

# freedom first

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ORGAN OF THE INDIAN COMMITTEE FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM

JUNE 1952

## THE OPEN SOCIETY

IN 1913, the late Mr. Gopala Krishna Gokhale returned from an extensive tour of Europe and told the members of the Servants of India Society that the people of Europe were living under a strain and predicted an early snap down. Since then men have fought two great wars to alleviate, if not to end, the strain, but it has continued to grow and spread and today the whole world is weighed down.

Many complicated problems have emerged in our century and their solutions have not been easy. National antagonisms and class conflicts, economic development and social change have raised issues of such fundamental importance and bristling with such complexities that solution of some of them has not eased the crisis in any way. Man's spirit feels more oppressed down than ever before.

The quest for solution has taken two different roads, one of broadening freedom and responsibility and the other of surrendering initiative and power to an external authority. Culture has generally been spelled in terms of broadening of freedom and deepening of responsibility.

In the past forty years the conflict between the free man with his autonomy of will and the anxious man seeking the embrace of a great Leviathan has become acute, and we now seem to be preparing for the final round. In Europe men have moved up both the roads and cohorts on both the sides have gained in strength and confidence.

There is nothing original about the conflict except its global dimensions and the intensity imparted to it by modern knowledge. In previous rounds of the conflict freedom has more often won against authoritarianism than lost and that has led to the development of culture. Resilience is so natural to the spirit

of man that no imprint of an authority has remained indelible.

Through the long travail man has learnt the value of keeping some arena free from tensions and trammels. And it is the domain of mind that has sought to retain such freedom.

In India, for centuries, thought has been free, for ever filled with the desire of the sky. Patterns of behaviour have been fixed; caste-bound society circumscribed man's actions, but his thought has soared freely. Thought has enjoyed an autonomy that few authorities have dared to encroach upon. Such a mental climate led to two advantages: (i) every idea had to confront its critics and free debate between them went on, and (ii) ideas were judged for their intrinsic worth, they often changed not the course of thought alone but of events too. Openness to ideas, refusal to discredit ideas by discovering some "interests" behind them and aversion to shifting controversies from the plane of ideas to the plane of interests were the hall-marks of our intellectual life.

That the voice of dissent should have free scope was a deep seated conviction. In describing the working of Buddhist assemblies, Dr. Radhakumud Mukerji writes in his *Hindu Civilization*, "Silence on Resolution put was taken as consent thereto; members in favour of it were asked 'to be silent' and 'anyone against it to speak.'" This shows not merely a predilection for tolerance but the conviction that a proposition gains by the freedom given to its critics and challengers.

Life in India, in the picturesque phrase of Walter Bagehot, was a lake of custom, but thoughts were never mere currents in it. Social life was hide-bound, but even there it was possible to move into the margin of free life that provided a purposeful quest inspired spirits. Those who yearned to experiment with life, to explore its ultimate secrets were not bound to conform to the traditional mores and the

established folkways. In the realm of thought, however, all were free. The windows of the mind were for ever open and the winds from all corners flowed in and out.

Regimentation of thought has been alien to the genius of this ancient land; she has revelled in luxuriant foliage of the mind, much of this "tropical growth" being superficial, but a part of it has proved to be of abiding worth. A glorious achievement was the climate of tolerance that was realised and the habit of confronting every idea with its critics that was developed and esteemed.

An open society is one where-in not only thought is free but behaviour is unbound and "ideational", that is capable of responding to the press and pull of ideas. In India ideas did not always alter the contours of conduct but its impact on others ideas was ceaseless. Ideas have freely impregnated and enriched one another. Such is our heritage of broad tolerance.

The Movement for Cultural Freedom builds itself upon these traditions and is anxious to enrich the heritage. The need for such a Movement has arisen because in the world today forces are growing that deem freedom to be a burden that is to be transferred to some authority. It is not realised that when wings are clipped, the sky becomes no more than a cage. Goblins of insecurity and anxiety are sought to be exorcised by seeking a tribal unity wherein man's individuality and autonomy are submerged in the mass—where man is transformed into a mass-man.

