

JOURNAL OF POLITICS

An Annual Publication of the Department of Political Science, Dibrugarh University.

Vol. VI. Special Issue, 1999

- ☐ 150 Years of The *Communist Manifesto* :
Its Teachings and Relevancy
 - ☐ *Eros and Civilization* : Herbert Marcuse's Brave
New World
 - ☐ The Vision of the State in *Communist Manifesto*
 - ☐ Green in Red : Ecopolitical Thought of Herbert
Marcuse
 - ☐ Problems of Organisation : Antagonism
Between the *Communist Manifesto* and the Post
Modernist Agenda
 - ☐ Marcuse's Marxism : Theory of Alienation and
Revolution
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Experiment
 - ☐ Marx, Marcuse and the Women's Question
 - ☐ Mao Zedong : The Man and the Revolution
Re-Assessed
 - ☐ Symposium on "Ecology and Politics"
-

Volume VI (Special Issue)

1999

JOURNAL OF POLITICS

[This Volume of the Journal of Politics is published with the financial assistance of the Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi.]

DHIREN BHAGAWATI

Editor

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

DIBRUGARH UNIVERSITY

DIBRUGARH : ASSAM (INDIA)

1999

JOURNAL OF POLITICS : An Annual Publication of the Department of Political Science published by the Registrar, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh, Assam, Price Individual Rs. 70.00 and Institutional Rs. 100.00

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Printed by :

DATAPLEX COMPUTER SYSTEMS,

Rajabhetta, Dibrugarh- 786 004

Ph. 0373-865559

h. Phukan

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Editor's Note

From Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* published in 1848 to the writings of Herbert Marcuse, Marxism has undergone a tremendous transformation. Marxism as a living body of thought will continue to flourish. In some quarters a hurried conclusion is drawn that Marxism has failed. Is humanity free from exploitation and domination? Is there any alternative philosophy to Marxism which pronounces freedom of the whole human society to be its ultimate aim? Who has failed Marxism and why? These questions have not been answered.

The present day thought rejects a metanarrative and the need for a centre of thought and action. It has assumed a powerful force to fragment the struggle for emancipation. The appeal of the *Communist Manifesto* may not stir the mind of the working class of the industrialized society any more in these days of cybernetics. But deterioration of civilization and vulgarization of culture and the socio-economic chaos prevailing in the Afro-Asian Latin American countries point to the immanent crisis of the capitalist order.

The following pages of the **Journal of Politics** are dedicated to the memory of Marx's *Communist Manifesto* in its hundred fifty years of publication and the birth centenary of Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979). Industrialization set the milieu of the *Communist Manifesto* and the writings of Marcuse. The same milieu during the writings of the *Manifesto* was exploitative to the working class and continued to remain suppressive of human freedom in the days of Marcuse. Both the *Communist Manifesto* and the writings of Marcuse intended plans for reorganization of human relations to achieve emancipation. Marx aimed at emancipation of the whole of society from class struggle, exploitation and oppression while Marcuse aimed at resolution of the conflict between Eros and Thanatos which he believed industrialization superimposed on human freedom. Industrialization in a capitalistic model, the question is not who owns industry because Soviet-Union was not an exception to it as Marcuse could courageously tell the orthodox Marxists, would suppress freedom of a class and the individual. Marx and Marcuse converged on this point. It has become more important to ask who produces, what is produced and for whose interests it is produced. Before the nuclear holocaust overtakes the humanity, let there be a realization that there may be a better way to live than the way chosen by some and imposed on others.

This issue of the **Journal of Politics** is published with the financial assistance of the **Indian Council of Social Science Research** and we acknowledge our gratitude to them. We also express our gratitude to all who are directly or indirectly involved in publication of the issue.

Dhiren Bhagawati

150 YEARS OF THE *COMMUNIST MANIFESTO* : ITS TEACHINGS AND RELEVANCY

K. M. Deka

(This article is a humble effort to examine the teachings and relevancy of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* in the light of historical experience. The passages quoted here in the article are taken from the English translation of the *Communist Manifesto*, 1888 as reproduced in Ebenstein's *Great Political Thinkers : Plato to the Present*, Oxford & IBH Publishing Company, Calcutta, Bombay, New Delhi, 1966)

I

The Communist League in its London meet of 1847 entrusted Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx the task of drafting a manifesto outlining therein the theoretical postulates and the programme of action of the Communists. It was accordingly done, and the Communist League comprising Communists of various nationalities of Europe adopted the Manifesto in its meeting held in London in February 1848. It may be noted that while a draft of the Manifesto was jointly prepared by Engels and Marx, the final shape to the historic pamphlet was given by Marx, a fact acknowledged by Engels in the Preface to its English translation brought out in 1888.

Written in unambiguous simple language, intelligible even to the common man, the Manifesto finely mixes emotions with logic so as to inspire and to guide the workers in their revolutionary role to destroy the exploitative socio-economic system, called Capitalism and to establish Communism in its place. The Manifesto is not a book, based on penetrating and sustained research; it is a pamphlet containing the Communist Party's statements on its principles and programme of action for social change. Yet underlying the Manifesto as its central theme is Marx's theory of Historical Materialism, although his major works were yet to be done. (Marx was hardly 30 years and Engels 28 when they wrote

the *Communist Manifesto*). It precedes the first volume of *Capital* by almost two decades - nineteen years to be precise. The only earlier works of the authors of the Manifesto which had a bearing upon this historic pamphlet were Marx's *The Holy Family* (1844), Engel's *The Conditions of the Working Class in England* (1844-45) and their joint work *The German Ideology* (1845-46).

The Manifesto was not a complete and detailed work on the subject of Communism. Yet, and notwithstanding its generality and brevity, the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* contains all the basic tenets of Scientific Socialism and hence it is the mother of all theories and practices of Communism.

In this respect, Lenin has to say the following :

With clarity and brilliance of genius, this work outlines a new world conception, consistent materialism which also embraces the realm of social life; dialectics as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development; the theory of class struggle and of world historic revolutionary role of the proletariat - the creator of a new Communist society. (Lenin, *Karl Marx, Collected works*, vol. 21)

Lenin's observation aptly summerises the great secret of the Communist Manifesto's revolutionary creative power that has changed the world in the last one and a half centuries. And even after the breakdown of the socialist system in USSR and East Europe, the Manifesto continues to influence mankind.

II

Teachings of the Manifesto

Communism in Europe had already been an acknowledged political force when Marx and Engels took up the task of drafting the Manifesto. In fact, the Manifesto begins with the statement, although taunting, "A spectre is haunting Europe - the spectre of Communism". Then it says that it was high time that the Communists openly publish their views, their aims and their tendencies. It was accordingly done. Prior to this the Communists did not have a revolutionary theory to guide them. The term 'communistic' was loosely used to mean any one in opposition to the established order. At the time when St. Simon, Fourier, Owen and others talked of "socialism", the capitalist system was yet to reach an advanced stage where class antagonism becomes

too acute to be resolved peacefully. Besides, those thinkers who called themselves socialists were devoid of a scientific theory to understand the dynamics of social evolution and a revolutionary programme to guide them in their struggle against the exploiters. Nevertheless, the ideas of those Utopian socialists too were duly acknowledged, however critical that acknowledgement might have been, by the authors of this monumental document.

The Manifesto teaches that society develops in accordance with certain laws which are independent of the consciousness and the will of the people. With the help of the theory of Dialectical Materialism, the Manifesto explains the general laws of social development. It says that social development in every epoch of history depends on the evolution of the forces of production, and that the real motive forces in a society are its material conditions. It traces the evolution and development of three great social-economic formations of known history of the past, all of which are marked by class struggles - a sort of incessant civil wars between the exploiting and the exploited classes.

The Manifesto briefly refers to the evolution of the Slave and the Feudal societies by following the laws of Historical Materialism, and to the revolutionary reconstruction of the feudal society into the bourgeois society. Like all other social-economic formations which preceded capitalism, it too was progressive at the initial stage although it retained fully its exploitative character. As capital developed, intensity of class-antagonism also increased progressively. Class-antagonism was definitely noticed by the Utopean Socialists too, but they, as noted earlier, did not have a scientific framework, like Historical Materialism, to apply so as to understand the world, and a theory of revolution in order to change it. The Manifesto does the job.

Thus the Manifesto's central focuss is capitalism. It traces the growth of the bourgeoisie which itself is a product of series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange. Itself an exploited class in the feudal system, the bourgeoisie "played a most revolutionary role in history", but after establishing its exclusive political sway over the society it turned exploitative. The state is converted into an executive committee of the whole bourgeoisie - an instrument of exploitation which is used to suppress other classes. The authors of the historic document

expose the class character of the capitalist system in the following words :

... modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old.

