanism was his source of inspiration, he steadfastly avoided discussion of humanist ethics and also rejected Kantian concept of categorical imperatives. Presumably, he feared that talk of humanist ethics might lead to channels of metaphysics which he despised. He overlooked that avoidance of categorical imperatives could mean that there was no human ethics as such and that there was to be only class ethics. This could lead to monstrous misdeeds in the name of serving class interests. This loophole was the tragedy of Marx.

Subrata Babu has said that the black man enjoys dignity in the Soviet Union, unlike in the West. I agree. I have pointed out in my paper that in the Soviet Union there is much personal security from robbery, murder and rape for all except the political dissenters and that social security provisions are great. Hence there is no difference of opinion on this question. Subrata Babu has also said that during the war with the Nazis, there was no fifth column in the Soviet Union and that this itself proves that the people were happy. To this, I would say that the people are possibly happier than they had been under the Czarist regime. But this not saying much. Moreover, the nationalist spirit has been traditionally very strong in Russia.

PRADIP BOSE : The statement that there was no fifth column in the Soviet Union is incorrect. In Ukraine, there was a large population that worked as fifth column.

GHOSH : In any case, if the criterion of success is the absence of fifth column, this is a weak defence. In Islamic societies, where there is some kind of fanaticism, the fifth column is rare. But that does not prove that the people in Islamic countries are happy. □



Prof. M.L. Sondhi (extreme Left), inaugurating the discussion on "October Revolution and World Politics". Others seated (L to R) Dr. Jayashekar, Nagarajan, Nana Deshmukh and Bimal Prasad.

2. October Revolution and World Politics

DR. JAYASHEKAR (Chairman) : I thank you very much for giving me the honour to preside over this session.

As a former student of Prof. Sondhi, and now as his colleague and co-worker, I have always enjoyed his very scintillating presentation on many issues. It can be very provocative, very persuasive and extremely stimulating at the same time, on any issue which he is likely to focus.

With these few words, I would request Prof. M.L. Sondhi to make his presentation on "October Revolution and World Politics".

PROF. M.L. SONDHI : There can hardly be any doubt that the Russian Revolution was a historical catalyst. It explains the main characteristics of the Soviet political system and the monopolisation of power by the Communist Party. It generated an orientation which led to industrialisation and collectivisation of agriculture. It also provided a vision of a new social order which would reject the profit motive and provide the underpinning of human values and social justice. It is

equally clear, as Khrushchev and Gorbachev have pointed out, that in place of the expected humanisation of the social structure, it led to Stalin's bloody purges of the thirties. The rampant corruption in the Brezhnev era can hardly justify the official exaggerations and new myths about the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

It is futile to conceal the contradictory character of the Russian Revolution if we wish to understand its function in the historical context of world politics. For example reality lies in between the two extreme positions on the relationship of the Russian Revolution and the anti-imperialist struggle in what we nowadays call the Third World. There is no room for facile observations in favour of exaggerated claims of Soviet support to revolution in Third World societies if the polemical literature stimulated by M.N. Roy's attack on Lenin's draft thesis on the National and Colonial Questions is adequately studied. The exigencies of Soviet state interests, and not radical thought, have more often than not affected the outcome of Moscow's policy-making with regard to the national liberation movements.

We do not have the time to examine in elaborate detail the different outlooks of the contending forces which shaped the Comintern's strategies in various periods. How did it lurch erratically to the view that social democracy was equivalent to social fascism and created a trend which logically led to a rejection of collaborative action against the rising Nazi danger? Where does Georgi Dimitrov's thesis of the Popular Front against Fascism, presented at the 7th Comintern Congress in 1935, fit into the scheme of things in judging the fundamental issues of the impact of the Russian Revolution on world politics? The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact exploded on to the global consciousness in an extremely pernicious fashion, enabling Fascism to obtain substantive help from Communists in its onslaught in 1939. The expedient political compromise of the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact was a new development which was viewed with both curiosity and alarm. The policy dominated by pragmatism and cynicism was a far cry from the strategy which had inspired Popular Fronts in France and in the struggle to support the Spanish Republic against Franco's Fascists. Even to this day a debate continues to rage over Soviet responsibility for handing over many anti-fascist Germans, who had found asylum in Moscow, to Hitler's Gestapo.

How is one to interpret this example of questionable inconsistency on the part of a Government which claims to provide a high standard of guidance for revolutionary change in the world? Till Hitler attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, the Soviet leadership continued to adopt policies that explicitly supported the advancement of Germany's totalitarian

political power in European countries. It is necessary to draw attention to this experience as a general issue since it is often assumed in Third World countries that proletarian internationalism could be some sort of an international code in the world of global and regional political intrigues. There are, however, many intangibles in the scenarios in the power game between two power blocs. In spite of the Leninist criticism of the imperialist spheres of influence of western powers, the Soviet assessment of its own legitimate backyard is by no means free from presuppositions of international hierarchy. Apart from outright annexation and expansion, the Soviet Union can make Third World countries into pawns in its power game. With the multitude of links which Gorbachev and Reagan are promising to develop between the super-powers, the perplexities of the Third World may be compounded in their efforts to control the tensions of their global rivalry. We are familiar with the syndromes of ideological warfare and military build-ups in aggravating disputed international issues between India and Pakistan, Ethiopia and Somalia and of course North and South Korea. The political dangers of accommodation between the two super-power rivals for third countries may also prove to be fateful depending upon the changing constellation of political events and the practical impact of the state of Soviet-American relations.

Some of the dilemmas and challenges for the Third World states in the new world environment after the Gorbachev-Reagan summitry are illustrated in the examples of the countries of East Europe who were caught unprepared by the deeply ambivalent attitudes of the Russians and Germans during the ominous developments leading up to the Second World War. The ever present risk of nuclear war and the arms race have converted both the USA and the Soviet Union into "warfare states", although with varying styles of politics.

The entrepreneurial attitudes and practices of the United States have provided it with unique success in economic mobilisation for huge technological leaps. With the adoption of NSC-68 in 1949-50, the United States accepted the position that its military might was necessary for maintaining what can only be called an American imperial design. The Soviet Union with all its rhetoric of economic or social revolution, could only set itself the aim of military and political equality with the United States. Its attempt to compete on social, ideological and economic issues has remained till date highly problematical. Advocates of military power in the Soviet Union have to contend with the difficulties of harnessing the nation's economic power without exacerbating tensions over the Soviet citizen's well-being. In spite of the economic strains on the system and the uneven nature of scientific and technological advances, achieved so far, the Soviet leadership is determined not to lose whatever level of strategic

superiority it has gained. Soviet advocacy of arms control and its diplomacy for "peaceful coexistence" is revised as experience or new circumstances require. The emphasis on world public opinion is particularly important for the Soviets as they view the military and technological competition with the Americans in the complex decades ahead. There are persuasive reasons for the Russians to address themselves effectively to India as a country whose historical background has helped in developing attitudes and positions of other developing and non-aligned countries.

The United States not only seeks to mould the world in its image of *Pax Americana*, but also aims at imposing on the Soviet Union a competition based on its superior economic mobilisation process and the advanced state of U.S. military technology. The Reagan administration's huge military budget and its initial refusal to concede political parity to the Soviet Union undoubtedly heightened Soviet anxieties about Washington's crusade. Soviet vulnerability to Reagan's S. D. I. and the propagation of nuclear war-fighting strategic ideas among his advisers does not arise only in challenges in military competition. With serious and growing problems of productivity in the industrial sector and with the perennial difficulties of Soviet agriculture, Moscow is in no mood to take on the American competition with its ossified system of central planning. The key policy issues for Gorbachev are defined by this recognition of the failure of both Stalin's terror and Brezhnev's conservatism, and not by any predetermined views on the nature of the Russian Revolution expressed in Soviet history books. Gorbachev needs to generate political and economic policy alternatives which cannot be derived from existing approaches to the study of the 1917 Revolution. Broadly speaking there is the traditional adulatory approach of the Soviet writers on the one hand and the western writing on the Russian Revolution and civil war of 1917-21. I think, we in India need to add a whole new dimension to our understanding of the Russian Revolution. Surprisingly very little attention has been paid to the rich insight offered by the Indian philosopher, the late Basant Kumar Mallik. His observations can help us to see beyond theories and models which are restricted by the belief that the Russian Revolution was a European Revolution. As Mallik has pointed out, some aspects of Soviet reality cannot be fully grasped without excluding a Eurocentric approach and by examining the values and norms of a society very similar to India's group society.

To quote Mallik: "Most of the men who have written on Russia have come to the conclusion that the Russian Revolution was part of a European Revolution. Recently Laski has come out with a strong claim that the Russian Revolution is part of a European Revolution. I conclude that even the Webbs and Maynard, both very great authorities, think this.

I believe they are mistaken. We have to ask, first, is it a Revolution at all? And second, has it to be European?"