In India we have had long experience of intellectual tolerance and of social regimentation. Such regimentation as we have learnt the hard way, has led to stagnation and decay. The National Movement, from the days of Rammohun Roy to those of Tagore and Gandhi, has sought to end the stagnation by strengthening the current of free movement. It is that current that is today threatened with destruction, and it is its unhampered flow that our Movement seeks.

The Movement for Cultural Freedom has no fixed nostrums for the ills of our people. But it is convinced that the sickness of society cannot be cured outside a climate of freedom. To work for an open society, to keep the windows of mind and heart open, is the main purpose, the driving impulse of the Movement. All choices are tentative and therefore the frame-work of free debate is the only condition that assures that wrong choices will be set right. To preserve that frame-work and not to impose any choice is the purpose of the Movement. Against strident voices of regimentation, forces of freedom

have to rally not for the success of some sect or a cause, but for retaining for the people freedom to choose and to *change*.

Man's understanding of life is always tentative, and what is tentative has to be open. Progress is possible where the ultimate frame-work of reference is not some creed or party or authority but man's questing spirit, his ability to affirm, to challenge and to deny. Only then have facts and ideas objective reality. In a regimented society truth is tailored and principles processed to suit exigencies, and therein man loses all measure. His search for meaning loses point and purpose.

The Movement for Cultural Freedom fully recognises the gathering anxieties and anguish of the modern man. And because of its awareness of the poignancy, it warns men against retreat into a cave, for such security is purchased at the cost of progress and growth. It tries to give men strength and confidence to face their anxieties in the open. Not by seeking the strength of those who assent does one silence the voice of doubt, for doubt has to be solved not suppressed. Suppression of doubt must lead to deeper anxieties to the worsening of the disease itself.

The open society is the objective of our Movement. While it wants the sway of freedom in every segment of life, it feels that the realm of mind that is its heart and home is what it must safeguard with all its might. In this stubborn allegiance to the liberties of the mind the Movement draws its strength and inspiration from India's glorious traditions. The crusade for open society has to be fought with widening mind and widening heart and all men who love to think freely and act openly are among its fighters.

## FREEDOM FIRST

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# Notes

## TRADE UNIONISTS TRIP

ONE of the major blots on the totalitarian system is that it does not permit of the existence of trade unions and of those processes by which the working man can assert his right to contribute or withhold his labour as he chooses. In fascist and communist countries the right to strike is abolished and trade unions are turned into a labour front of the dictatorship. That these fundamental considerations can be sometimes overlooked even in circles where there should be fullest awareness of them is evidenced by the sending of a delegation to Communist China on the occasion of May Day celebrations by the Hind Mazdoor Sabha in this country. Such a delegation has already left for Peking in response to an invitation from that capital. Despite this *fait accompli*, it may not be altogether pointless to consider its implications.

Does this event mean that the Indian Socialists and their trade union colleagues who function in the Hind Mazdoor Sabha have reconsidered their understanding of the nature of totalitarian dictatorship? Is it that they have allowed the claims of Asian racialism to overcome their theoretical groundwork? Or has the temptation to indulge in a jaunt made them lightly cast aside considerations that should have weighed with such devoted and sincere trade unionists as they are? Perhaps it is none of these but the fear of being accused of having a closed mind and refusing to find out the truth when an opportunity is provided. Whatever the answer, they can hardly have enhanced the reputation of their organisation either among lovers of freedom in this country or among their fellow trade unionists of the I.C.F.T.U. abroad, none of whom would respond to such an invitation.

Quite apart from issues of principle, their action is bound to injure them in two distinct respects. For one thing, when they stood on the platform with the present masters of China on May Day, they must to some extent have weakened the capacity to resist tyranny inherent in the mass of people who watched them. Those thousands upon thousands who know only too well to what new slavery they have been subjected must have felt their hopes of international solidarity and aid weaken as they watched these democratic socialists from India fraternising with

those who have destroyed the Chinese Trade Union movement and either killed or driven abroad its best workers. Their presence must also have aroused considerable doubts as to their wisdom and sagacity in the minds of large sections of their Chinese audience: "Are these men really quite so innocent? Can't they understand what has happened to us?" These must be the thoughts that passed through the crowds even as it automatically conformed to the call for cheers and applause.