... It has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other - the bourgeois and the proletariat.

The Manifesto predicts, in view of class antagonisms, the ruin of the capitalist society and transition according to the laws of social development into a higher form of society. Transition from one system to the other takes place by means of deep upheaval that takes place in the form of revolution. Just as the Slave society was destroyed by class antagonism leading to the emergence and growth of the feudal society, the latter in turn was done away with by the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois society would also be destroyed by the classes antagonistic to the capitalist class which uses the state as an instrument of exploitation, predicts the Communist Manifesto.

The following passage from the Manifesto pinpoints how the forces of destruction of the bourgeois society are inherent in the system itself :

The essential condition for the existence and for the sway of the bourgeois class is the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage labourers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the bourgeoisie, replaces the isolation (of the labourers) due to competition, by their revolutionary combinations, due to association. The development of modern industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie therefore, above all, produces are its own grave-diggers. Its fall, and victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.

The Manifesto analyses why the bourgeoisie has to integrate the whole world into its own system and convert the

globe into its market. The Manifesto says :

The need of constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production (hence to workers also) ... In place of old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant land and climbs. ...

The bourgeoisie by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all nations, even the most barbarians, into civilisation. ... It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production ...

The Manifesto also explains the growth of the proletariat into a revolutionary class through the process of struggle with the bourgeoisie at several stages of the development of capital. It asserts :

the social conditions of the old society no longer exist for the proletariat. The proletariat is without property; his relation to his wife and children has no longer anything common with bourgeois family relations; modern industrial labour, modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him of every trace of national character.

... They have nothing of their own to sever and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurance of, individual property.

So the proletariat, the most oppressed class, and being without property, without national character is standing face to face with the capitalist class with no stake in terms of property, for, they do not have it. The proletarian revolution, so predicts the Manifesto, is bound to be completely different from the earlier ones which were led by and only for the minority. The proletarian revolution would, in fact, destroy the bourgeois right to private property and convert property into common property of all members of society, thus shedding its class character.

The Manifesto thus exposes the secrets of class struggle and the laws of social changes and predicts the doom of the

capitalist system as the ultimate result of class antagonism. It identifies the proletariat as the most revolutionary class in the capitalist system and arms with the necessary theory and programme of violent revolution to end exploitation and injustice by destroying the capitalist system and thereby first founding the dictatorship of the proletariat and finally by establishing a classless, stateless society, that is, Communism.

To achieve the goal, the Manifesto assigns the leading role to the Communist Party, "the most advanced and resolute section of the working class" of every country. For 'the Community theoretically have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement".

The *Communist Manifesto* provides not only a general programme of revolution but also it teaches the working class the tactics of struggle which would change in the different phases of the struggle. It advocates supple and the realistic tactics to push forward the revolution and commands the Communist Party to join hands with various classes, parties and forces opposed to the capitalist class so as to convert it into a mass movement breaking through sectarian barriers. This will lead to forcible overthrow of capitalism.

The first step of the revolution by the proletariat, so teaches the great pamphlet, is to raise the working class to the position of ruling class and wrest all capital and instruments of production into the hands of the state. To revolutionise the entire mode of production, it suggests ten measures, such as, abolition of property along with the right of inheritance, heavy progressive income tax, nationalisation of the central Bank etc. This would lead to the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Finally, proletariat dictatorship would make room for communism - a system in which there would be no private property, and hence the society would no longer have any class. The abolition of classes would lead to the abolition of the State. Then finally Communism, the highest stage of human society - classless and stateless - would emerge.

The Manifesto is not a detailed and comprehensive work on communism. As such, it cannot be fully comprehended without referring to the subsequent works of Marx and Engels as well as

the creative innovations made by others, particularly by Lenin and after him, Mao. It should however be borne in mind that the general principles laid down in the Manifesto are, so did assert Marx and Engels, and affirmed by Lenin and others, as correct as ever. In the preface to the German Edition of the Manifesto, 1872, Marx and Engels made following assertion :

However much the state of things must have altered during the last twentyfive years, the general principles laid down in this Manifesto are, on the whole, as correct today as ever. Here and there some detail might be improved. The practical application of the principles will depend ... everywhere and at all times, on the historical conditions for the time being existing, and, for the reason, no special stress is laid on the revolutionary measures proposed at the end of Section II (of the Manifesto)- that passage would in many respects, be very differently worded today ... The working class cannot simply hold of the readymade state-machinery and wield for its own purposes. (Vide Marx and Engels *On the Paris Commune*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1971, p.270.)

Marx and Engels admitted frankly that in view of the gigantic advance of modern industry in the period under their review, and in view also of the extended party organisation of the working class, and in the light of historical experience from February Revolution (1848) and the Paris Commune (1872), the programme of the revolution became in terms of details antiquated. Also the lesson that could be drawn from the Paris Commune was that without establishing dictatorship of the proletariat, the existing apparatus of the state cannot be used for building socialism.

It may also be noted that Marx was thrilled to have read the famous work of Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-81) dealing with pre-historic societies, entitled *Ancient Society*, (MacMillan & Co., London, 1877) for two reasons. (1) Morgan's work confirmed the validity of the Marxian thesis that society can exist without private property and the state, and also proved the existence of Primitive Communism in the pre-class period which had lasted for an immensely longer period compared to all the class dominated societies. This would help a fuller periodisation of history which was not possible at the time of writing the Manifesto. (2) The work would also help formulating how class society evolved out of the ruins of Primitive Communism, and how transition from

capitalism, the highest state of class society, would lead to Communism, the highest state of classless and hence stateless society. In other words, in the light of *Ancient Society*, the Manifesto would proclaim that the oldest (Primitive Communism) and the newest (Capitalism) correspond to the socialist trend. So the dialectics of social development in its fullest exposition can be construed to mean that Primitive Communism was negated by private property which in its turn shall be negated by the revival of communism in a higher form. (See Deviprasad Chattopadhyay, "Dialectics of Social Evolution : Morgan, Marx and Engels" in *Social Scientist*, No. 112, 1982, pp. 3-20, for a fuller discussion on the subject).

It may be noted that Marx drew the attention of Engels to *Ancient Society* but apparently he himself intended to publicise the book in Germany with detailed notes on it. However, it did not happen and so Engels took upon himself the unfinished task of Marx and in 1884 he brought out his *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State in the light of the researches of Lewis H. Morgan*. Engels' work filled a major gap in the Manifesto and helped formulating fully the dialectics of social development.

Morgan, while looking back at the immensely vast period of man's existence in the Primitive Communist society, saw that it had been negated by class society, Marx and Engels foresaw the negation of the class society by the re-emergence of communism in its higher-much higher-form. Thus Engels' classic *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (etc) integrates the findings of Morgan and himself on primitive Communist Society with the Communist Manifesto, thereby expounding fully the laws of social transition and development. This was, however, done not by an amendment to the Manifesto but by a note to it, for, Marx and Engels had taken the stand that "*the Manifesto has become a historical document on which we have no longer any right to alter*" (emphasis added). (See Marx and Engels *Selected Works*, Moscow, 1975, p. 32).

It may be emphasised that attempts have been made by a group of Anglo-American Social Anthropologists to reject Morgan as it sees the danger that Morgan's work poses to the very roots of family, private property and the state. But as admitted by leading figure of the group, these Anthropologists have little understanding in the matter of kinship (Chattopadhyay, *op. cit.* pp. 12 & 13). Thus the periodisation of history as made by

Marx and Engels remains valid; the pre-class society covered roughly ninety-nine per cent of the period of man's active existence on the planet earth, and that the future Communist society is destined, according to the Manifesto, to be the highest and longest stage of human civilisation.

In regard to other gaps in the Manifesto, it was Lenin who has contributed the most to cover them by his creative innovations. The innovations include his concepts of (i) the party and the role of the vanguard in the revolution; (ii) imperialism - a form of capitalism in the epoch of finance capital, (iii) revolution and its strategies and tactics, (iv) the proletarian state as a precursor to Communism and (v) coalition of workers and peasants. In this respect, mention may also be made of Mao's creative contributions to Marxian principles and programme of revolution particularly his concepts of contradictions, the role of the peasantry in the revolution, and cultural revolution - that revolution is a continuing process (*sans* its left adventurism). Thus Marxism being a living science, the Manifesto shall go on getting innovated in the light of historical experience from epoch to epoch although its basic principles remain unaltered.