Mallik answered the first question in the affirmative and then proceeded to discuss the adequacy of the evidence that the leaders of the Russian Revolution had been influenced by European thinkers like Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke and Marx and by the Paris Commune. He pointed out that the Russian Revolution could only be understood in terms of Russian history, and he developed his argument in the following words: "In Marxist doctrine, the Party is the elect; it embodies or lives the ideal, or conscience, or it may be described as the soul or essence of socialism. They could never go wrong. One comes across a similar notion in the Catholic Church. The Hindus are also held together by the ideal, or Code or Dharma. There are people who interpret the code by guiding and controlling. The element of mysticism can be found in all these cases. Lenin combined that notion with the Soviet, the village community. This is an idea of a community founded on groups. You are not dealing with individual decisions, or with a whole State in terms of individuals, but in terms of communes or *Mirs*. The essential feature is the corporate sense. After the leaders came back to Russia, they came into the Russian atmosphere, and if the success of the Revolution was due to the co-operation of the peasants, the peasants were stimulated by the history of Russia, which was the history of the *Mir*. This was the people's contribution to the Revolution."

Viewed from a Mallikean perspective, it is not the Soviet Unions' relentless march to its "socialist" destiny and pursuit of interlocking strategic and ideological objectives that can provide a comprehensive description of the theoretical and political significance of the Russian Revolution. The searching questions have not been provided by those western analysts who see the Russian Revolution as an unfinished project of western-inspired human emancipation. The interpretative material on the Russian Revolution should be tackled from the viewpoint of an enquiry into the nature of the Russian social organisation, and the ability of traditional structures to absorb novel and modern ideas.

Our point of departure is that both the capitalist demonologists and communist apologists have presented models of the Russian Revolution which are flawed. Mallik's plea for transferring the focus away from the European context to the Russian people has far-reaching consequences. We can now raise questions grounded in the primacy of the Russian national experience and avoid grave misperceptions about the Soviet Union. If we start with Mallik's view that the Russian tradition of the *Mir* is interwoven into the very fabric of Soviet behaviour, although it is suppressed

by the coercive Marxist system, we may develop an Indian approach to the Russian Revolution with far-reaching implications for the future development of India's relations with the Soviet Union.

Ever since the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956 and Khrushchev's speech denouncing Stalin, the communist elites in the Soviet Union are facing a great dilemma in relating their political culture to the basic human needs of the Russians and other nationalities. The theories and practices which they have inherited have been merely suppressing human problems and have not led to either prosperity or to freedom. The issue that requires attention is not whether the 1917 Revolution has been successful or unsuccessful in strengthening socialism, or whether it has created a society which is rich or poor in material terms. The task is to locate the real sources of discontent in the Russian individual and to analyse at the group level why Russian society remains disharmonious after six decades of the Revolution.

The Soviet philosophy of politics and war and the western theories of the mellowing of the Soviet power both are confused and inconsistent attempts to fit Russian experience into the clichés of international politeness. Hopefully it will be the task of Indian scholars, following the insights of Basanta Kumar Mallik, to explicate the role of Soviet power in the world community as a logical extension of the social environment at home. Gorbachev has not gone beyond a description of the way in which the reform-minded can come together against the conservative opposition. If he really cares for Russia's future he would have to provide the meaning of a new self-awareness which would lead to a new ethos of social responsibility. The disillusionment of the Soviet intelligentsia is too deep for it to be removed by just three slogans: *glasnost*, *perestroika* and *novoye myshleniye*. A powerful moral vision, like Mahatma Gandhi's, must be added to Gorbachev's "new thinking".

There is considerable confusion that currently prevails in the Soviet Union on the directions in which to look for new answers. In an effort to overcome ideological myopia, an effort is being made to encapsulate earlier thinking in Gorbachev's slogans. His speeches have unleashed a lively public debate and it is not surprising that Nikolai Bukharin's name is coming back. Bukharin was strongly involved in arguing for concessions to the peasantry and his economic vision favoured a balanced exchange between the peasant economy and the socialist industry. Utilising the coercive power of the state, Stalin wanted accelerated industrialisation by imposing harsh tributes on the rural countryside. Bukharin's central contention, for which he had ultimately to pay with his life, was more closely related to

the organic reality of Russian society than those dogmas which created the terrible legacy which Gorbachev is trying to overcome.

The dictatorial methods of government have deep historical roots in Russia but the "dictatorship of the proletariat" has produced attributes of political power which accentuate the role of misperception and false images. Gorbachev has now exposed the manner in which the liberalisation process initiated by Khrushchev at the 20th Congress of the CPSU was obstructed and reversed by those who were threatened by the progressive social forces.

No aspect of Soviet experience has been so distorted as the military build-up following the conservative reaction to the Hungarian and Polish restiveness in the late fifties and the further militaristic drive by the hard-liners following Khrushchev's ouster.

While intensifying mistrust with the other super power and with China, the crucial military decisions have not helped Soviet leaders to transcend the constraints they wished to overcome. Although Soviet military-strategic policies have had widespread repercussions after the end of the Second World War, on the whole the Soviets have failed to convert their military power and military preparedness into political advantage in determining the future of world order. Even though Soviet Union's international position has become more stable and secure, yet thanks to mechanisms like the Brezhnev Doctrine, and by finding victims of aggression in Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan, Moscow has time and again thrown away its diplomatic advantages.

As a result of my personal experience in Czechoslovakia, I can testify to the frustration that Soviet militarism has created for Soviet policymakers by undermining the moral dimension of Soviet foreign policy by actions which were neither politically nor strategically necessary. Although Dubcek and the Prague Spring were snuffed out, yet they clearly demonstrated that the existing Soviet regime was not the model for the future. There is an element of hypocrisy in Soviet protestations against the politics of hysteria in America when they have been unable to avoid the recurrence of Himalayan blunders like Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan.

The Third World would be profoundly mistaken if it took the promised Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan as the end of the matter as far as Soviet interventionism is concerned. The image of the meeting between Brezhnev and Kissinger sharing jokes in Moscow at a time when the Americans were mining the Haiphong harbour, is engraved upon the collective memory of people in Asia. As time goes on, what kind of policy

will the Soviets evolve for the Third World? We know that after having valiantly advocated the likelihood of political transition to socialism along the non-capitalistic path of development, Khrushchev gave up his earlier optimism about a common destiny of the Soviet Union and the developing countries. The legacy of Brezhnev's Third World policy is in many ways contradictory. In Gorbachev's case there is hardly any doubt that his Third World policy can only be understood within the wider context of his negotiations on major Soviet-American conflicts. Random statements cannot be pressed too far, but foreign Minister Shchervnadze's remarks that the Soviets intend to enter into lot of economic agreements with the Western world and could not allow their domestic growth to be hostage to some one or two states elsewhere, show that henceforth Soviet-Third World relations will be developed under the shadow of Soviet agreements with the West.

We should welcome the fact that we may be entering a period of declining East-West tensions as the second detente develops between Gorbachev and Reagan. It is equally necessary that Indian policy should not be based on illusions. We should learn to discriminate among the various aspects of Soviet economic, social and political behaviour and the various diplomatic solutions offered to us by Moscow. While recognising the Soviet Union as a friendly power, we should not hesitate to discern the weaknesses in the Soviet planning system, a system in which the emphasis has been on quantity and not on quality. We should also have a realistic understanding of the anti-democratic attitudes which have been generated by the failure to implement Soviet economic reform over the decades. At present in the name of Indo-Soviet friendship, both official and academic circles in India tend to turn a deaf ear to the criticism of political and economic immobilism which has overtaken Soviet society. There are hardly any Indian studies focussing on the abuse of power and the absence of civil liberties in the Soviet Union. From the standpoint of the Indian revolutionary tradition, uncritical acceptance of the revolutionary quality of the 1917 Revolution cannot provide an adequate analytical picture. To the extent to which human dimensions have not fared well, it must be admitted that the Soviet experience has counter-revolutionary ingredients. With his monstrous crimes, Stalin's repressive leadership cannot serve but to remind us of the wisdom of Gandhiji's insistence that that society is governed best which is governed the least. The continuing shortages, imbalances and disequilibria in the Soviet economy and the ruthless pursuit of corrupt practices shows that the so-called leading role of the Party has produced a monolithic political system but one in which there is an unnatural suppression of innovation. The result is that the Soviet economy is unable to produce enough consumer goods for the internal market and cannot offer industrial and consumer goods which are attractive to buyers in the world market.

The world is watching with interest whether Gorbachev succeeds in breaking the vicious incidence of the controlling power from above. Evasive manoeuvres will not help unless the Party gives up its divine right to be the ultimate economic decision-maker and accepts genuine democratisation. Similarly the dogma that "individual labour is not legitimate" has worked havoc in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. I know from my observation in Czechoslovakia that the replacement of the market system by administrative regulation and the refusal to allow private enterprise even on a small scale, thwarted the cohesiveness and progressive energy of the Czechoslovak people. Similarly the collectivisation of the countryside has destroyed the initiative of family farmers. Anyone with a reasonable understanding of the Soviet economy can see that the sacrosanct principles inherited from the 1917 Revolution beginning with the fundamental principle of party control of the economy, are the root cause of the deep structural malformations in the Soviet system. The concepts guiding Gorbachev's economic reforms, however, do not extend to any challenge to the hard reality of party control.

Seen over the time span since Gandhiji's movement for Swaraj developed and the Soviet Union set on its "revolutionary" course, the Indian and Soviet experiences can be usefully compared. Swaraj can be understood as "self-legitimation". Gandhiji's effort was to stabilise influences in Indian society and polity which would bring the masses into the decision-making process as and when foreign rule ended. There is a good deal of empirical evidence that within limits the Indian experiment in parliamentary democracy has been relatively successful. In trying to explain the difficulties of the Gorbachev era we can point to the different political praxis initiated by the Russian Revolution which makes Swaraj or self-legitimation an incomparably more difficult process for the Russians of today. How will Gorbachev solve his problem of self-legitimation, and can he discard the historical baggage of Lenin's works on the political organisation of the Soviet state? Will the Soviet military tolerate him? Will Gorbachev be able to solve the problem of Soviet agriculture?