Perhaps more grave for the Hind Mazdoor Sabha than the injury they have done the workers of China is the injury that they might do on their return by confusing the mind of the Indian workers. Their fraternising with Liu Shau-chi and the leaders of the World Federation of Trade Unions in Peking is nothing more or less than a participation in a United Front with the Communists on an international scale. Why then refuse to join hands with the All-India Trade Union Congress which takes orders from their hosts in Peking? On what ground can this self-contradictory policy be explained to the Indian worker? If the Chinese "Trade Union" leaders are really the liberators and spokesmen of the Chinese working class, then what harm can there be in fraternising with the Danges and Ranadives who take orders from Liu Shau-Chi? What is wrong with joining hands with them from now on and merging the Hind Mazdoor Sabha in the All-India Trade Union Congress? Our trade union friends are on their return going to find it extremely hard to answer these questions that will be put to them under appropriate Communist tutoring.

There is, of course, one possible answer for them to give. This will be to admit frankly that they went under a *bona fide* misconception, but that they have come back with their eyes opened and with a full realisation of the horror the Chinese people are enduring. But will they? It would gladden the hearts of all lovers of freedom if they could bring themselves to this courageous action. Meanwhile, some consolation can be drawn from the fact that the Indian National Trade Union Congress, which had received a similar invitation, lost no time rejecting it out of hand, thus displaying a sounder instinct than that prevalent in quarters that are considered somewhat more sophisticated.

## DELHI HOSPITALITY

THAT the housing situation in India is acute is a matter of direct experience to many of us, and the *Statesman* felt it necessary to plead editorially on May 5 for a Ministry of Housing to meet the situation.



We must confess, however, that it was not from the *Statesman* but only on reading a bulletin, dated April 30, 1952, put out by *Tanjug*, the Yugoslav News Agency, that we became fully aware of the intensity of the problem. It would appear that the Secretariat of the International Peace Forum, set up last October by the Zagreb Conference for Peace and International Co-operation, to which Acharya Narendra Dev was later co-opted, met in Paris on April 11–12 to discuss the holding of another International Congress. It had been proposed that this Congress should meet in New Delhi, but the meeting was told that “the Indian Government had notified the International Peace Forum that the problem of accommodating delegates presented insurmountable difficulties in New Delhi and other Indian towns.”

One might have been prepared to accept the reason given by the Indian Government as the result of a somewhat panicky assessment of the accommodation problem on the part of the Estate Office in New Delhi had it not been for the way in which the intention to hold the Indian Congress for Cultural Freedom in Delhi last year was similarly frustrated. Only the most naive would fail to discern a link between the attitude of the administration in these two cases. It was whispered widely last March that the pressure brought by the Indian Government on the organisers of the Indian Congress for Cultural Freedom to shift the venue from Delhi was not altogether unconnected with a representation made by the Chinese Communist Embassy. It is not difficult to imagine what the reaction of the Soviet Embassy in New Delhi would have been to the holding of a Yugoslav-inspired Peace Congress in the Indian capital.

One would have thought that the powers-that-be in New Delhi would have been only too happy to allow the Indian people to know that there was a point of view in regard to peace somewhat different from that held by Comintern-inspired organisations with which we are familiar.

It is good to know that, though the holding of the International Conference in India has had to be abandoned and the Conference postponed till some time after September this year, the Secretariat of the International Peace Forum have decided to convene a number of regional Congresses—one in South America, one in Europe, and a third for countries in the Far East somewhere in India, during 1952 or the beginning of 1953. We believe that even those who do not altogether see eye to eye with the present Yugoslav regime—which cannot yet be called a democratic one—will be glad to welcome to this

country a meeting for the furtherance of peace which might conceivably help to rescue that unfortunate word from the clutches of its worst enemies who at present monopolise it.