III

The Manifesto in the light of historical experience : From Paris Commune to Socialism in One State

The efficacy of the Communist Manifesto was for the first time tested in the Paris Commune, established by the working class on 18 March 1871 which lasted for only 72 days. It was 23 years after the February 1848 uprising of the Paris Workers that a proletarian state, being governed by the working people, with all its social and political measures taken in the interest of the working people- the working class above all- could be established. Its details are matter of history; but what is relevant here are the theoretical innovations built up on the basis of the experience of the Commune which may be briefly recapitulated.

The achievements of the Commune, although temporary, reaffirmed the validity of the Communist Manifesto and brought home the point that the Manifesto was no utopian but something realisable by proletarian revolution. It inspired the working class

throughout Europe; mass meetings and demonstrations were held in support of the Paris Commune in full expression of working class internationalism. This was the first great show of strength and solidarity of the revolutionary class throughout the whole continent. It should also be highlighted that keeping high the banner of solidarity of workers of all countries, the Paris Commune elected a foreigner (German) to its executive body.

Marx and Engels who analysed the achievements and failures of the Paris Commune discovered a major gap in the Manifesto, that is the Manifesto did not specifically provide for a proletarian state as a precursor to Communism. It was found that the proletarian state cannot use the apparatus of the bourgeois state for building up socialism during the period of transition. Therefore the working class, concluded Marx, must evolve its own state machine with special emphasis on a proletarian army. Earlier, from the experience of the February and June 1848 revolutions of the workers of Paris, it was found that a disciplined party of the workers was an essential pre-condition for a successful proletarian revolution. [These two gaps were to be made up later by the creative innovations of V. I. Lenin. His concept of party, organised on the principle of democratic centralism, and that of the vanguard of the party, and his outline of the proletarian state (*State and Revolution*) are standing on the lessons of the Paris Commune.]

Dwelling on the Paris Commune, Engels made the following observation :

From the very outset, the Commune was compelled to recognise that the working class, once came to power, could not go on managing with the old state machine, that in order not to lose again its only just conquered supremacy, the working class must, on the one hand, do away with all the old repressive machinery previously used against it itself, and on the other safeguard itself against its own deputies and officials. (Engels, 'Introduction to the Civil War in France' included in *On the Paris Commune*, Progress Publishers Moscow, 1971, p. 32)

The Paris Commune showed that without a united front of the workers and the peasants, under the leadership of the former, a socialist revolution could not be a success. The Proudhonists who were looking after the agrarian question of

the Commune failed to have a proper grasp over this aspect and thus proved themselves to be irrelevant to the socialist revolution. (Later, Lenin and after him, Mao enriched themselves from this experience of the Commune). In terms of revolutionary strategies and tactics, too, the Paris Commune erred in several matters. For instance, as Marx pointed out, had the Commune seized the Bank of France, it would have been worth ten thousand hostages which could have forced Versailles to come to peace with the Commune.

The Paris Commune, the first proletarian state, was a matter of 72 days. It was confined to the capital city without the people being conscious of what was happening there. The Commune was not even understood by its own creators, the Blanquists (majority) and the Proudhonists (minority). On the other hand, the Russian revolution, so stressed Lenin, was standing on the experience of the Paris Commune and on the years of experience of German Social Democracy. Above all, Lenin's concrete analysis of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism, and the contemporary contradictions between the working class and the capitalists as well as contradictions between the colonial countries and the imperialist ones, and contradictions among the imperialist countries themselves led him to conclude that socialist revolution can take place not only in advanced capitalist countries but in relatively backward countries as well where the imperialist chain was the weakest. Russia was one such country.

The Bolshevik party led by Lenin successfully applied the Marxist theory of revolution to the concrete conditions of Russia. The revolution was successful. But the building up of a socialist state was a stupendous task and the road to socialism was zigzag and never straight. Lenin, in order to negotiate with the sharp turns and twists that the Russian revolution faced made several tactical adjustments, the new Economic Policy (NEP) being the most significant of them. Lenin was absolutely clear that the NEP was a temporary compromise forced upon the revolution by Russia's concrete situations. The bourgeois revolution was to complete, and the agrarian question and worker-peasant relation was to take correct shape before transition to socialism. Hence NEP was in the form of two steps backward in order to leap one step in the direction of socialism. It brought commodity exchange to the fore as the principal lever of the NEP. It was impossible to

establish a correct relationship between the proletariat and the peasantry or an altogether stable form of economic alliance between these two classes in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism - without regular commodity exchange or the exchange of products between industry and agriculture. ('Draft Resolution on Questions of New Economic Policy' in Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 423).

However, ever since the adoption of NEP, controversies shrouded it - controversies created not only by opponents of communism but also by party insiders. These controversies arose not only during Lenin's life time and in the period of Stalin but also in Gorbachev's time as well. In recent times in complete distortion of historical facts, not only Charles Bettelheim (*Class Struggle in USSR*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1978) and E. H. Carr & R. W. Davis *The Foundations of Planned Economy*, Macmillan Press, London, 1971) among other western critics of Marxism, but also Mikhail Gorbachev, the then Secretary General of the CPSU hailed NEP as the correct line and condemned Stalin for altering it by super-industrialisation and collectivisation of farmings of the USSR and for waging war against the Kulaks.

There are abundant proofs to show that Lenin never introduced NEP as a permanent feature of the Soviet State. Lenin explained in his Report to the Second All - Russia Congress of Political Education Departments, 17 October 1921, the circumstances leading to the adoption of NEP as a tactical and temporary concession. He said,

Partly owing to our problems that overwhelmed us and partly owing to the desperate position in which the Republic found itself when the imperialist war ended - owing to these circumstances, and a number of others, we made the mistake of deciding to go over directly to communist production and distribution. We thought that under the surplus - food appropriate system the peasants would provide us with required quantity of grain to which we could distribute among the factories and thus achieve communist production and distribution ... unfortunately ... brief experience convinced us that time was wrong, that it ran counter to what we had previously written about the transition from capitalism to socialism (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 62).

The purport of NEP was clearly laid down by Lenin in the aforementioned address and in the following words,

New Economic Policy means substituting a tax for the requisitioning of food; it means reverting to capitalism to a considerable extent, to what extent we do not know. Concessions to foreign capitalists ... and leasing enterprises to private capitalists definitely mean restoring capitalism, and this is part and parcel of the New Economic Policy; for abolition of the surplus - food appropriation system means allowing the peasants to trade freely in their surplus agricultural produce in whatever is left over after the tax is collected. (Lenin, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-65).

Besides, Lenin wanted to use NEP as a training ground for the working class, for, by working with the bourgeois side by side, the workers would acquire the required mastery over the system of production, particularly the know-how and the managerial skills. The process of building the Soviet State in the initial years was so difficult and so complex, and things were so uncertain that Lenin could not fix a cut off date for NEP to discontinue. But in no case he intended NEP to continue permanently.

After Lenin's death the Party faced a severe ideological rift. The 'Left Opposition' headed by Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev held the view firmly that the on-going socialisation of Soviet Russia was too slow and that the proletarian regime there in Russia could maintain itself only if a 'permanent revolution' succeeded outside, and that Stalin's programme of "Socialism in one State" was simply unpractical. Stalin held just the opposite view. But for a time being he used for tactical reasons the "Right Opposition" (led by Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky who advocated that NEP should continue permanently as far as the agrarian sector was concerned while socialism might be built in the cities) against the Trotskyists. However, in 1928 Stalin decided to do away with NEP and super-industrialise Soviet Union in the manner of the Five Year Plan, a part of which, incidentally, was the brain-child of Trotsky, that included collectivisation of the peasantry. While forced draft-industrialisation under state sector was hoisted in 1928 itself, forcible collectivisation began one year later. There were about 25,000,000 peasant holdings which Stalin wanted to unite into socialised collective farms upon whose success depended the future of the Soviet Union. There was

fierce resistance from the peasants, particularly the Kulaks, during the period from 1929 to 1933. The peasants slaughtered their livestock rather than turn it over to the collectives and about 50 percent of Russia's livestock was thus destroyed. It took about a decade to replenish the slaughtered stock. In 1932 the farmers, both in and outside the collective farms, sowed the crop which was abundant but they did not harvest all of it. There was famine as a result of acute food shortage and several million peasants perished. In a sense, the peasants first killed their animals and then they killed themselves. The famine broke the peasant resistance and thereafter planned socialisation of the USSR proceeded smoothly and also speedily, despite Stalin's desire to tone it down after the famine.