In trying to explain the difficulties faced by the Soviets and looking at the new tactics and strategies of the new Soviet leadership, we can discover many ideas and findings which are relevant to the macro-political analysis of India. The Indian Revolution has provided us with a historical consciousness and given us self-legitimation as a cultural phenomenon. Soviet apologists have painted too idyllic a picture of the democratic heritage of the Russian Revolution. Unfortunately the Soviet polity is not oriented to serve the interests of the masses. The structure which was intended to serve the need of primary industrialisation has abjectly failed to produce a vigorous industrial democracy. The influx of western technology cannot overcome the deep distrust of parliamen-

tary democracy in the Soviet Union. Can India help Russia to overcome the Soviet distaste for Democracy? The Soviet Union is likely to remain a permanent factor in Indian foreign policy. So far we have followed a haphazard policy of getting Soviet help for the Indian political establishment in return for a blind support to the administrative bureaucracy which has resisted structural changes in the Soviet Union.

Up till now India appears to have drawn a sharp distinction between the external and internal aspects of Soviet reality. A new discussion should now emerge on the impact of domestic factors in Indo-Soviet collaboration for the future. New Delhi should eschew simplistic posturing and try to achieve a multi-dimensional evaluation of the Soviet Union's performance at home and abroad. In certain areas Indian norms and practices are vastly superior to what the Soviet Union offers and there should be no hesitation in demanding that the Soviets implement international norms in the field of human rights, for example.

It is pertinent to add a few words about the role of culture. The spiritual malaise associated with both Soviet and American societies has dangerous implications for their control over world-wide communications systems. Care must be taken by India to define strictly the situations of potential Indo-Soviet reciprocity. There is no reason why India should accept the concept of Soviet political domination anywhere in the Third World. Nor should the Soviet Union be a political example for India to follow. It may be useful in Gorbachev's tenure to start a new Indo-Soviet dialogue on the contributions the Indian and Russian Revolutions might make to a peaceful world order. Someone in India should remind Gorbachev of the following words of the great Russian thinker, Michael Bakunin :

"It is absolutely necessary for any country wishing to join the free federation of people, to replace its centralised, bureaucratic and military organisations, by a federalist organisation based on the absolute liberty and autonomy of regions, provinces, communes, associations and individuals."

BARDHAN : Mr. Chairman, after the really very interesting talk that was given just now, I will try to make a few points. I hope I will be permitted if I touch upon something which was even said earlier. In fact, in some way or the other, they have come up again and again.

Firstly, I agree with him and I say, that as a communist, I do not feel that the Soviet Union is a model in that sense of the term. The October Revolution is not a model for the Indian Revolution, nor is the Chinese Revolution a model for us. That stage, when people talked about models and all that, is now over. The world has gone ahead and the one thing, which binds us, as far as we are concerned, to the Soviet

Union, are the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, as we understand them, the goal of socialism, the aim of peace. Nothing else binds us, because every country has to find its own path, naturally according to the genius of its own people, according to its own history, traditions, characteristics and circumstances. There is no denying it.

I do not think that the Soviet communists, the Soviet Party, lost its leadership because of mistakes, which it had made with regard to Yugoslavia, or say with regard to Albania or China; nothing of that sort. The question of one Communist Party and, obviously, in this case, it means the CPSU, being the leader of the World Communist Movement, had ceased much earlier. That is one of the reasons why the Communist International was dissolved. The world had become complex. Situations in countries required deep analysis by the parties there. By and large, most of the parties had matured. They did not require any direction from one centre.

The last time, the Indian Communists, I am saying it with great responsibility, the last time, the Indian communists sought any guidance from the Soviet Party was in 1950. Stalin was alive, and mind you, if I tell you what guidance Stalin gave, you will revise some of your opinions about him. He told us: "Why are you continuing the Telangana struggle? You cannot make a revolution like that. Go into elections, try to win over the masses. Have a programme. Without a Party programme, you cannot go forward from day to day; you will be tossing about in the sea." But that was the last time.

ONE VOICE : How about their seeking you out to advise you?

BARDHAN : No, let us be fair to them. They are more occupied with many other things than trying to guide the various Communist parties, least of all the Indian Communist Party because they are really very much worried about their relations with the Indian Government, for various reasons, like Peace. (Laughter)

NAGARAJAN : Protection to the Communist Party will help?

A VOICE : To an extent, the Communist Party should help.

BARDHAN : You will remember, one of the topmost leaders of the Communist International, none other than Palmiro Togliatti, wrote the thesis about poly-centrism, saying precisely this thing. He was one of the topmost leaders, second only to Dimitrov, and he was the man, who wrote that "communist movement cannot be guided by one centre. It is polycentrism today."

After the Chinese Revolution, they in China experimented with the Leap Forward; they experimented with the people's communes. They had to abandon all that. And as the great Chinese Party has admitted, all these subjective attempts to force the pace of social change, actually put them back by more than 2-3 decades. You cannot force the pace of social change like that; you cannot skip over many stages of development, which alone can ultimately bring you to socialism.

Therefore, I do not see anything wrong in correcting the mistakes. Revision and reform are going on, and will have to go on. That need not bring us to the conclusion that this is back-sliding. This is not back-sliding. This is taking into account the objective reality, and the fact that social development is a much more complex phenomenon.

Then, I also think that there was a very relevant question, which you raised about excessive reliance on the State and whether it delivers the goods. Obviously, it does not deliver the goods. Excessive reliance on the State only brings about two things—greater bureaucratisation and over-centralisation. Lenin had talked about it. He had continuously warned us against bureaucratisation, even under socialism and that, therefore, it has to be fought. Stalin forgot these behests of Lenin about fighting bureaucratisation. It is the initiative of the masses—and when we talk of mass initiative, obviously it is the mass initiative of the working people, in the first place—which will deliver the goods. If we see anything in the Soviet Union, it is that they have corrected themselves, whenever they have gone back to the working people, and posed their problems before them in a frank spirit, the spirit which we observe today.

I do not think that the answers have been found, but they have gone back to the working people and by going back to them, they are trying to harness the mass initiative of the people. A question had been put to Khrushchev by some of the fraternal communist parties, whether it was necessary in the 20th Congress to come out with all that denunciation of Stalin. The only explanation that was given, was that unless we get over all these inhibiting factors, it will not be possible for us to unleash the initiative of the masses, on which we rely for any further advance. That is why all these things had to be overcome. It is in that sense that I talked about the revolution advancing by criticising itself. It is not in the sense of finding scapegoats. Maybe, some scapegoats are also found; there is no doubt about it. Sometimes we also feel that somebody is being made a scapegoat. But unless we criticise, unleash mass initiative, there is no going forward.

So, ultimately, the society, the mass, the working people, the individual. In the final analysis it is he who will bring about any social change, and it is he whose energies have to be mobilised.

Now comes the question of science and technology, nature and man, and the inter-relationship between these forces. I do not think that the communists are guilty of absolutising science and technology in that sense, viz. that it is above criticism; it is the new God that has got to be worshipped and so on. Or that science and technology will achieve everything. By no means. In fact, I think Subrata was very clear when he said that it is not by trying to attack nature or fighting against nature, it is by appreciating nature, adapting yourself to the laws of nature, that you can bring about certain change and, in this sense, science and technology also have to operate within certain limits. For instance, science and technology is quite capable today of turning the rivers that flow North in the Soviet Union, and making them flow South, an idea with which the Soviet Union was toying for quite long, thinking that by that way, they will irrigate the deserts. But they have now abandoned it. They have cancelled it, because it has been pointed out and well argued, that this will upset the balance of nature and the ecology, not only of the Soviet Union, but also of many other countries of the world. After all, these rivers flow into the Arctic Ocean, which is shared by many other countries. What I mean is that Marxism-Leninism looks at science and technology from the point of view of the unity of man and nature. Nature has to be changed and all the resources which nature has given, have to be utilised properly. Therefore, it is not a question of science and technology being worshipped.

Now, some things have been said about the original sin, viz. the leading role of the Party. I think there has been some confusion about it and we have criticised ourselves for that. For instance, the leading role of the Communist Party has come to mean that the Communist Party can, therefore, dictate what ought to be written, what ought not to be written, what sort of dances and what sort of music there should be. One can recall the Zhadnov report on Music and Art and Literature, in which it looked as if the Communist Party was setting down a line on all these things.

This is, of course, not possible. The leading role of the Communist Party is meant in a very particular sense, in the sense of organising all the forces of society for bringing about a change, for bringing about a revolution, and consummating it. The leading role is exercised in the strategic sense, not in the tactical sense. It is said in the sense of working out the entire strategy of revolution that without such a strategy, you will just be drifting about, here and there.

So, it is in the strategic sense that the leading role is conceived of, and not in the tactical sense, as if you can direct everything, from day to

day. Nowadays efforts are being made to see that the leading role of the party does not intrude itself in the work of Government from day to day, because in that case government itself becomes an adjunct of the Party and even elected representatives cease to have any meaning. It is being done in China; it is being done in the Soviet Union.