## TAMPERING WITH HISTORY

THE Government of West Bengal would appear to be contemplating the appointment of a Committee to go into the question of removing the statues of British administrators from the Calcutta Maidan and to determine what should be done with these statues in the event of their removal being decided upon. We are glad that the wellknown historian Dr. Jadunath Sircar has taken the stand that monuments of the British period of Indian history are “historical records” which should be allowed to stand as they are for good or ill.

The reported move of the Bengal Government is yet one more manifestation of a mood which finds other expressions in a tendency to replace British and other historic cognomens attached to roads and streets by the names of Indian patriots of our own generation. It would perhaps be more fitting if we were to leave it to the verdict of history to honour the great men of our own time. Perhaps not all of them would be found by succeeding generations to be worthy of such honours. In any event, as Dr. Jadunath Sircar has pointed out, removing statues and other monuments really amounts to tampering with history. We can no more wipe out either the memory or the reality of the British period in our history by demolishing or removing these monuments than we can obliterate the Moghul period of our history by destroying the Taj Mahal.

There are dictators who do make such efforts. The obliteration of all monuments and even references in history books to Leon Trotsky by the present dictator of Russia is a case in point. It is questionable whether outside Soviet boundaries this effort has done anything to take away even an inch of Trotsky's stature or the importance of the historic role that he played in the October Revolution. It is also unlikely that, in the long run, when the Russian people have emerged from the long night which at present encompasses them, they will not put Trotsky back on the pedestal from which he has been removed by his detractor.

We hope Dr. Jadunath Sircar will be able to persuade the Committee on which he has now been persuaded to serve to abandon the project.

# Masterpieces of the 20th Century

## INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION OF THE ARTS IN PARIS

**I**N response to an invitation from the International movement for Cultural Freedom, the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom has sent five representatives to participate in the literary discussions connected with the Masterpieces of the XX Century Exposition. Led by Sir Rustom Masani, who has many works of scholarship in English and Gujarati to his credit, the delegation also includes P. Y. Deshpande, the leading Marathi author and critic, Ramabriksha Benipuri, the famous Hindi writer, Ka. Naa. Subramaniam, well-known Tamil novelist and short-story writer, and Philip Spratt, Secretary of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom.

*Masterpieces of the XXth Century* is the title and theme of a great exposition of the arts to be presented in Paris throughout the month of May under the sponsorship of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. Representative works of our epoch in the domains of symphony, opera, ballet, painting, drama, literature and cinema will be presented. Participating will be many of the foremost artistic organizations, thinkers, writers, composers, and artists of today. The exposition will close with a series of lectures by writers and philosophers on topics of importance to our time.

The Congress for Cultural Freedom is an organization of intellectuals, philosophers, writers, journalists, composers, painters and scientists of all political faiths who are united by their opposition to totalitarian controls over the creative mind of man. Its honorary presidents are Benedetto Croce, John Dewey, Karl Jaspers, Salvador de Madariaga, Jacques Maritain and Bertrand Russell. The chairman of its executive committee is Denis de Rougemont and Nicolas Nabokov is Secretary-general.

The programme for "Masterpieces" is divided as follows: 1.—A literary programme; 2.—An art exhibit; 3.—A musical programme; 4.—A dramatic programme.

The literary programme will consist of six to eight lectures and four to six discussions on the novel and poetry of this century.

Due to the difficulty of presenting a complete picture of the literary history of a great many countries as embodied in different languages the Conference will lay stress on the tendencies which different literatures have in common.

There has been, despite all differences of temperament and artistic conception, a literature whose principal task has been to explore and express the fundamental realities of the human mind. The many kinds of experience described can only have been written because the creative freedom of the writer has been preserved. So ultimately it is in this freedom of creation that lies the unity of the different aspects of literature which will be exhibited in the programme of the conference.