In a remarkably short period of time socialism in the Soviet state was built up and Stalin proved that 'socialism in one state' was possible. This, too, was achieved at a time when the capitalist powers were ravaged by an economic crisis of unprecedented severity and scope. This was, of course, achieved at a very high price, particularly in respect of collectivisation. Stalin admitted his mistakes in the agrarian front which were partly due to the fact that class analysis of the peasantry was not properly undertaken before forcible collectivisation. (Mao drew lessons from Stalin's mistakes, analysed the classes within the peasantry, and forged strong alliance between the workers and the peasants during and after the revolution.)

Stalin described the Soviet economy thus built up to mean that : (1) The power of the capitalist class has been overthrown and has been replaced by the power of the working class. (2) The tools and means of production, the land, factories etc. have been taken away from the capitalists and handed over to the working class and the peasantry. (3) The development of production is subordinated, not to the principle of competition and the safeguarding of capitalist profit, but to the principle of planned guidance and systematic improvement of the material and cultural level of the toilers. (4) The distribution of the national income takes place in the interests of systematically raising the material position of the workers and peasants, and extending socialist production in town and country. (5) The systematic improvement of the material position of the toilers and ceaseless growth of their requirements guarantee the working class against crises of

overproduction and against the growth of unemployment, etc. (6) the working class is the master of the country, working not for the capitalists, but its own class". (Stalin, *Leninism*, p. 307. Quoted by John Gunther, *Inside Europe*, Harper & Brothers, New York and London, 1940, pp. 568-569).

The Manifesto thus underwent its first concrete translation in Russia where the dictatorship of the proletariat was made possible theoretically and practically. The Soviet state grew from strength to strength. After World War II, it emerged as a super power in the bipolar world and matched the other super power in every field.

IV

Relevancy of the Manifesto

During 1989-91, the socialist states of East Europe, and the USSR itself "withered away"- peacefully - making room for return of the capitalist system there. Following this setback, the Manifesto's validity and relevancy is once more under cloud. Earlier, too, after the failure of the February and June 1848 Revolutions of the Paris workers, and also on the fall of the Paris Commune of 1871, the opponents of communism euphorically tended to write off the Manifesto. Now also similar euphoria prevails following the recent setback of socialism. A leading American intellectual dared pronounce "the end of history", meaning thereby that there will be no more dialectics of social development and that capitalism is the last word in history and that future history would simply be its mechanical details. The Editorial Board of *Problems of Communism* in its last letter to the readers announced the winding up of the famous journal since the 'menace of communism is over'. The Western block declared the end of the Cold War and the beginning of new world order and world peace. Many celebrities even wished Marx and Lenin were not born, as did Winston Churchill in the past. In his *The Aftermath*, Churchill while writing about Lenin, observed "their (Russian people's) worst misfortune was his (Lenin's) birth; their next worse was his death". (John Gunther, *op. cit.* p. 329).

But can history be wished away and does capitalism have the last say ? Let us have a glance at the US society today. *Forbes* magazine in its 1998 annual release has the following,

among many other, information about social inequalities there in USA to offer : there are 175 billionaires in the USA of whom 42 per cent got their immense fortune through inheritance. The data about 'self-made men' by virtue of free enterprises too are quite disturbing. For instance, Bill Gates, Philip Nike and their lot flourish by exploiting mainly the workers of the developing countries of the globe. *Forbes* reports that Nike who deals in sports shoes and clothes, get his products manufactured by Asian Workers who per head hardly earns less than ten dollars a week. The 25,000 workers who make his products - Nike, La Gear, Reebok and Adidas - earn only 12.5 million dollars annually while Nike's fortune has crossed 5.4 billion dollars. And Nike is a lesser billionaire compared to Bill Gates, another self-made man, whose wealth has exceeded 39.5 billion dollars, worth more than the combined GNP of all the central American countries. Another magazine *Business Week* reveals the gross disparities in the pay structures of the working people themselves employed by these enterprises and Multi National Corporations; a CEO of a corporation gets 209 times the pay of a factory worker of the same corporation. Taking advantage of the present 'economic reforms' and globalisation, and the absence of socialist block which resisted such exploitation in the past, these MNCs are making fantastic profits at the cost of the workers, mainly of the developing countries.

The UNDP's *Human Development Report* 1999 (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999) too highlights the concentration, centralisation and internationalisation of finance capital, particularly in the post - 1990 decade. The purports of the negative aspects of globalisation as highlighted by the Report are as follows :

(1) Rapid globalisation has created rapid inequalities among the people of different classes and countries. The gap between per capita income between the countries with the richest fifth of the world people and those with the poorest fifth increased from 30:1 in 1960 to 60:1 in 1995 and 74:1 in 1995. These inequalities are more pronounced in those countries of Sub-Saharen Africa which have been most integrated with the global economy dominated by the most developed countries, for, these African countries export only primary agricultural commodities, the prices of which are invariably determined by the importing countries.

The Report has identified the networth of 200 richest billionaires which had been 440 billion in 1994 that rose to a dizzy height of \$1042 billion in 1998. As regards their global distribution, the Report reveals that of the 200 richest people, 65 belong to North America, 55 to Europe, 13 to other industrial countries, 30 to Asia and Pacific region, 16 to Arab states, 17 to Latin America and Caribbean, 3 to East European and CIS countries and 1 to Sub-Saharan Africa. The Report observes that the assets of three richest people are more than the combined GNP of all the least developed countries; assets of 200 richest people are more than the combined income of 41 percent of the world's people, an annual contribution of just 1 percent of whose income can provide access to universal primary education for all children of the whole globe.

It may be recalled that first Human Development Report of the UNDP, 1990 makes the following noteworthy observation:

The real wealth of a nation is its people. And the purpose of Development is to create an enabling environment for people enjoying long, healthy and creative lives. This simple but powerful truth is too often forgotten in the pursuit of material and financial wealth. (Quoted by *Frontline*, 27 August, 1999)

The Communist Manifesto in this respect, says nothing different than what has been said by the UNDP's Report.

The Report also has brought out the fiscal instability in South East Asian region from 1997 onward - a typical byproduct of present day globalisation based on fast mobility of finance capital. (Earlier Brazil was another victim of this process). This instability has caused great human losses in addition to \$2 trillion economic loss. More than a quarter of the people 4.5 billion living in the developing countries are below the poverty line (poverty line being fixed at \$2 per head per day).

The Report also makes a scathing comment on the MNCs which are an essential feature of today's finance capital. It says that Multinational Corporations which now play a major role globally in matters relating to economy, information and research do not have defined and accepted sense of public accountability as they claim to be 'private enterprises'.

The MNCs, which control 95 percent of global commodity trade, together with the World Bank, IMF, giant international banks and the World Trade Organisation dominate every aspect of the global village; and the developing countries play just a subordinate role in it. The intensification of this contradiction is bound to lead to unprecedented increase in poverty, diseases, miseries, homelessness and insecurity of all sorts of the people of the underdeveloped countries.

As a result of the on-going economic liberalisation and globalisation, the developing countries are in helpless conditions of debt trap. It is almost impossible for these countries to repay their debts. But the World Bank and the IMF are coercing these countries to take stringent financial measures so that from the extra savings at least a portion of the debt can be repaid. In 1998, the IMF succeeded in recovering 390 million dollars from the African States as part of IMF's structural adjustment programmes. (*People's Democracy*, 28.9.1991). The outcome of the programme is disastrous. Government spendings on health, education, and social welfare are drastically cut. The programme also entails removal of all controls on foreign investment in these countries.

The condition of the working people of the developed countries are better only by comparison. They also are an insecure lot now. Globalisation is thus another name for the present stage of imperialism, characterised by transformation of the world into a global village with full freedom of free trade, free movement of capital, technology, services and work forces. Its arm are the IMF, WB, MNCs, NATO and WTO with the help of which it extracts maximum surplus value and amass capital, and modifies the laws of capitalism in order to readjust them to new conditions. All this has been possible due to the collapse of the USSR and the Socialist block which had so long supported the causes of the oppressed people of the developing countries and acted as powerful deterrant to war and aggression. Dismantling of the Warsaw pact has not led to dismantling of the NATO; on the contrary, NATO has been further strengthened as an instrument of coercion and military intervention.

The decade of experience in capitalist reconstruction of Russia has only resulted in decadence of the super power of yesterday. Capitalism and market economy have provided little

solution to the Russian people's problems which arose as a consequence of the complete erosion of the social security that was guaranteed to them by the socialist system. Above 40 per cent of the Russian people today live below the poverty line. Decadence in every sphere of the country is almost complete. As a result, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation has staged a comeback to the centre stage of the country's politics and has now emerged as the largest political force in the Duma. Similarly the Communist Parties of the erstwhile East European countries have re-emerged as potent political force. This shows that the Communist Manifesto has not become irrelevant for these 'capitalist' countries.