Now though I have understood and appreciated many things that were said by Prof. Sondhi, I have not been able to understand one thing which he said about corruption, for instance. Corruption, he said, will not take place in a free society. Thereby it seems he traces the root cause of corruption to a closed society, a society where there is no glasnost, a society where corruption does not come out in the open. I think that is not a sufficient explanation, because presuming that the American society in that sense is an open society, there ought not to be any corruption. If I have understood him wrongly, I would be glad to be corrected.

SONDHI : I did not mean that.

BARDHAN : I was only trying to point out, for instance, that American society, that way is a very open society. One might criticize American society for twenty other evils, but certainly not for closedness and yet, what is the level of corruption, what is the scale of corruption, in that society ! Nothing gets done in America without commissions and kick-backs. They think commissions are legitimate. Even to pay a Japanese Prime Minister for selling Lockheed.

SONDHI : I want to clarify. I was referring to the competition between the two giants, America and Russia, and the result is that it induces corruption in the world system.

BARDHAN : In that case, I need not labour that point. But since corruption has come up again and again and corruption is being discussed both in the Soviet Union and outside, I should like to say that one must have a sense of proportion about it. Corruption is very much talked about in the Soviet Union because the Soviet socialist society is expected to be a non-corrupt society. It is being talked about not because in the Soviet Union, we have more corruption than in America or Britain, or for that matter, the Indian society that we see today. Well, nothing here gets done without payment. One had expected that under socialism, corruption ought not to be there, when there is no money power. It is a case of loss of illusions. Therefore, we are going about it. Corruption has to be fought and corruption is being fought in the Soviet Union. I do not think corruption is being fought in that way in other countries.

Now something about Bukharin and Dubcek. I would like to join issue here. The attempt that is being made in the Soviet Union, I think, is a good attempt. It is to rehabilitate them in the sense that the accusation about their being enemies of the people, spies, agents of imperialist powers were all wrong, highly derogatory, considering the role that they had played in the course of the Revolution. In that sense, the rehabilitation is right. But I do not think that the Soviet Party thinks that Bukharin was right in his slogan about enriching the peasants and counterposing it to collectivisation—or in his under-estimation of the role of industrialisation in the Soviet Union during the First Five Year Plan and after. If you have read the Report of Gorbachev to the 70th Anniversary, you will see that he has tried to put all these things objectively. In that sense Bukharin was certainly wrong. What heavy price would the Soviet Union have paid had the Soviet Union not rapidly built its industrial might ? The answer to that is that it would not have been able to face the fascist offensive, or won the Great Patriotic War. It would not have emerged victorious at all. After all, life is the best proof—whether certain things were right or not.

ONE VOICE : The dispute is not with existence.

BARDHAN : I am saying that what is said about rehabilitation of Bukharin was not in the sense of endorsing his policies.

The same about Trotsky. Trotsky did play a great role during the revolution in the initial stages. But when a man starts doubting whether socialism can be built in one country—in Russia after 1917—then a line has to be drawn.

Then about Dubcek. The trouble about Dubcek was not that he talked about socialism with a human face. That can certainly be accepted. The trouble was that Dubcek lost control over his own party. The trouble was that there was ideological subversion going on within the entire party. The trouble certainly was that if Czechoslovakia was to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact, then the consequences would have been grave. Just as speaking even from the Indian point of view, I would be very suspicious if tomorrow suddenly Nepal and China, or Nepal and USA, for instance, have a treaty of mutual security and mutual help and all that sort of thing. I will start wondering what all that is about. In that confrontation during the cold war, Czechoslovakia going out of the Warsaw Pact and the Party Leadership adopting a resolution—and, mind you, Dubcek was not in favour of that resolution; but that only shows that here was a General Secretary who could not control even his own Party—that would have meant the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia itself. I therefore think that the problem was not socialism with a human face. The problem was whether Dubcek would have remained in charge, whether the Party could remain in control of Czechoslovakia.

Now, I thought I should refer to all these questions. Otherwise many of the things which Prof. Sondhi has said, are generally acceptable.

ASHOK MODAK : Mr. Chairman, Prof. Sondhi referred to the concept of unity of for East European countries which, to my mind, Gorbachev has almost rejected. Let me refer to the relationship between Moscow and France. Can it be considered as acceptable, keeping aside other things? I also want to make some other comments. I feel that the Soviet Union is definitely good, if not as a close relative, certainly as a distant relation.

I will give two or three examples. I can refer to the episode of nationalisation of Suez Canal in 1956. At that time, Egypt did enjoy some advantages and benefits because of Soviet support.

Then India definitely enjoyed Soviet support, whenever a threat arose on the issues of Goa or Kashmir or Bangladesh. But the thing is whether during the period of Brezhnev, a kind of pressure was put on India—that is the most crucial issue. I will be happy if persons like Comrade Bardhan clarifies this thing. Three or four issues come to my mind. Number one, you can say, the whole idea regarding the Indian ocean, and I think there was a very distinct difference between the Soviet approach on the one hand and the approach adopted by India on the other. While the Soviet Union probably wanted that India should condemn only American military bases, India condemned both, the military bases of America as well as the military activity of the Soviets. So, I just want to know, I will be happy if a sort of clarification is given, whether a kind of pressure was put by the Soviet leaders on that particular issue.

Secondly, that was the stand of the Soviet Union when Sikkim was annexed. Because there were some rumours at the time.

Thirdly, the Soviet Union's stand regarding the McMahon Line. Shri I.K. Gujral himself has stated in one of his articles that from 1956 onwards, the Soviet Union has been publishing Maps of India, and on many occasions, the maps published by the Soviet Union proved to be rather mischievous. They did not do justice to the boundaries of India. Of course, whenever things were brought to the notice of the Soviet Union, some corrections were definitely made, but I am still not aware of the stand of the Soviet Union regarding Siachin, regarding the location of the McMahon Line. That is issue number 3.

And lastly, quite a few experiments have been undertaken for improving the economic relations between Soviet Union and India, particularly during the visit of Brezhnev to India in 1973 or so, a kind of dialo-

gue took place, debate took place. I am eager to know what happened later on.

I want to make two simple observations. The over-all picture of Indo-Soviet relations is undoubtedly good for India. India has definitely enjoyed quite a few remarkable benefits, advantages, and that way, I repeat Soviet Union is definitely a good distant relative for all the under-developed countries. However, on some issues at micro-level, there are some tensions, strains. Anyway, as we are here and a very free and frank discussion is taking place, I think time is appropriate to get or to seek a kind of clarification.

NAGARAJAN : One problem is troubling my mind. When we discuss problems concerned with social sciences, the epistemological question becomes a very serious one. The kind of honesty, disinterestedness and dispassionateness that are necessary or just enough in the field of physical sciences are totally insufficient even to grasp the truth in the realm of social sciences. This was pointed out long back by Frederick Engels himself when he criticised economists like Adam Smith and Mill. He said that their basic defect was their dishonesty. Let me make myself clearer.

To be a top class or even competent physical scientist or a mathematician, the following qualifications are not essential. One need not be compassionate, charitable, considerate, tolerant, lovable or honest, and good to others. Secondly, the following traits are *no disqualification*. One can very well be a rascal, scoundrel, murderer, fraud, pilferer, inhuman, shameless, pimp or a prostitute. *The most essential qualifications* are just the following : one should be clever, observant, careful in one's work, diligent, efficient, imaginative and well informed in one's own field of work. In these physical sciences, the term 'good' can have no other meaning except quite able and intelligent. That is the reason why today many top scientists are prepared to utter palpable lies and we have many such people amidst the "galaxy" of Indian scientists.

On the other hand to be a good economist, sociologist, anthropologist or historian, a medicine man or even an engineer, the most essential qualification is tremendous amount of honesty of a very high order where one should be prepared to lay down one's life gladly for the sake of one's fellow-beings. One who creates artefacts affects the lives of thousands of people. When we talk of Einstein or Planck as great physicists, we are not in the least thinking about their humanist qualities because these have no relevance to the quality of their ethics. But when we discuss Marx or Mill as an economist or social critic, we definitely have at the back of our minds (we may not state it very explicitly) their ethics because their sociology

or economics are really reflections of their humanism or lack of it. We are not merely thinking of their technical competence.

Hence, Benjamin Farrington was very correct in his statement, "When the political consequences become apparent, there is a half-conscious reluctance to pursue the logic."

Now, my point is, when we are talking about Soviet Union today, the basic standpoint has to be concern for the people. Only then, we can understand what is happening in the Soviet Union and what relevance it has for us. If you do not have love for the people, then your data are of no use to me. Even the altering of data or their abuse is commonplace. That is why I insist on the methodology, and the yardstick, to assess social science and social phenomena.

ONE VOICE : Don't we need a yardstick for natural sciences ?

NAGARAJAN : In biological sciences also, that compassion is absolutely essential. Otherwise, you cannot be an ecologist at all.

ANOTHER VOICE : Compassion in science ?

NAGARAJAN : Generally there are three positions. The imperialist philosophy is wedded to the goal—"Mama jana Sukhina Bhavantu—let only my people be happy. There is another position—'Sarvejana Sukhina Bhavantu'—Let all human beings be happy. The third position is : 'Loka Sanstha Sukhina Bhavantu'—Let all in the whole universe be happy.

