PREFACE

One of the most arresting developments of the last decade in the field of Marxist studies, has been the rise of interest in working out the ethical implications of Marxian thought. Despite the fact that Karl Marx has been among the most preponderent influences in the shaping of the modern mind, the ethical rigour of Marxism as Karl Popper puts it, is only now beginning to attract the measure of notice it deserves. This may be due primarily to a revival of interest in humanism—a concept which springs up and receives emphasis in the life of man from time to time and one to which, Marxist scholars claim, Marx has added entirely new dimensions. And yet it may also be due to the fact that it is being increasingly realized that the appeal of Marxism lies not so much in its economic and political content as would be indicated from the enormous literature to which it has given rise, as in its moral and ethical content.

The present work is a modest attempt at understanding and interpreting the ethical meaning and significance of the Marxian thought which has thus far been understood as having a purely economic content. It is an exacting task to illuminate and discover the
solutions to the exceedingly varied and debatable set of questions to which there has been no authoritative answer. In the nature of things, therefore, a work on Marxian ethics becomes an exploration into, a search for, the ethical implications embedded in Marx's total philosophy of culture. The study that follows is thus, in many ways, an analysis of the sociological foundations of ethical problems, in the context of Marxian thought. It constitutes itself into an intent look at the sociology of ethics which hopefully, facilitates a better and fuller understanding of any system of morality.

Philosophy, according to Marx, is concerned with the true nature of man in his socio-historical setting. It is related to action. It is this concept of philosophy which is adopted throughout the discussion in the following pages. The attempt here is to understand Marx, in depth, with regard to the ethico-philosophical position taken by him. This reconstruction of Marx's ethical position assumes perhaps added importance at a time when the divergences and contradictions have become so prominent in the interpretation of the thought of Marx.

Inevitably there has been in the discussion that follows a return to questions which naggingly recur: are we to be the makers of our fate or shall we be content
with being its prophets? Or again, was Marx himself a mere moral prophet, or did he endow man with the power to make his own destiny? To campaign for or against Marx, is only too easy. What is needed perhaps is a detached and objective philosophical analysis, without commitment to a given position. The important thing, above all, is to evade the cloud of confusion that seems to hang over everything connected with Marxian studies.

To claim success at having arrived at this detached approach would perhaps be too much. But at least an honest effort in that direction has been made in the pages that follow. The issues are profound. The perspectives must be proper, and the propositions just. The prerequisite in the circumstances is, therefore, total intellectual honesty. The present work may be imperfect in many ways, but there has been, throughout writing it, a deep commitment to this approach.

My debts, in the writing of this work, have been many. The foremost of these I owe to Dr. Prem Nath, Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy in the Panjab University, Chandigarh. To say that he has guided and supervised my work would be utterly inadequate. He has done much more than that; he has sustained me with his encouragement and help throughout the long period of my research. Prof. Nath's interdisciplinary approach
has helped me to look at the problems of ethnics in wider perspectives. The insights and ideas that Dr. Nath shared with me during these years are only a token of his continuing contribution to my education. My intellectual debt to him over the years is transparent in the pages that follow and is very gratefully acknowledged. I should like to add that whatever faults the present work has are due to me; whatever merits it has owe themselves to him.

In the completion of this work I have been fortunate in having the benefit of consultation and discussion with many scholars to whom I should like to express my gratefulness. I am especially indebted to Dr. Niharanjan Ray, Director, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla. He made some most valuable suggestions, and discussions with him were always a source of inspiration to me. His insightful comments and criticisms helped me to clarify my thoughts on some crucial points. He was also very kind in allowing me a free access to the library of the Institute. I am also thankful to Dr. A.P. Rao, Research Fellow at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla and Miss M. Kohli, Head of the Department of Political Science, Punjabi University, Patiala for having gone through the manuscript and given very constructive suggestions.
Finally, on a more personal note I would like to express my deep gratitude to Professor B.G. Goswamy and Dr. Karuna Goswamy for their willing and erudite suggestions. Miss A.K. Anand and Dr. Jagdish Sharma of the Panjab University Library, Chandigarh, have also contributed heavily in the completion of the present work by providing help above and beyond the call of their duty. I acknowledge their help with a deep sense of appreciation and gratefulness. My particular thanks are also due to Mr. Chander Mohan Mittal for having typed out the manuscript.

BHUAN CHANDEL