The present world scenario only confirms once more the validity of the general principles of the Communist Manifesto. The Manifesto is not a brain-child of Karl Marx alone; it is a product of accumulated human experience and wisdom. As long as hunger, and exploitation of man by man exists in the society, the Manifesto can never be wished away; on the contrary, it would remain as an authentic fighter against exploitation and social injustice. To conclude in the words of William Ebenstein, Professor of Political Science at Princeton University, "The ideology of Communism will remain a potent factor in world politics even if the Soviet Union disappears, for internal or external reasons, as a major world power. Just as revolutionary communism was born long before the Soviet Union came into existence, it may easily outlive her eclipse or demise. The military strength of Russia, China and other communist states may come and go, but ideological challenge of Communism as a political faith and doctrine will continue".



EROS AND CIVILIZATION:**HERBERT MARCUSE'S BRAVE NEW WORLD****K. N. Phukan**

Herbert Marcuse sub-titles his book, *Eros and Civilization* (first published 1955; the edition here referred to is that of Allen Lane, London 1964), as *A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*. The book, however, is made up of two parts. First of all, it sets forth the basic tenets of Freud's (1856-1939) metapsychology, and then goes on to bring out its implications for human civilization, its origins and progress. In the second part, *Eros and Civilization* is focussed on a critique of civilization, which leads on to abstract philosophic speculations about the future of this civilization from a point of view that Marcuse partly forces out from a radical reinterpretation of the Freudian world-view. The second part of the book is thoroughly speculative in the sense of being unempirical, so that the speculations are mostly incapable of being related to any concrete image of life, whether of the individual or of the community. The speculations may indeed appear to get remoter and remoter from probable human experience, in spite of the author's conscious efforts to fuse Freudian analysis with apparently socialist aspirations, perhaps because fundamental incompatibilities between Freud's world-view and the Marxist world-view, however unorthodox in Marcuse, are almost impossible to wish away. The trouble with Marcuse's narrative is that he sets himself an abstract theoretical task of reconciling irreconcilables in his vision of a possible future civilization, which is to be revolutionary not only in being free from class-domination but also from libidinal repression, which, built over the ages into the human psyche, appears to him to be a firmly established obstacle in the way of a total revolutionary fulfillment. For Freud, who is a conservative rationalist and determinist, this obstacle is inevitable and insurmountable; but for Marcuse, who is a dialectical materialist albeit an unorthodox Marxist lives, the obstacle, theoretically, is surmountable and should be surmounted. Thus, it is no error to say that Marcuse in

his narrative goes half the way with Freud, and then goes the other half with his own construction of a socialist-revolutionary vision. The point where he parts company with the conservative Freud is precisely where he reinterprets Freud to make his metapsychological world-view amenable to revolutionary change, at once libidinal and social, and also seeks to interfuse with this reinterpretation a materialist programme for political action radically aiming to eliminate class domination and exploitation. In the process, Marcuse sees libidinal and socio-economic repression as the root of all evils in civilization which he eloquently denounces in all his writings.

It is often said that even before Marx it had been natural for man sporadically to gain some of the insights which have later been systematized in Marxist philosophy and its programme for political action. Similarly, some of the Freudian insights which Marcuse builds into his critique and his unabashedly metaphysical (inspite of his Marxist doctrination) vision for a sane and satisfying existence for mankind, had not been unknown to man before Freud, in the East as well as the West. For instance, it had been anticipated profoundly in mythology and literature that the basic structure inherent in the primary instincts of man is reproduced in a somewhat mimetic fashion in the structure developing in culture or civilization. In Greek mythology, and in the plays of Sophocles, for example, freedom in a grown-up man from the innately primal Oedipal wish in infantile sexuality is a necessary condition for enabling reproductive fertility for crops, animals and the human kind. The insight into the libidinal desire of the infant for the parents of the opposite sex and the concomitant jealousy of the parents of the same sex asked in the prehistoric beginnings of the human race for the enforcement of a parental repression to start with, but it was also a repression that almost simultaneously, if not previously, needed to be structured by education in the instincts themselves. This repression, both inevitable and necessary in Freud's metapsychology, of infantile libidinality, may be imagined as partially enforced in the beginning but increasingly internalized by man in the depths of the instincts themselves. In whatever way the repression came to be supervened upon the instincts, the recognition of its necessity, probably in the brother-clan stage of the growth of civilization, gave rise to guilt feelings, which the Greek mythologies and literature tellingly dramatize. Without these pre-Freudian insights

in the back-ground constituted by mythology and literature, Freud probably would have found it very difficult to give his metapsychology its perspicacity and credibility.

The ancients in Europe began to regard instinctual fallibility and sexual guilt as a potent curse on mankind, a curse that impaired physical reproductivity and spiritual vitality. This is to be seen as a recurrent theme in the entire range of significant European literature, ancient, medieval and modern. The preoccupations with themes relating to human sexuality become increasingly subtler with time, but at bottom they remain elemental and tentacular, penetrating surface sexuality into depths underneath, and thus perceptive of intimate and perhaps also integral ties between what is undisguisedly sexual and what is apparently asexual in personalities and institutions. Freud in a more conscious way builds up his theory of the interfusion between Eros or the primal life instincts and the regressive-progressive dialectics in the evolutionary growth of civilization, and not surprisingly his psychoanalytical insights are often scaffolded on his understanding of literature mingling imperceptibly with self-knowledge.

The subterranean links between the frankly sexual and the apparently asexual have been traditional attractions for the literary imagination not only in Europe but all over the world. In Indian literature too there are numerous references to myths suggestive of such links. Very often, the evocation of Eros in Indian literature is also an evocation of its moral problematics, its necessary inhibition or repression to ensure culture. Sometimes, as in the ancient Greek Dionysian or Bacchanal rites or in a medieval work like Boccaccio's *Decameron*, in some ancient or medieval Indian works of literature too, Eros appears to be given a temporary licence for uninhibited revelry but, this licence is always to be withdrawn or suspended whenever the moralistic repressive alarm is sounded out. In at least one incident in the *Bhaqawata*, licence appears to be given to the multiform and hence by implication incorporeal godhead for full and free and yet blameless erotic play, but when the question is raised about the possibility of similar licence for humans, the prescription is for a necessary inhibition of Eros. Thus, the human situation, with very few exceptions such as those of Orpheus and Narcissus as interpreted by Marcuse in *Eros and Civilization*, asks for a repression of sexuality or inhibition of the instincts, so that man

can turn from erotic play to work, which is to be life-supporting and generative of culture or civilization. Freud's metapsychology is consistent with these images of self-governed sexuality in art as creative of culture. In such images, as in Freud, the deflection of instinctual energy into work productive of the means of life is more than hinted at. Swimming against those tides, Marcuse in *Eros and Civilization*, proposes a total and radical break with the conservative European traditions of culture with their orientation to instinctual repression, and pleads for a new basis for culture in unrepressed Eros in the interest of a revolution, which would not only extend almost absolute libidinal freedom to the domain of society and politics but also preclude a betrayal of this revolution by staying safely and uninterruptedly revolutionary for ever and ever on the basis of unrepressed libidinality and the accompanying work-world freedom.

Before we turn to focus on Marcuse's reinterpretation of Freud, it may be underlined that the student of Shakespeare also cannot be blind to the poet-playwright's awareness of the multiform connections between human sexuality and civilization. The great poet, on the one hand, was aware of the supreme need to ensure the natural health of the instincts by not bringing to bear upon them extremely rigorous repressions, and on the other, of the need to check the befoulment of sex by excessive indulgence. There is that profoundly disturbing play of Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, where he poignantly dramatizes the inevitable hypocrisy and/or hysteria of the unnatural and self-imposed celibacy of the puritan and the anchorite and alarms the reader's or viewer's imagination about the grave political dangers that may ensue from the puritanical pretence to the absolute virtue of abstinence. The connection between the wilfully thwarted Eros and the sadistic political wilfulness of Angelo in *Measure for Measure* is made by Shakespeare with a point and precision which Herbert Marcuse for one would greatly appreciate. But while Marcuse in his book argues for and builds up an extreme thesis to plead for a total undoing of repression which for Freud is the necessary basis of culture, Shakespeare would appear to be arguing for a balance between natural free play and healthy restraint in order at the same time to ensure that there is to be no maiming or disabling of the instincts either by excessive repression or by excessive indulgence. One may indeed imagine that if Shakespeare were

to be confronted with Freud's theory, he would, on the showing of *Measure for Measure*, largely agree with Freud, but at the same time enter the plea that a way may be found to minimise the damage by repression to the human psyche by all fair means. And if Shakespeare were to be confronted with Marcuse's neo-Freudian and quasi-Marxist theory advocating for the undoing of economic domination through the total undoing of the repression of Eros, he would warn Marcuse of the anarchic possibilities of total and polymorphous free play proposed for the instincts in order to create a basis for a politically far-reaching revolutionary order for mankind.