If the health and happiness of everything and everybody is the goal, we have to see that the atmosphere is healthy, the water is healthy, the soil is healthy and the nexus of insects and micro-organisms is healthy, for only then I can be healthy. If these things are destroyed, I will be destroyed. Therefore, even if the purpose be limited to ensuring merely the happiness of the human species, you have to go beyond man-centred humanism. Unfortunately, this dimension was absent in Marx.

The point is, our science and technology would have to be conducive to other creatures and things.

BARDHAN : Interaction with Nature should be such that Nature also is safeguarded.

NAGARAJAN : Nature is the mother. In Darwinism, Nature was conceived as the cruel father. Engels' approach, too, was the same. Marx's

was a purely rationalist approach. Love did not have a central place in his scheme of things, leave alone love for other species or reverence for Nature. As one who has been working inside the communist movement, I have been seeking a correction of this imbalance.

BARDHAN : I want to refer you to only two things. One is Marx's writings on primitive accumulation. Could anybody without deep love for mankind, write it ? The other is Volume No. III of *Das Kapital*, where he is speaking about agriculture and where chapter after chapter is written about the whole cycle of Nature. The man who is writing this, does he not have some feeling for Nature ? Is this the writing of a person who is out to rape Nature ?

NAGARAJAN : Marx's humanism is unquestioned. Yet, his philosophical approach is a masculine approach. I come from a "Prapatti"-tradition where the feminine approach is dominant. The woman's love for the child is unconditional and absolute. Father's love for the son is always conditional.

A VOICE : The relevance of this is not yet clear.

GHOSH : What he is trying to convey is this. According to him, Marx himself was a supremely ethical person. But in his writings, he had bypassed the question of ethics. He no doubt had great concern for the welfare of mankind but it was like father's love, in which justice and retribution had the central role. The concept of "winning by love" was absent in his scheme of things. Love as an end in itself was absent in Marx. Reverence, yes reverence for Nature, was outside the bounds of his rigid rationalism.

NAGARAJAN : I, as a Communist, am criticising the Soviet Union, its policies, and its pattern of civilization. My vision of a desirable society is very different from that of the leaders who have been ruling the Soviet Union over the last several decades. For they have rejected the essence of Marxism. For me, the essence of Marxism can be summed up in a single sentence—namely, the product is related to the producer: under an exploitative system, there is alien relationship between the two; the task is to change the relationship. You cannot change this relationship without production. You become human because of this production. You cannot achieve optimum production without becoming human. Therefore, the test which inevitably needs to be applied in every situation is : what is the relation between the product and the producer ? If the relation is hostile, then, you are struggling in the house, in the nation, and between the nations. The harmonious relation-

ship has to be established between you and the product, the being and the non-being, the subject and the object. So, I see freedom or unfreedom in these relationships. Now, what kind of relationship obtains in the Soviet Union?

The Soviet Union is concerned with machines, not the people so much. It pursues technologies which have their own momentum and which reduce people to mere cogs in these machines. This is not the right technology for man. Here man is for the technology. This is a genre of technology which makes man subservient to machines. It seeks to conquer Nature and ends up by conquering the vast masses of people for servitude to a few. It destroys man's soul. It destroys Nature—and, hence, man and all living species, which are parts of Nature. When this kind of technology is in operation, superficial efforts in the name of ecological restoration of nature, are just feeble counter-measures, merely to console one's conscience.

Unfortunately, it was Lenin who had imported from the USA concepts of efficiency, Taylorism etc. Of course, man's control over the machine remains very much as a slogan. Actually man loses control in this kind of production process itself when rapacious technology of this nature is enthroned. The introduction of such technology is real revisionism. This is replacement of Marx's humanism by machinism. We all have to be concerned about it because the USSR and the USA, as worshippers of this kind of machines, are taking the Soviet people and the whole world to a dangerous path. Billions of people are going to die if things go on like that.

There is a different kind of proletarian approach towards Marx. Marx had said that without sufficient material basis there cannot be a new society. In China's Yenan, for twenty years, the material basis was laid for a new kind of society. Yenan was no big state but its potential was large. This was a remarkably egalitarian society: the potential for a new society matured here. It was not based on very large industries. The Western kind of technology was not regarded as the determining factor, nor did it decide its fate. The so-called superior technology was defeated by native technology because ultimately man is superior, not the machines. When man is not overcome by the dehumanising process initiated and powered from within his own ranks, he wins over the machines. That is why Mao said the Atom Bomb is a paper tiger: machines would not be decisive. If you go to manufacture bombs to decide the nation's destiny or the course of history, the whole attitude changes, the position gets reversed. That is asking man to surrender to the machine. A country that depends on the solidarity and iron will of man can defeat the machine. This was shown by Vietnam and, previously, by the forces which had their base in Yenan. The lessons from Yenan experience were as follows:

(i) No need for fast production; (ii) Reject the idea of priority to heavy industries at all costs; (iii) There should be a clear definition of human needs; (iv) A recycling economy is a must. The wasteful "throw-away economy" must be avoided; (v) A radically new strategy of defence, where arms are not decisive—that is a must; (vi) A new kind of State which does not produce a coercive bureaucratic apparatus has to emerge; (vii) A new kind of party with a humanist ethics at its core must be nurtured; (viii) Trade cannot be essential, or even a very important, aim of production.

Of course, the State has to have armed forces. But when you exaggerate the importance of arms to the extent of belittling the importance of human freedom, happiness and unity, you undermine the very basis of defence. Great truths are paradoxical. There are opposing statements of truth. Both are limited truths. When you see each in its proper aspect and see also its limitations, you follow dialectics truly. But when you exaggerate the one or the other aspect, you convert both into untruths. Undue exaggeration of every limited truth turns into its exact opposite. That is what the Soviet Union is doing. In this, the USA has become its *guru* (mentor). The kind of technology path, which West Europe and the USA charted, has become Russia's path also.

Exaggerating one aspect and overlooking another aspect, is not devotion to truth. Our Dr. Radhakrishnan quoted Lenin to say: "All countries are influenced by socialism but all countries need not reach socialism by the same path." This portion he quoted correctly. But he did not quote the next sentence which read as follows: "But no country will reach socialism without the establishment of proletarian regime." This is Radhakrishnan's garbled truth. Likewise, the Soviet Union, too, had, and is having, its garbled truth. Marx and Lenin had envisioned the smashing of bourgeois state to create a new kind of state. True, they did not leave any guidelines for the new kind of state. But there was no scope for any doubt that in that kind of state, the coercive element has to be the lowest. But the Soviet Union's coercion of the people has been at its highest. This is no socialism. In this machinist path, the soul of socialism has been sold.

True, it is very difficult to handle the delicate balance between man and machine. These are the two factors generating contradictions i.e. two contrary pulls. It is easy to tackle contradictions between you and your enemy. But it is difficult to handle contradictions between the people themselves and arrive at a balance where technology would reduce back-breaking labour without becoming the master. Soviet leaders, however, shied away from the very beginning, from judging things from this perspective. They kept on strengthening the State machinery at the cost of the people.

After the second world war the role of the Soviet Union was equally motivated by power politics. Stalin made it clear—and Roosevelt accepted it—that East Europe was to be the Soviet Union's "backyard". This was the main reason for the split between the Soviet and Yugoslav communists.

Churchill wanted the Yugoslav King to return to Belgrade after the war and Stalin agreed to that because according to the agreement with western powers, Yugoslavia, unlike some other East European countries, was not to be under complete Soviet influence. But Marshal Tito, the Yugoslav communist leader, who had fought the liberation struggle with little or no help from the Soviet Union, did not accept the idea of the king and royalty returning to his country. This was the beginning of sharp differences between the Soviet and Yugoslav communist leaders. The Yugoslavs were saying that Moscow had no right to decide the future of their country. You can read about it in Milovan Djilas book "Conversations with Stalin". Yugoslavia, the only country in Eastern Europe where revolution took place under communist leadership, was expelled from the Cominform in 1948, within three years of the cessation of the war.

There are two points which I wish to make concerning the Soviet role in world politics. First, the old Czarist Empire, which had been expanding in the 19th century, did not collapse after the first world war, as did the Austro-Hungarian Empire, as a result of which, a number of countries in Central East Europe became independent. The Czarist empire did not collapse because of the Bolshevik Revolution. Different republics of the Soviet Union have had nominally the right to secede but everybody knows that this was never going to happen because of the tight grip of the ruling Communist Party. The inherited Czarist empire is going to cause a lot of problems for the Soviet leadership in the future.

The other problem is the new East European empire, which the Soviet Union acquired after the second world war and which has witnessed large-scale revolts. The East German workers revolted in 1953; the Hungarian Revolution took place in 1956; the great Czechoslovak turmoil happened in 1969 and in Poland there have been a series of uprisings. None of these problems have been solved. Therefore, the concept of the Brezhnev Doctrine of "limited sovereignty" of the communist-ruled countries had to be evolved. If any country tends to get out of the communist control, then the Soviet Union would have the right to send its armed forces to "restore order". I would like to pose the question: what is the real basis of the Soviet Union's relationship with the East European countries within its sphere of influence? Is sheer military power. But this cannot continue for an indefinite period, although it had its "sanction" in the Yalta Agree-

ment. Is it not an outdated document, prepared by imperialist powers, arbitrarily deciding the fate of other nations?