The subjects which would be dealt with at the Literary Forum and in the lectures at the Congress include: (i) Isolation and mass communication; (ii) Revolt and human fellowship; (iii) Diversity and Universality.

Leading writers from each of the Western countries as well as India and Japan have been invited to participate in this programme, which will probably be held at the Sorbonne.

Four to six lectures on art will be given by internationally famous art critics and art historians.

## OUR TASKS

**T**HE first annual General Meeting of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom which met in Bombay on 27th April 1925, worked out a concrete programme of activities for the coming year. The programme includes—formation of regional groups and Committees throughout the country, publication of a monthly bulletin, establishing closer relations with Indian language writers and their organisations, holding small study-conferences and symposium to discuss fundamental problems of cultural freedom

and promoting cultural activities among university students through their own associations.

The programme was evolved out of a lively discussion in which those attending the meeting took active part and evinced keen interest in the execution of these projects.

The meeting, which was presided over by Mr. Jaya-Prakash Narain also agreed to a membership fee of Rs. 3/- inclusive of the subscription for the bulletin. It was decided that the office of the Indian Committee be shifted to Bombay.

The Executive Committee elected for the year 1952-53 consists of the following, with power to co-opt.

MR. M. R. MASANI

MR. ASOKA MEHTA

MR. RAM SINGH

MR. SAMPURNANAND

MR. JAIPAL SINGH M. P.

MR. RAJA RAO

MR. P. KODANDA RAO (Honorary Treasurer)

MR. PHILIP SPRATT

MR. P. Y. DESHPANDE } (Honorary Secretaries)

PROF. J. C. DARUVALA }

An idea of the kind of work that may be propitiously done by regional groups in the Indian Committee is provided by the example set by the Bombay Committee.

March and April were months of intense activity for the Bombay Committee.

The educational programme during these months was directed towards both the fundamental and topical issues of the movement for cultural freedom. An article on "Bread and Freedom" by Sydney Hook, which was syndicated, dealt with one of the most discussed aspects of the contemporary problem. The article was published by the English Sunday paper the *Bharat Jyoti* as well as by other newspapers in Marathi, Tamil and Malayalam.

Mr. Robert Guillain's articles on 'Revolution in China', published in *Le Monde* and the *Manchester Guardian*, offered an insight into the real conditions of the so-called Peoples' Democracy of China. These articles, were also syndicated in March and were published in newspapers in seven Indian languages, as well as in English, from April onwards. They mark an important contribution towards the difficult task of telling the truth about Communist China to an incredulous public misled by idealised versions hitherto provided.

The Bombay Committee also issued in the columns of the press an open letter to Democratic parties reminding them of the fundamental values they hold in common and expressing the hope that they would not let their immediate differences impel them to behave in a manner particularly in South India which would help those who did not share their democratic faith and would use constitutional and parliamentary forms for the destruction of the constitution itself.

There were some interesting visitors to Bombay during these months—Ruth Fischer, former German Communist leader and now an authority on the international communist movement—Dr. Walter Eells, an eminent expert in higher education, Mr. and Mrs. Sydney Hertzberg and Mr. Robert Delson of the India League of America. Very useful discussions with them about mutual experiences and common problems were arranged by the Bombay Committee.

## EXHIBIT ONE

IF the Soviet Art Exhibition opened at the Cowasji Art Gallery is representative of the Best In Soviet Art, then nothing need further be said about Soviet Art. We know. It consists of huge gift frames, massive canvasses and more gilt frames. And of course, Comrade Stalin. Of Art, one saw very little; of Stalin, one saw a great deal; of the Stalinist concept of Art, one saw a lot. In fact, it was mostly the Stalinist concept that one saw in the numerous gaudy canvasses. Art, as the saying goes, was conspicuous by its absence. What is art, anyway, that it should claim separate existence apart from the Soviet concept of what Art should be?