Marcuse's restatement of the Freudian position is straightforward and orthodox; but his reinterpretation of the Freudian Eros in the intended consequences for civilization marks a crucial departure from the Freudian exegesis on the interactions between Eros and civilization. While Freud accepts the dynamics of Eros and civilization in their evolutionary development in human history as given and unalterable, Marcuse rejects their historical interrelations as a wrongly chosen and disastrous basis for civilization right in the beginning and asks for a totally radical reorientation in Eros in order to ensure a consequent reorientation in civilization. It appears from Marcuse's point of view as though there were two ways before man in his remote prehistorical beginnings, of which he could have chosen either, but he had chosen the wrong one. Marcuse believes that in his historical evolution, man, not knowing which way would be better for him, chose the way through repression, being unwilling rather than unable to resist the compulsive force of a basic repression arising initially from a conflict within the life instinct between the death instinct and itself. With the development of civilization, repression has become surer and stronger than ever, and yet for Marcuse, it is never too late in the day for man to force out his life instinct or Eros from the ever increasing tyranny of repression. Thus liberated, Eros would be an unfailing source for the creation of a brave new civilization where work, instead of being alienated labour, would be play, and the uninhibited libido would be generative of an abiding and all-round enjoyment of life without any conceivable pain and guilt feeling which repression entails. In his psychoanalysis, Freud is at once realistic and pessimistic; his view of man is perhaps also tragic in a true sense as it proceeds from the fatality of repression, which while maiming Eros enables

it as an active source of civilization. In contrast, Marcuse would appear an idealist and optimist who finally ends up as a romantic revolutionist on the ground of a libidinal reorientation, the necessary means to which he does not care to indicate.

Marcuse holds that the European identification of the essence of existence with Logos, the seat of conscious reasoning, consecutive thinking or contemplation, was the initial blunder. His own belief is that of Freud, that the essence of being and becoming is Eros, and it is the surrender and subjugation of Eros to Logos that gives us the bloated and blundering industrial civilization we now have. Man is essentially a creature of Eros, of desire for objects of love, and by this alone he is most himself in the relentless drive of the energy that is desire for securing pleasure and avoiding pain. This is what Freud calls the "pleasure-principle", and man's 'psychical activity' in his view is regulated by this principle. This in other words is the life instinct that formulates the purposes for living. The pleasure-principle is the same as the quest for happiness, which is constantly frustrated by the "reality-principle", the active opponent of the "pleasure-principle". The drive for pleasure runs against the reality of the everyday world, which enforces the repression and renunciation of pleasure. The cause of repression is the conflict between the two principles, of which the pleasure principle is located in the unconscious, the id. The conscious self interferes repressively with the unconscious at the instance of external reality characterized by the condition of want and the necessity to work. It is the conscious mind, repressing the unconscious, that institutes education and the making of culture through the basic instrument of repression. Pleasure has to be forgone for work, which demands submission to reality, which is constitutive of the delay in or renunciation of pleasure. The conflict between the pleasure-principle and the reality-principle gives rise to dreams, fantasies, the utopian wish-fulfillment, which constitute neurosis. Neurosis is a manifestation of the repressed unconscious, which when frustrated by the reality-principle, seeks out substitute-gratification in order to make the repression emotionally bearable by palliating pain without wholly removing it. Substitute-gratifications signify a return by the back door of the pleasure-principle, when denied and frustrated by reality. Thus denied by repression, pleasure suffers not only a reduction but also a distortion, or degeneration from the essence of being and

becoming into mere symptom, a disease. In Freud's theory, repression appears often to be defined as the necessity to work, which Marcuse distinguishes from play, the mode of operation of the pleasure-principle. And it is work that builds up civilization, and so civilization is the result of repression, the thwarting of the pleasure-principle. In other words, man or society found in repression the means for fulfilling the demands for productive labour. Man in one sense represses himself to create society and in another sense he then goes on to use society to further repress himself to make the process of development a continuous one. Marcuse appears to be subscribing to both these views. And in the light of this analysis, it is not the individual alone who suffers from neurosis, but civilization itself does so. It appears that Marcuse proposes to save mankind from this universal neurosis that makes him perform alienated labour by foregoing under compulsions the gratifications of pleasure. He proposes to do so through a libidinal liberation that would in a revolutionary way restore Eros to the essence of existence through an overthrow of Logos.

Marcuse's restatement of the Freudian position is worthy of a series of quotations from his *Eros and Civilization*. (page numbers given within brackets). Marcuse writes :

But the unrestrained pleasure comes into conflict with the natural and human environment. The individual comes to the traumatic realization that full and painless gratification of his needs is impossible. And after this experience of disappointment, a new principle of mental functioning gains ascendancy. The reality principle supersedes the pleasure principle : man learns to give up momentary, uncertain, and destructive pleasure for delayed, restrained, but 'assured' pleasure. Because of this lasting gain through renunciation and restraint, according to Freud, the reality principle 'safeguards' rather than 'dethrones', 'modifies' rather than denies, the pleasure principle" (p-13)

Marcuse goes on to say that Freud thinks of the animal drives as bringing upon themselves the organized ego, where the faculties of attention, memory, judgement arise. The power of reason however spares "phantasy", which belongs to the pleasure principle and to the domain of art and imagination. The opposition of the reality principle to the pleasure principle, in historical time, brings about the rise of a system of institution, of law and order and social organisation of sex relations for enforcement of taboos such as that an incest. The repressive social institutions emerge from the repressive apparatus of man that prohibits certain

sexual gratifications in order to permit and promote certain others.

The psychic apparatus of man according to Freud, and so for Marcuse, is made up of the id, the ego and the superego. The domain of the unconscious, of the pleasure principle, is the id, and as the seat of desire, it is amoral in its drive for gratification. Under the influence of external reality, the id, develops into ego, which introduces the reality principle and mediates between the id and the external world. The ego finds reality hostile to the id and becomes an instrument for the rejection of instincts which on gratification are destructive in nature for an organized society. Superego develops under parental influence to start with and then begins to represent social morality. Repression, we understand, is carried out by the ego at the behest of the superego. The repressive organization of the institutions is the ground where the dynamics of the conflict between Eros and civilization are played out.

At this point of his restatement of Freud, Marcuse introduces two concepts of his own as tools for his study of Eros and civilization. The first of these is "Surplus-repression", which means repression in addition to basic repression "necessary for the perpetuation of the human race in civilization" and which is identifiable with "restrictions necessitated by social domination" (p-35). And the other concept introduced by Marcuse is that of the "Performance principle", defined as "the prevailing historical form of the *reality principle*" (p-35). By his doctrine of surplus-repression, Marcuse extends the psychoanalytical concept of repression to a quasi-political concept emanating from the social and political institutions of domination in the "distribution of scarcity as well as the effort of overcoming it", (p-36). One such basic institution is the monogamic-patriarchal family, whose influence is to be understood as bringing about a progressive de-sexualization of the human kind. The surplus-repression caused by the necessity of the monogamic-patriarchal family led to a curbing of the polymorphous potentialities of the libido and prepared the way for the restrictive "genital supremacy" or fixation in the relation of the sexes. Marcuse makes out the genital fixation - (which implies the drive for genital gratification to the exclusion of other non-genital libidinal gratifications) to be a negative symptomatic effect of surplus-repression. The restriction of the pleasures of the senses was in a way discovered by economic man to be an instrument of social domination according to Marcuse. On this showing, he goes on to argue that "psychological

categories ... have become political categories" (p. XXVII). It is by assuming this interchangeability of psychological and political categories, Marcuse turns his neo-Freudian psychoanalysis to a basis for a revolutionary critique of civilization. We may suggest at this point that this interchangeability cannot in truth be pressed to the farthest limit, and if too literally insisted upon as Marcuse seems to do, political theorizing on its basis may move toward a point at which the abstractions tend to lose support from empirical experience in the political world. But apart from this possible objection to Marcuse, wholesale interchangeability of psychological and political categories, general intelligence does not stand in the way of conceding the common standpoint of Freud and Marcuse that the ongoing antagonism between culture and sexuality generates additional repression, and leads to the release of forces that engage in social and political domination and an active destructiveness that is conservative and counter-revolutionary in import. Marcuse's conclusion that "...Freud's metapsychology comes face to face with the fatal dialectic of civilization : the very progress of civilization leads to the release of increasingly destructive forces" (p. 54), is both empirically verifiable and of great import.