Eastern Europe is going to give a lot of problems to the Soviet Union. Revolts in these countries were suppressed by sheer physical force. Now these countries have started drifting towards the west because they all need money and technology, which Moscow cannot provide. Moscow cannot stop these countries because she also needs western money and technology.

The old and new empire of the Soviet Union will not only cause problems but it will also limit the Soviet Union's role in world politics.

A VOICE : The point is that because of the economic weakness of the Soviet Union, these countries are looking to the US and other industrially advanced countries, after the West and Japan. Sheer military power cannot succeed in world politics today. This has been proved.

The second problem is that because of this economic weakness, the Soviet Union and its allies have borrowed 131 billion dollars from western banks. Now they want to go to the World Bank, and other banks. They want to go to the GATT.

BOSE : So, the Soviet Union is a part of that kind of a system in which the United States and the Soviet Union are becoming best friends. I do not find any difference in their foreign policy orientation. They have the same kind of hegemonistic approach. In this situation, the middle powers and the Third World countries should take advantage. Why not? It is power politics, and the Third World countries should take advantage of it. The Third World countries fight among themselves and the superpowers take advantage. If China settles its problem with India, then India's dependence on the Soviet Union will be considerably lessened. The United States wants India to be a "regional power" under its own influence. The Soviet Union would also like India to be a "regional power"—but under its influence.

America could not control Vietnam. Neo-colonialism will not work. I don't think one can draw any inspiration from Soviet foreign policy.

S.N. GHOSH : Mr. Bardhan said that CPSU has now lost its dominance over the communist parties of other countries. He perhaps meant that CPSU has now lost its moral authority. It should have in any case lost its dominance.

BARDHAN : I think the other factor was the maturity of the global community.

GHOSH : The CPSU's authority as a guide had failed in China earlier. Mr. Bardhan said that after 1953 CPI did not ask for guidance from the Soviet Union. It is possible that no guidance was sought formally. But even then the guidance was looked for. I was a part of the communist movement up to February 1957. I know how an editorial in the Cominform journal changed the party's line of thinking. The tradition of dependence, the habit of looking for clues from the Soviet leadership for action in India, does not seem to have changed. Merely to say that guidance has not been sought after 1950, will be dilution of truth.

I give credit to Mao Tse-tung for having realized that power-wielders can become a class and perpetuate themselves and their progeny in privileged positions, in the same manner as the propertied classes do. They can become a "New Class". Mao is the only one among the world communist leaders who felt the need for a cultural revolution to safeguard against the possibility of the Power Elite exploitation taking the place of exploitation by propertied classes. I am no blind admirer of Mao, for I thoroughly disliked the way he enjoyed his deification by the masses in his life-time. But I must say, his concept of cultural revolution was very correct. The way it was sought to be done was wrong. He was in too much of a hurry because he wanted to see the surge of this cultural movement during his life-time. He could not trust others to lead this kind of revolution. This haste on his part and this distrust of others came from his weakness—namely, the failure to evolve an alternative theory of development towards genuine socialism. If he had succeeded in laying the theoretical basis for a new kind of development which had a built-in force to counter the bureaucratic power, he could have had the confidence that the idea would generate an irresistible movement even after his death. Without this basis, he sought to accomplish cultural revolution by the force of his personality. Hence the hurry, the violence, the excesses. This forcing of pace was evident in his "Great Leap Forward" and "People's Commune" movements. When you produce an excessive swing in one direction, it gives rise to an excessive reaction in the opposite direction. Thus, it becomes counter-productive. China has been suffering from the backlash of the excesses. It does not mean that the concept of cultural revolution was wrong. The Soviet leaders and the leaders of the communist parties ought to have welcomed the concept, while decrying the turbulent and rowdy methods of its implementation in China.

Then I come to the point regarding bureaucratism made by both Mr. Bardhan and Subrata Babu. Please pardon my saying that even now

you are paying mere lip-service to the slogan of de-bureaucratism. For you are not going into the heart of the question : what gives rise to bureaucracy? Nor are you trying to go deep into the question, what in the Soviet system, has made excessive dependence on the State inevitable? The question of law of nature has also not been understood in its proper sense. Can you stop bureaucratism while maintaining a system which breeds bureaucratism?

BARDHAN : System can mean many kinds of systems. Do you mean a socialist system—a political system—or administrative system?

GHOSH : I am coming to the social roots of bureaucratic power. Please do not misunderstand me when I relate a story from my personal life which opened my eyes to the factors that breed and sustain bureaucratic power. It was in 1956. Khrushchev had disclosed the enormity of crimes committed by Stalin which left no doubt that Stalin had become a dictator and concentrated all power in his hands. I was trying to fathom how all power could be concentrated in one individual's hands in a society pledged to collective welfare and collective leadership. I was not satisfied with the usual explanation of personality cult. My question was : why could this personality cult develop? While I rejected the Party leadership's stock answer, I did not have the answer myself. It was at this time that one event took place.

It was my and Kamal Basu's (Parliament Member) responsibility to initiate a discussion within the Communist Parliamentary Party on the stand we should take in relation to the Insurance Corporation Bill. At the end of that Bill there was a schedule of compensation which we, despite our great perseverance, could not make a head or tail of. So we said, "let us get the help of an actuary". Fortunately, the Insurance Employees' Federation Secretary, Chandra Sekhar Bose, was readily available. He was a sympathiser of the party and managed to bring one of India's topmost actuaries for our consultation. My wife and children were then away to Calcutta: so he stayed in my room for a few days. He restricted his movements severely. From my room he would go only to the adjoining toilet. He would not go to the verandah or the lawn, leave alone the road in front of the bungalow. I said to him, "Look, you are one of the topmost actuaries of India. Why are you so afraid?" He said, "Mr. Ghosh, in earlier times, if Cowasjee Jehangir of Oriental Insurance Company sacked me, B.K. Shah of New India would have welcomed me; if he too sacked me, P.N. Talukdar of Hindustan Insurance would have welcomed me. But today, all this is one nationalised set-up. Moreover, our custodian is expected in Delhi. If he happens to see me here in front of a communist member's bungalow, I would have no place anywhere in the insurance set-up". In a flash I got the answer to the question which was tormenting me.

From my personal experience I had known that if a person is sacked by the Bata Company, he could get a job in the Flex company. But if a person is sacked by the Northern Railways, he would not find a place in the Southern Railway or any other Railway. If a person is sacked by the Ichapore Gun Factory, he would not get a job in the Jabalpur Gun Factory. The question that cropped up in my mind was: "If this can happen in a country where the means of production are only partially nationalised, what can happen in a country where all means of production are owned and controlled by the State?" I also knew that with the existing pattern of industrialisation, there is increasing specialisation. Hence if the actuary loses his job in the insurance set-up, he will have hardly any place anywhere. Yet, in a country like India, where all means of production and all professions are *not* controlled by the State, our actuary can—if he has some savings—learn chartered accountancy or law over a few years and begin life anew. But that road was barred to the people of the Soviet Union.

In that moment of awakening, I came to know why Khrushchev had earlier to perform Gopak dance before Stalin and why people in the Soviet Union had to be servile to the possessors of State power. I came to realize that where both political power and economic power are concentrated in the same hands, a monstrous bureaucracy grows, jettisoning people's liberties.

Then began a crisis in my conscience. Would I then have to support private ownership and plutocracy? Over the years I came to realize that just as in a biological system, the existence of acids, alkalis and neutrals provides the balance and builds up a harmonious whole, we have to have in our social system a dynamic equilibrium of private, state and cooperative sectors, each equally strong. I came to feel that if any of these three sectors became weak, the whole system would get diseased. But it took me some years to come to this realization. In 1956, I was limited to the conclusion that decentralisation of management, freedom of the press, independence of the judiciary, and assertion by consumer councils were the remedies. Now decentralisation became the key slogan for me. Mind you, this was before Khrushchev came out with his slogan for decentralisation of management. I remember, the Party's General Secretary Ajoy Ghosh phoned me up to ask "Can you make out a case for nationalisation of banking?" I said, "Yes, I can. But I would not like to talk about nationalisation unless we talk also about decentralisation of management, freedom of the press, independence of the judiciary, and the consumer councils". Hence the basis of despotic bureaucratic power is the concentration of political and economic power in the same hands. Unless you fight this concept of concentration of both types of power, all your talk of fighting bureaucratism is futile.

Then, there are other questions even for those whose concept is limited to nationalisation. If an enterprise is to be under Public ownership, should the right of ownership vest only in the federal government? Can it not vest in the regional or local level? Even where the ownership right vests in the federal level, cannot some decentralised forms of management be introduced in the interest of quick and correct responses to situations? Now-a-days, we are talking about management by workers or worker participation in management.....

BARDHAN: Even earlier, the ownership of collective farms was not with the State.

GHOSH: Here I was talking in the context of management of factories. It is true that the management of collective farms was in local hands. But there, too, this decentralisation was negated by the concept of centralism in the party, which really held the levers of control. That is how democracy got lost. Hence the combination of political and economic power and the control of means of production basically by centralised party apparatus strengthened the base of bureaucracy. Genuine decentralisation of management and full control by the people were never attempted in the past. Gorbachev deserves support because he is attempting this, even if partially, for the first time in Soviet history.