When news was first flashed that Soviet canvasses were on their way to India to show the chaps out here what Soviet realism has achieved in the realm of art, there was subdued enthusiasm among the intellectuals. Just imagine! Russia was actually showing

us her treasured possessions! But the canvasses were sent to Delhi in the first instance and to Calcutta next, and Bombay was only given a glimpse of photographic reproductions of some of the originals. Critics took one good look at them and decided that one good look was one too many. The first exhibition, despite the ballyhoo that accompanied it, proved a flop. But the critics were told to watch out. Photographic reproductions, after all, were but photographic reproductions. Like the younger brother who told his hooligan opponent to just wait and watch for the older brother to give him a sound thrashing, the critics were told: "Just wait for those masterpieces now at Calcutta. You will get the surprise of your lives". They did get their surprise. They have still to recover from their utter bewilderment. One critic, after he went round the exhibits said: "But surely.....". That was all that he could mumble



The *Times of India* Art Critic spoke much less, but next day there appeared a discreet review in the *Times'* sedate columns. The critic, it appeared, was very happy indeed to go round the Gallery. He was duly impressed by all that he saw. But Oh, where were the paintings? And where Art?

This, of course, is very distressing. The Press, we suspect, has been bought over by American dollars and good Bourbon whisky. Surely not ALL the Art Critics could be so blind as not to find some good in the paintings? The *Free Press Bulletin* art critic seemed totally unimpressed by what he saw. The *National Standard* was rude. The language press was more so. No one seemed to think large frames can be substitutes for good painting. In fact they all seemed to pick a quarrel with what passes muster in Russia as art. It must have come as a shock to Madame Erzina, wife of the First Secretary to the Soviet Embassy, who was—if it may not sound strange—chaperoning the Soviet painters here by invitation.

It began very badly for the Soviet Stalin Prize winners. At the Press preview, the Press, very mulishly it would seem, was absent, or almost so. The *Free Press Journal* sent its reporter and so did the *Standard*. The rest of the audience was made up of Communist party workers and waiters who were serving, not Vodka, but some local concoction that tasted like sour milk.

Next day, the show was opened with great flourish and then tongues, as they do, began to wag. The critics ordered aspirin; art lovers looked askance at each other. Only the fellow travellers hugged each other in fits of ecstasy. What their private views on the subject of Soviet Arts are will probably never be known—never, until, they are officially denounced by the Party—but publicly they tried to make up by their enthusiasm what was lacking in public feeling. It was all very, very brave. It needed to be. For the elaborate facade of Soviet superiority in Art had been at one stroke destroyed. It would have been far better if Russia had refrained from making a show of her work. They say heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter. The same thing goes for exhibitions. Paintings unseen are always superb. The veil of secrecy should never be torn. That is the principle behind the purdah. There is romance behind the veil. The reality of the unshed veil can often destroy the beauty conjured up by the mind's eye. And so it has been with the Soviet Art Exhibition. Stalin be praised. Inshallah!

There is one aspect of Soviet realism which has been baffling me. And I speak here not as an Art

Critic—that job can be done by lesser men—but by an objective seeker after truth.

I refer, of course, to that huge patch of canvas showing Mao Tse-tung and Comrade Stalin standing side by side, looking over the walls of the Kremlin at the sprawling city below and afar.

More by way of curiosity and a thirst for knowledge which six years of reporting the seamier side of Indian politics has not quenched than by any desire to search for Truth or the dynamics of Soviet Realism, I asked my guide how tall Marshall Stalin was. My guide, incidentally, had seen Stalin. At close quarters too, for he had been to Moscow and been the honoured guest of the People's Republic. He smiled. He smiled indulgently at me as much as to say, "You see, old boy, you really ought not to ask me such questions, but I shall answer you, nevertheless." And he said, with the air of an authority and with considerable show of superiority, that Stalin was, as a matter of fact, short of stature.

"And Mao?" I asked.

"Mao?" queried my guide, "Why Mao is a hugely built man, very tall, very tall, indeed".

Our curiosity was aroused.

"Taller, say, than Stalin himself?"

"Certainly. Much taller. Much taller. Mao is no teeny-weeny creature, I assure you".