The second concept that Marcuse introduces to his narrative from his neo-Freudian neo-Marxist position is that of the "performance principle". The performance principle may be understood as the reality principle after it has achieved a rigid class stratification of society in order to sustain "The competitive economic performances of its members" (p-44). With the performance principle, work becomes alienated labour in the sense of the absence from it of any engagement of the self in its essential libidinality so that it forecloses all real gratifications. A long paragraph of Marcuse may be quoted here to make the meaning of this concept clear :

The performance principle, which is that of an acquisitive society in the process of constant expansion, presupposes a long development during which domination has been increasingly rationalized : control over social labour now reproduces society on an enlarged scale and under improving conditions. For a long way, the interests of domination and interests of the whole coincide : the profitable utilization of the productive apparatus fulfills the needs and faculties of the individuals. For the vast majority of the population, the scope and mode of satisfaction are determined by their own labour;

but their labour is work for an apparatus which they do not control, which operates as an independent power to which individuals must submit if they want to live. And it becomes the more alien the more specialized the division of labour becomes. Men do not live their own lives but perform pre-established functions. While they work, they do not fulfill their own needs and faculties but work in *alienation*. Work has now become *general*, and so have the restrictions placed upon the libido : labour time, which is the largest part of the individual's life time, is painful time, for alienated labour is absence of gratification, negative of the pleasure principle. Libido is diverted for socially useful performances in which the individual works for himself only in so far as he works for the apparatus, engaged in activities that mostly do not coincide with his own faculties and desires (p-45).

We have now to understand that the conflict between the pleasure principle and the reality principle has in the gigantic material progress of civilization developed into a conflict between the essentially erotic or libidinal nature of man and his social environment. The libidinal repression and the economic domination of man for the purpose of alienated labour as the sole means of living have come together in the dualistic apparatus of surplus-repression and the performance principle. In other words the reality principle has become multidimensional and more rigorous and it now so decisively militates against the pleasure principle fundamental for human existence that both man and his environment stand immeasurably and increasingly dehumanized. With the increase in surplus-repression as a prop for the work-world and the more efficient consolidation of the apparatus of the performance principle, there has been a social-biological reduction of man to a mere tool for alienated labour. The habituation to alienated labour under the rule of the two principles has progressively desexualized man by restricting his love. The repression-domination has become a vicious cricle engulfing man in a hostile environment, which asks for a revolutionary overthrow if he ever is to be free from the control of forces threatening his fundamental existential nature with an impersonal apparatus of his own creation. This then is an essentially tragic situation with man the prisoner of a destiny he has himself helped to fashion.

Confronted with the dual tragedies of alienated labour and thwarted gratification, man according to an optimistic Marcuse, may yet work himself on to the road to a liberation

which would at once be libidinal and social. But liberation perhaps can never be an unmixed blessing since the rhythm of history as envisaged in Freudian psychoanalysis assumes that liberation is inevitably succeeded by a counter-revolution entailing more domination. Marcuse says,

It seems essential for Freud's hypothesis that in the sequence of the development toward civilization the matriarchal period is *preceded* by primal patriarchal despotism : the low degree of repressive domination, the extent of erotic freedom, which are traditionally associated with matriarchy appear in Freud's hypothesis, as consequences of the overthrow of patriarchal despotism rather than as primary 'natural' conditions. In the development of civilization, freedom becomes possible only as *liberation*. Liberty *follows* domination and leads to the reaffirmation of domination. Matriarchy is replaced by patriarchal counter-revolution, and the latter is stabilized by the institutionalization of religion (p-65).

This seems theoretically to provide that there is always the likelihood of a revolution being followed by a counter-revolution, and a counter-revolution stabilized through a fresh reorganization until the need for the next liberation arises. This is in addition to the fact of "every revolution" being a "betrayed revolution". (p-91).

The condition of human existence in the material world is marked by successive displacements of Eros, which is primal in the psyche, by the reactionary Logos. Marcuse seems to imply this when he says :

Self-consciousness and reason, which have conquered and shaped the historical world, have done so in the image of repression, internal and external. They have worked as the agents of domination, the liberties which they have brought (and these are considerable) grew in the soil of enslavement and have retained the mark of their birth, (p-57).

More alarmingly, Marcuse says a little later :

Originating under renunciation and developing under progressive renunciation, civilization tends towards selfdestruction (p-83).

This is so, because under the rule of organized sexuality, there has been a progressive weakening of the inhibition of the polymorphous libido. This has helped man to build up civilization

with its orientation to growing mastery over nature and growing productivity. Increasing mastery over nature and productivity have however been possible at the price of a progressive weakening of Eros, which entails the danger of increasing destructiveness released from the repressed Eros and directed on man as well as his environment.

In these circumstances, Marcuse appears to envisage not one but two revolutions, one in the realm of the psyche and the other in the socio-economic world. In his neo-Freudian terminology, this great revolution is necessary in order to achieve a liberation from repression, which would give us a free or de-controlled Eros, and also a liberation of the work-world from surplus-repression, so that both man and his work-world may come in a post-revolutionary world under the unified command of one unregimented Eros. Marcuse points out that this revolution, when achieved, would mean that Freud's correlation- "instinctual repression-socially useful labour-civilization" would transform itself into a new meaningful correlation, "instinctual liberation-socially useful-work civilization". (pp. 154-55). He argues that since the social domination of man by man has developed repression into surplus-repression, it is surplus repression, which has organized and reduced life into an "instrument" of alienated labour, that a true revolution would have to target for overthrow. But it seems that in his scheme of things, the liberation of Eros will somehow have to precede any such revolutionary overthrow of the machinery of surplus-repression, for he says that "the liberation of Eros could create new and durable work relations". (p-155) and by implication, not the other way round. However, which target would be hit first, repression or surplus-repression, is a question not easy to determine, and as Marcuse raises this question vaguely and by implication only, he nowhere gives a clear answer. To common sense, it would appear that since it is repression that has given rise to surplus-repression, it is the cause that must first be hit before the effect. And even here, by what means and how and by whom the revolutionary liberation of Eros is to be achieved, after man has been habituated to its repression from so remote a beginning to so late in the day, is a matter that Marcuse appears to leave alone. Marcuse is not unaware of serious odds against the liberation from surplus-repression. While proposing the elimination of surplus repression in order to bring about "a universal gratification of individual needs", he

perceives that "the material as well as mental resources of civilization" are too limited for this purpose. Besides, he does not hesitate to affirm that "the prevailing international structure of industrial civilization seems to condemn such an idea to ridicule" (p-151). What he considers to be necessary is "a rational organization of fully developed industrial society after the conquest of scarcity" (p-151). In actual experience however, to ask for the "conquest of scarcity" and a truly "rational" organization of a society with its orientation to ever increasing productivity and profit is not much less than asking for what looks highly improbable with Freudian repression and Marcuse's surplus-repression given as simultaneously active facts of life.

It is not wrong to suggest that when confronted with the odds against the liberation that he formulates, Marcuse's narrative makes a detour from the main line of his vision to considerations of "Phantasy and Utopia" and dwells on the unbridgeable gulf between "the laws of reason" and the "dream" of "uninhibited desire and gratification". (p-142). In "Chapter Eight", he also examines the "Images of Orpheus and Narcissus" to point out almost regrettably that the European ethos made the significant choice as culture hero of Prometheus, the firestealing and rebellious god of the work-world, in preference to Orpheus and Narcissus, who for him are more than mere symbols of autoerotic fulfillment. By a further detour into literary interpretation, he makes Orpheus and Narcissus, in contrast to Prometheus as the archetype of a painful work ethos, optimistic symbols of unrepressed joy and fulfillment, achieving a wholly pleasurable oneness with nature. "Primary narcissism", Marcuse says, "is more than autoeroticism; it engulfs the 'environment', integrating the narcissitic ego with the objective world". (p-168). And he goes on to say that Orpheus "protests against the repressive order of procreative sexuality" and through his expression of a polymorphous libidinality in uninhibited pursuit of "beauty" and "contemplation", he is able to turn language into "song" (in opposition to self-conscious reason) and work into 'play' (in opposition to alienated labour) (p-171).