There is yet another source of despotism, to which there seems to be near-blindness in both the East and the West. It is mega-technology, in which centralism inheres. It leads to corporate centralism in capitalist system and statist centralism in the state socialist system. This mega-technology is the product of nature-conquering approach. This kind of technology is so oriented that the more efficient the process under its criteria, the more entropic (i.e. environmental disorder-creating) it is. The more it seeks to extract hyper-production from one crop, the more ruinous it becomes to the complex of factors surrounding it, the more it reduces the productivity of the nexus of resource systems. The more this kind of technology is allowed to operate, the more it restricts the scope of entrepreneurship to fewer people; it restricts the scope for employment, while displacing vast numbers from their customary occupations, and it also promotes inequality. This is not merely eco-destructive but politically and economically centripetal technology. It is a very important base of authoritarianism in both capitalist and soviet systems.

Subrata Babu may talk of "laws of nature". But where is the seriousness to understand Nature's laws? This has become merely a slogan in the manner of a fashion. If anybody tries to understand the laws of Nature, he would come to know the bounteousness in Nature and would

have to give up the concept of conquering nature, which is the guiding philosophy of the so-called modern science and technology.

BARDHAN : Mr. Ghosh, only in socialist countries can you have a farm or a factory under conditions that do not disturb the ecology. I have seen that there is no (effluent) discharge into the Volga river, for instance.

GHOSH : I agree that it is easier to introduce real ecological approach where private profit motive does not operate. But genuine ecological understanding has to come first. Ecology is not mere anti-pollution. When the basic understanding of natural laws is defective, where the understanding of the bounteousness of Nature's own processes is absent, the theoretical possibility of better ecological approach under soviet system mostly would not operate. I want to ask you: which is the most polluted country in Europe? You will possibly admit that it is Czechoslovakia, which is a socialist country by your definition. Why could this happen? Here you have to go to the fundamentals of ecological principles. Marxists are even now blind to these principles. This is because Marx was led by Darwinism which had seen only competitiveness in Nature's order and was blind to the system of cooperation in Nature. The natural principles of recycling, symbiosis and antibiosis are the means for the highest possible productivity—please mark the words, highest possible productivity—of the resource systems. Not to understand this bounteousness is to remain ignorant of laws of Nature. Anybody who wants to impose his own technology on Nature, disrupting her own more productive technology, anybody who thinks that Nature would have to be made to change to yield more, is paying lip-service to Nature's laws. The approach has to be to understand Nature's ways and to initiate processes which move with Nature's rhythms. There is no evidence as yet of any serious attempt to understand these laws. Hence the references to Nature seem ritualistic.

I am not against science and technology. I am against the kind of science and technology which seeks foolishly to conquer Nature and which limits itself to reductionist approach, i.e. to studying Nature piecemeal, belittling her integrative processes and linkages. I would like to give an example of what difference it makes. Nature has given us vast scope for fertilisation of soil through several pathways. Take nitrogen fixation—through lightning, through bacteria in the floating fern, in the blue green alga, and in the nodules of legumes. The earthworms and termites build soil organic matter for fertilisation in multiple ways. The biota from adjoining forests also contribute to soil humus formation. Ignoring all these, the nature-conquering "modern science" advocates chemical fertilisation

which kills earthworms and termites, de-activates nitrogen fixing bacteria, causes imbalance in trace elements, scorches the soil after making it yield a few bumper crops for a few years, loads the foodcrops with pesticide residues, and fouls the water with nitrates, phosphates and sulphides. Under the influence of modern science, this is being done in all countries including the Soviet Union. This is because the industrial countries of the world, including the Soviet Union, did not see the unscientific and short-lived nature of chemical fertilisation approach, because none of these countries cared to study Nature holistically. You will also find that the Soviet Union is the country where the soil erosion rate is the highest in the world. Why is it?

BARDHAN : Not because of this,

GHOSH : There may be several causes. But the plain fact is that the Soviet Union's soil erosion rate is the highest—let us say, among the highest—in the world. This is the result of non-understanding of Nature. So, "observing nature" has become a mere slogan. If one really tries to observe Nature in its wholeness, then, the prevailing kinds of unscientific land use patterns, the rapacity of chemical-intensive farming and the types of industrial processing which are mechanically, or capital-wise, highly productive but inherently destructive ecologically, must stop. It is not merely a question of preventing the effluent discharge to Volga: it is also a question of preventing obnoxious emissions to foul the atmosphere; it is a question of stopping the deleterious effects of the products on animal and human bodies and the resource systems. Besides, it is also a social question of preventing the centralisation of power.

I repeat, the reductionist kind of science and the nature-manipulating technology become not only capital-intensive and more complex. They also dislodge more and more people from their access and are inherently centralising, building up corporate centralism or state centralism. This kind of science and technology is suitable for non-life processes and life-destructive processes i.e. for war purposes. So long as you acquiesce in, or even tolerate, this kind of science and technology, all your talk about de-bureaucratisation or observing Nature will come to naught because the basis will remain. The combination of economic and political power in the same hands reinforces this centralist power.

Regarding the other point that Dubcek lost his control over his own Czechoslovak party—this is a point that Mr. Bardhan made—I would like to submit that the Soviet leadership played no small role in undermining his position.

NAGARAJAN : Let me give a piece of information of the latest thinking on the origin of bureaucracy. It is not only the centralisation excesses of state ownership. There is yet another point. There was an interesting note by Trotsky on speeding up production some way or the other. When you speed up production, and have production as your sole goal, bureaucracy is the definite consequence of it.

I would then refer to another issue. They are all allowing the needs to increase. I would like to ask : is there any thinking in any of the socialist countries as to what constitutes genuine human need ? There should be a definite, humanist definition of human need. Only then will this rat race be stopped, and there will be better happiness. Unfortunately, people think as if having this and that constitutes happiness. This kind of possessing all sorts of things and wasting resources has become the symbol of happiness. If we want this kind of happiness, we will be ruined. I think it is better to have a different kind of concept of need, a human need. Has any Marxist party seriously taken the trouble to define the human need ?

JAYASHEKAR : On a point of information. There are a number of official studies as well as studies by the socialist people in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. All of them have indicated that pollution in the socialist countries, in eastern Europe, is much more than in the western countries.

BARDHAN : I would believe you. But I would like to say, I have read things which give an opposite picture.

GHOSH : I don't think the opposite picture is correct. Undoubtedly, there is heavy pollution in the West European countries. In West Germany there is acid rain. Hence, if you simply make a blanket statement that the West European countries are ecologically more degraded, that would not be correct. Undoubtedly, they too are heavily degraded.

BARDHAN : I think, I will bring a Polish economist's study which makes a reference to this.

GHOSH : You can say some of the Western countries, too, are very heavily polluted.

A VOICE : Or many of them.

GHOSH : But there is one clear statement. Whatever may be the differences between Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary, so far as the environmental problem is concerned, Czechoslovakia is in the worst situation in Europe. All the West European countries and the East European countries have come to a consensus on this issue.

BARDHAN : They have a common river also, the Danube river, which they have to share.

GHOSH : The whole point is this. In the existing pattern of production, when they are producing goods valued at x, they now face a dilemma that for environmental protection, they would have to spend twice as much as the investment capital for production.

NAGARAJAN : That is exactly where we are going.

BARDHAN : I only wanted to ask a question if you are not concluding. You had said about some of the qualities which are required for social sciences. You named some of the social sciences. I presume you named History also.

NAGARAJAN : Yes, History also.

BARDHAN : Thank you very much. So, you said that the same honesty is required in the case of History too. If somebody gets up and starts saying that the second world war started from the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, then I must say that it is a highly dishonest approach towards history, if I may be permitted to say so.

BOSE : Did I say this ? If you got this impression from my statement, that was never my intention.

BARDHAN : But that was the word that you used.

BOSE : No I do not know when I used it. If I used it all, it was a mistake.

NAGARAJAN : Beside honesty, compassion is the other quality.

BARDHAN : To that also I agree. I am a very compassionate man.

In fact, I am taking your help because I agree with it. I agree that in the matter of social sciences, you have not only to be honest but you have to be highly objective also.

NAGARAJAN : By being tremendously honest you can be objective also.

BARDHAN : Quite right.

MALKANI : He never thought that you would render any help to him.

BARDHAN : I would not wish to say anything more than that.

A VOICE : If you stick to honesty, it is all right. Hope you would not say socialist honesty.....

BARDHAN : I am making one point. I was not very sure that it was very relevant to the discussion that is going on. Many aspects are being considered. One can, of course, say one has a different view. Different views are welcome. But history must also be treated as an exact science in certain respects, with this difference that there has to be more honesty there, and more objectivity than anywhere else.

The Second World War certainly did not start with Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. Even otherwise, you will agree that if the pact was in August and the war started on September 1, then, the whole army and the mobilisation of the army could not have taken place as a consequence of the pact. We seem to be talking about something through our hat when we say that the war could start because of Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. The military production must have started much earlier. There was something known as Munich Pact also.

MODAK : You are probably referring to the partition of Poland.

BARDHAN : No, no. I am coming to that. There was something known as the Munich Pact. There was something known as the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia. It must also be known that talks were going on in which the Soviet Union had said that it could guarantee the independence of Poland provided the Polish Government was willing to allow the Red Army to go up to the border of Germany. After all, how the hell do you otherwise guarantee the safety of Poland? They will be attacked from the west. Col. Beck refused to give any indication of his willingness to let the

Red Army pass through Poland to face Germany. He was so anti-communist that he would not allow that even for saving Poland. He asked western powers other than the Soviet Union because they had gone there for talks: 'Are you willing to have a pact like that?' No, they said. Then they sent a very low-level clerk to negotiate with the Soviet Union. All these documents—since you are talking of documents, Mr. Bose—are from the British sources, the French sources, the German foreign office. All are now out, because the 30-year or 40-year limit, whatever it is, is over. Now I think it should dispose of the allegation.