That, I suppose, was my cue. I led my unsuspecting guide to the afore-mentioned canvas showing the Two Heroes and said—did I betray my sorrow, I wonder—in a voice not unmixed with wonder: "But tell me, why should not Mao be portrayed TALLER than Stalin, if indeed he is taller as you say?"

For there it was on the canvas: there the painting of two men shown as of equal height, Stalin looking certainly the more dominating. Was it part of Soviet Realism to add a few cubits to Stalin's physical stature? Was it unethical in the Soviet concept of things, to show Stalin as he was? My guide, alas! had no answer. He had suddenly discovered that he was urgently wanted outside, and please, would I excuse him? Of course I would. The Soviet cat was out of its realistic bag—or whatever it is that Russian painters carry with them—and there I was musing on the verities of Stalinist Concepts. It was—as Alice might have said—but then Alice would never have been permitted in the Court of Comrade Stalin.

Footnote: To those interested in footwear, a note of interest. Stalin prefers square shoes, and Mao pointed ones. This I gleaned from the painting. But then, I hope, there is nothing of political interest in it. With Soviet Art, you never can tell.

Viswamitra

## DECLARATION ON CULTURAL FREEDOM

Culture has both an individual and a social content. Individual culture is an attitude to life on the part of a human being who seeks awareness of himself and of the world. Social culture results from the integration of the culture of the members of a community and of the social relationships emerging in the geographical environment and historical tradition which define the community. Neither individual nor social culture can be complete unless it rests on the underlying unity of mankind.

### II

Culture can only flourish, find its best expression, and be secure in a free society. A society is free in which the integrity of the individual is recognised and respected as a primary ethical value, with all the guarantees of social justice, including equality or opportunity, which this principle implies. All spiritual pursuits and attainments arising from culture are rooted in this fundamental principle.

### III

While culture has a universal basis, its expression is as particular and varied as the communities themselves. This variety is inherent in the creative genius of peoples and enriches the content of human experience on which universal culture is based.

### IV

Each concrete social unit which has geographical environment and a historical tradition must enjoy independence and be able to evolve its own culture and afford and maintain the necessary freedom for its members and for their individual cultural progress.

### V

It is the duty of the individual to protect and develop the conditions, mentioned above, necessary for freedom of culture.

Freedom of cultural pursuits is of intrinsic significance, not only for the individual but for the community as a whole.

### VI

The best expression of a free culture presupposes an attempt

to widen, deepen and perfect the individual's awareness himself and of the world. In modern times civilisation has been mostly governed by an undue emphasis on externalities and a tendency towards standardisation of human life. Totalitarianism, and extreme expression of this evil, has carried into the social and political fields.

### VII

At no period of time and in no region has perfection of cultural freedom been attained. But the recognition of the integrity of the individual as a primary ethical value provides the basic condition for the march towards perfection. Where social tyranny has existed in the past and continues to exist in greater or less measure today, it is obvious that in a society where the basic political, economic and social conditions for individual freedom are accepted and respected culture may develop, while, in societies where these basic conditions have been denied or destroyed, even the possibility of a contemporary culture ceases to exist. The effect of modern tyranny is more insidious and destructive than any tyranny in the past inasmuch as the modern tyranny of totalitarianism seeks to dictate not only the form in which truth, both aesthetic and scientific, may be expressed but truth itself. In such a tyranny truth itself ceases to exist and have no meaning; it is made subservient to political belief, economic advantage and expediency.

### VIII

The new tyranny founded on the theory and practice of totalitarianism is the gravest challenge man has faced in civilised history.

The defence of cultural freedom is, in the main, the defence of free society against this challenge.

Indifference or neutrality towards this totalitarian tyranny amounts to renunciation of the Indian tradition and our human heritage, and a betrayal of all spiritual values.

*Adopted by the Indian Congress for Cultural Freedom on 31st March 1951*

*The Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom is a non-partisan organisation open to all men and women who adhere to the Declaration printed above.*

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Herewith Rs. 3/- in payment of my membership fee.

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