Coming to speak of it, who was the first to fight against the fascists? After all, there was a non-intervention policy being followed by others. Certainly, it was the communists and the Soviet Volunteers who went into Spain to fight in the Spanish Civil War. So, they were fighting fascism very much. But, then, if somebody wants that Germans should march towards the east rather than towards the west, then, there you are free for your interpretation. One can stave off an aggression by concluding a pact. "For at least some time you don't march towards our border"—that was the purpose of Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. I can understand the worthwhileness of this idea being challenged. But challenge it only after stating all the history correctly. Only then, it would be a question of views.

BOSE : I would like to say only two things because I cannot go into the whole history of the Soviet foreign policy. What I was trying to say is that there were two decisive changes during 1928-35. One was the era of the so-called left adventurism. During this first phase, their line was that everybody is bad; the bourgeois democrats are bad, the national movements in colonial countries are bad, the social democrats are bad and so on. It is a fact of history that a part of the reason of Hitler's rise to power was the Soviet foreign policy. This policy played a very important role because they were influencing the German communist party's policy. Once Hitler came to power, he started suppressing everybody, including the communists. In the second stage, the line was popular front. At that time everybody became a friend, everybody became acceptable. Social democrats became bosom friends, and all, including the bourgeois democrats, were welcome.

BARDHAN : The biggest leader of the Communist International was in Germany helping anti-nazi forces. Dimitrov had to face Reichstag fire trial. Let us not forget this. He was not there to help Hitler.

BOSE : That was after...

BARDHAN : That was in 1932, Sir. Before Hitler came to power.

A VOICE : Of course, before Hitler became chancellor.

BARDHAN : Just when Hitler came to power, Dimitrov was arrested that day. He was right there.

BOSE : In 1933 Hitler came to power. And, so far as the objectivity of history is concerned, every time the Soviet history was changed, when the leader was changed. Khrushchev has disappeared. But I will talk of my little experience with the Museum of Revolution in Moscow. It is one of the more interesting places in Moscow.

BARDHAN : I agree with you in advance, that is one of their worst things, that they cannot reckon with their own history of 70 years.

BOSE : So, I was looking for a picture which was very widely known—Lenin sitting and Trotsky standing just below the platform there. It is a very well known picture of a historical event after Lenin returned to Russia. So, I was in the Museum of Revolution. I wanted to see that picture. There was nothing. I could not see that picture of Trotsky. Trotsky played, after Lenin, the most important role in the revolution.

BARDHAN : By the way, Trotsky was not a member of the party at that time when Lenin returned to Russia. He joined later. I do not know what you are saying, how it was to be there.

BOSE : I am saying, Trotsky got the order of Red Banner in 1921 given by Lenin. Anyway, I may just tell you that when I met Soviet writers in the Writers' Club, I just said, "Well, in the Museum of Revolution there is nothing that I found about Trotsky. After all, he played a role". They said, "There is. Didn't you see?" I was taken aback. They repeated "Yes, there is. That is Trotsky, the Czarist agent. He was an imperialist agent, and a counter-revolutionary. That document is there in the Museum of Revolution." So, to them Trotsky was a Czarist agent.

BARDHAN : All of them are there now

BOSE : We know that the history of the Soviet Union changes every time the leader changes. We do not find anything of Khrushchev now.

BARDHAN : That does not answer my question.

BOSE : No, that is the objectivity. We know the history. What I am trying to say is this, that it is a fact of history that Hitler decided to attack Poland after he made Germany safe from attack from the eastern

side, by means of a pact with the Soviet Union. He would not have done it otherwise.

GHOSH : Mr. Malkani justified Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement. I just wanted to put one question not only to you—Mr. Bardhan and Mr. Banerjee—but also to Pradip Babu. All of you desired industrialisation. But which kind of industrialisation? Was there no need to decide which kind of industries should be built and which kind of industries should be avoided? Then comes another set of questions about those kind of industries which are necessary and desirable. On which scale or scales should they be? Should they be all large? If there is need for large, medium and small industries, then, in which proportion should these be?

Will you agree with this approach?

BARDHAN : Yes.

GHOSH : Now, that is one point.

BARDHAN : I go further. I also agree as far as the ownership is concerned, it should not be only the state ownership, but state, co-operative and multi-structure industry.

GHOSH : Good. That is another aspect. I am coming to yet another aspect. Subrata Babu made the point that without industrialisation Russia would not have been able to withstand Nazi forces. He was merely emphasising the desirability of heavy industries. There, I say that for industries with military potential it should have a separate sector, but let not the whole economy or even the whole industrial economy be tied to, and made an appendage of heavy industries from consideration of defence only. Will you agree there? I know, the cost of defence in that case will be shown as very much higher.

BARDHAN : Firstly, I agree to that. Secondly, I tell you, many civilian industries can get converted into military industry later. I never knew it myself till I read the first-hand document where there is a discussion on that issue; and Stalin, in fact, says that you cannot dismantle the whole industrial potential of West Germany because it is so big. There he says, "Please remember, even a carpenter's shop manufacturing furniture can be converted into a shop to manufacture aeroplane". That was the first time I came to know that it can happen.

GHOSH : From 1961 to 1977 I devoted myself to this so-called high technology area—petroleum, fertilizers, and then to a limited extent, steel and also nuclear power. I, therefore, know something of the nature of this high-tech. I can also appreciate Stalin's statement about the military potential of the civilian economy. Here I am not talking of that. In emergency situations, by all means you convert the civilian industry if it becomes absolutely necessary. But, for God's sake, do not make the whole economy a tail to your military needs.

BARDHAN : That is absolutely right.

GHOSH : If you do that, then, what will happen is this. Now, there is the question of economy of scale in every industry. If you build particular type of chemical industry, the military industry becomes the incidental beneficiary. But in the alternative situation, the whole cost will have to be shown against the military expenditure and the cost will appear to be much higher. But that is a much lesser social and economic cost than tying the entire civilian industry to military consideration.

BARDHAN : This is agreed.

GHOSH : If you accept that, then, the kind of uneasiness that you now feel from my preferred type of industrialisation will disappear. There will be no basis for this fear.

BANERJEE—We agree. There is no question.

BARDHAN : Some of these problems the Soviet Union is now facing. After all, the Soviet Union can send sputnik into space, but their pens disintegrate on earth.

BANERJEE : I would like to make an observation. I cannot understand what objection could be there if the Soviet Union wants to enter the IMF or the GATT. This issue takes us back to 1920s when socialism in one country was the subject of controversy. At that time, Lenin made exactly the point that we must co-exist for a long period of time, and during this period we have to enter into relationship with the world economic system including the world capitalist system. My contention is, in the thirties, the Soviet Union ceased to be a part of the world economic system. It also continued to be in isolation after the Soviet Union withdrew from the Brettonwoods conference. Now, they are going back, to interact with the world system. This should be considered very good because this is the way...

BARDHAN : But they were in the Brettonwoods, which means they were ideologically prepared.

BANERJEE : Yes, ideologically prepared.

BARDHAN : It was a backslide that...

BANERJEE : It was backslide that they allowed themselves to be isolated. Number two, since it is a question of leading role of the party, let me refer to a parallel case. I was recently reading about the RIN mutiny and Gandhiji's attitude. It suddenly struck me that he had made a firm, profound statement. He said, you cannot lead a revolution through RIN revolt because the national leadership is not prepared for it. So, even Gandhiji as a perfect political realist, recognised the leadership of the party, importance of the leading role of the party.

BARDHAN : Otherwise you were to drift into a series of follies.

As for the question of the Soviet Union entering the IMF, I think, most of us would like to welcome it. It will only strengthen the Third World countries.

BANERJEE : Exactly.

BARDHAN : After all, on the entry of the Soviet Union and the Third World countries, the UN has changed its character also.

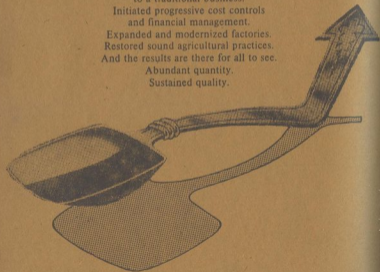
BANERJEE : Also to say that the Soviet Union is raising peace as a major slogan because its economy is in trouble is, again, a distortion of history because the only revolution in the world which came out with the banner of peace is the Russian Revolution. For the first time peace and development were interlinked. I will deal with this in detail tomorrow.

BARDHAN : From the time of the October Revolution itself, you will see major programmes were undertaken.

SONDHI : I think, we have had a very profitable discussion. It is not for me to give any reply. But I think that there are certain areas in which typical Indian point of view can be formulated, taking into account our own way, how we look at social problems. Of course, there is need to emphasise social pluralism because there has to be an understanding of the way in which certain dynamism is restored to society, to the state. Social pluralism is also the solution to various problems which are coming up from the point of sharing the rewards in a society. I think, we should know our own experience with our trade unions and the need to strengthen

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