Further continuing his detour, Marcuse goes on to consider the "aesthetic" experience as a means to liberation from repression. Even though he concludes that the sensuousness of art can help us overcome the constraints of reason, the freedom that emanates from aesthetic sensuousness applies only to the

realm of art and cannot overthrow the unfreedom inherent in the real world of labour and production. The acceptance of this position also brings him face to face with the conclusion that a non-repressive civilization with a complete liberation of Eros within the existing constraints of surplus-repression "would explode civilization itself, since (it) is sustained through renunciation and work (labour) - in other words, through repressive utilization of instinctual energy". He further says that "Freed from these constraints, man would exist without work and without order; he would fall back into nature, which would destroy culture" (p-175). To this situation, one must of course give the name of anarchy. Thus, for any one seeking the liberation of Eros without the destruction of civilization as we have it, there must be further explorations, and perhaps such explorations cannot but take the path of interfusing observed realities with improbable abstractions, as Marcuse seems to do in what follows.

Marcuse himself admits that his vision of a non-repressive civilization steered by uninhibited libidinal freedom is "lifted from a marginal trend in mythology and philosophy" (p-197). On this basis, his speculations have no way but to go beyond the limits of materialist realities and the familiar space-time probabilities. It appears that non-repressive reality principle, or performance principle would be almost impossible to put together, and if ever found by some magical power, it would involve the present state of civilization in a regression at once psychical, social and material. It may, in an extreme case, mean a dissolution or disintegration of civilization as we have it from its long journey to the complex present from the remotest origins in prehistory. The greatest challenge, on Marcuse's own admission, to a possible non-repressive instinctual order would be the disorderly instinct of sexuality. What is in serious doubt is the capacity of the sexual instinct for ever reaching a state of libidinal rationality even if it were possible so late in the day to secure for it a state of partial freedom from repression (and surplus-repression) so as to stabilize it in a new order that would be unfailingly supportive of uninhibited gratification compatible with civilized social freedom. This will require not only a radical reorganization of the psychic apparatus but also of sexuality and its social relations so that the new organization of sexuality could give rise to the springs of a social order which would at once sustain unrepressed libidinal gratification while foreclosing the possibility of surplus-repression

for the sake of increasing productivity in order to maintain scarcity at a bearable level.

Marcuse seeks a re-sexualization of progressively desexualized man in order to create a new basis for a brave new world. In other words, he speculates about a possible release of libido to overflow the limits of restrictions institutionalized by the reality principle and the performance principle, in order that the reality principle and the performance principle may be undone through a resexualization of the entire human body. The human body has been reduced by a repressive civilization to an instrument of labour through a systematic denial of its quest for gratification. The result is a degeneration of a pregenital polymorphous sexuality into a state of procreative genital supremacy. The human body is now to be reprogrammed for an all-round and unrepressed gratification so that the whole body would become an object of enjoyment not in the narrow sense of autoeroticism but in the sense of a oneness with nature that the body through its own free enjoyment would achieve. This radical transformation of sexuality would bring about a true Eros in a revolutionary way and entail a revolutionary social order without alienated labour and the domination that go with it. In other words, Marcuse in a sense would substitute a political revolution by the working classes with a psychical revolution of the libido to remove at one stroke the very basis for the violent economic plundering of nature and the exploitation of man as it goes on in an industrial society. The vision of Marcuse is that of a world where the Freudian theory of delayed and regimented libidinal gratification would be inoperative so that work itself would be painless, unexploitative and synonymous with immediate and unregimented gratification. Thus, it is a socialist utopia that Marcuse really conceives in his *Eros and civilization*, through the means of a psychical revolution in favour of the total libido.

Marcuse is not blind to the fact that an isolated libidinal liberation would be an explosion of civilization as it at present exists, for there is the sure danger that it would give rise to a society of sex-manias. He however proposes to preclude this possibility by giving effect not to a release of libido but to a transformation of it, "from sexuality constrained under genital supremacy to eroticization of the entire personality". (p-201). This is what he calls not an explosion of libido, but a "spread" of it, meaning thereby an extension of genitality to a healthy polymorphousness.

Whether this libidinal transformation would precede or follow what he calls the "societal transformation" (p-201) is something he decides to leave vague and ambiguous. But he claims that this libidinal transformation would eroticize time itself and most certainly external nature and the order of work; and all of these would also be harmoniously integrated to foreclose any fresh rift between man and nature. The transformation would also stop short of reactivating the precivilized state of culture and would indeed take it beyond the present to a higher stage of civilization while totally removing the negative basis in repression without much reduction of the present superstructure and of productivity in society as of now. In the new world, the perversions themselves would lose their perverse content through a "lack of success" and a "natural growth into maturity" (p-204). A new order of "self-sublimation" would create a new unrepressive morality as the entire "life of the organism" becomes the object of sexuality instead of mere genital gratification. In short, sexuality would change into Eros, an all-inclusive instinctuality rather than the regimented sexual instinct. It appears that the whole transformation is proposed to be effected by a hitherto unknown mode of self-sublimation, which in its dynamics would agree to be "aim-inhibited" (p-207) in order to flow back into the body, the source, for its further replenishment. There would thus be no end to bliss, libidinal and social, in Marcuse's brave new world.

To build up his theory, Marcuse resorts to a large-scale and basic re-interpretation of Freud in order to supervene a non-repressive Eros on Freud's repressive psychoanalysis and reads into it a "genital-fugal libido", which is to make room for an eroticization further and further away from mere genitality, which for all we know may actually be inherent and indestructible in the calculus of sexual instincts. The fear of a society of maniacs seems to be furtively wished away by Marcuse in an observation like this :

Reactivation of polymorphous and narcissistic sexuality ceases to be a threat to culture and can itself lead to culture-building if the organism exists not as instrument of alienated labour but as a subject of self realization - in other words, if socially useful work is at the same time the transparent satisfaction of an individual need (p-210).

Marcuse also envisages a respiritualized existence not any more through an antagonistic separation of the physical and the spiritual under a theology that has accepted repression as natural but through a reappropriation of the physical to the realm of the spirit. In this new mode of existence, Eros and Agape would be one and the same. Work will proceed from the pleasure principle alone and would itself be erotic and not distinguishable from play. Even scarcity would cease to be a constraint on the pleasure principle, for work, turned into play, would cease to be alienated labour that sustains its profitability by releasing human needs into the superfluous, which libidinal gratification would somehow render undesirable and dispensable. The free flow of "non-desexualized instinctual energy" would engulf the work-world, and work would turn into play by being objectless, and the need for progressively violent industrialization would disappear. Indeed, the work-world would be a garden, where man and nature would come together in a non-repressive and non-exploitative brave new order. And this in short would be the Revolution of revolutions and foreclose and need for any other, for the time in which it will be achieved would itself be timeless, perhaps through an abolition of history in its known sense, and what is more, through an annihilation of the "death instinct" by its reappropriation to Eros.

Marcuse, to be sure, is not unrealistic not to perceive that "the transformation of sexuality into Eros, and its extension to lasting libidinal relations, here presuppose the rational reorganization of a huge industrial apparatus, a highly specialized societal division of labour, the use of fantastically destructive energies, and the cooperation of vast masses" (p-217). By what names and how this rational reorganization is to be effected and whether it is to precede, follow or coincide with libidinal correction is a matter that Marcuse seems to leave to mere faith, which is synonymous with a flight of metaphysical imagination substituting for revolutionary materialism. Thus the apparently optimistic theory of Marcuse is actually an intellectualist reversal of a profound pessimism arising from a sense of the odds against a materialist revolution in the current state of the overindustrialized western society, adjusting itself from time to time to global reality through a knee-jerk release of its own destructive potentialities.

Undeterred by such lacuna, Marcuse envisages an apparently non-violent suspension of history for reason itself to

become sensuous, while even a conservative like T. S. Eliot is known to have accepted reason and sensuousness as drifting apart to cause a loss never to be made good. But for Marcuse somehow the rift between reason and sensuousness would disappear at our mere wish and a free sensuous rationality would bring the world under its benign rule and help extend the Freudian unconscious to the realm of the conscious, which would then cease to be an instrument of repression. However, it is entirely to Marcuse's credit that in spite of his optimism, he in his critique of civilization allows the emphasis to fall on the fact, as he proceeds with his speculations for redemption, that the rampant murderousness of the present state of civilization continues to "darken the prospect of a civilization without repression" (p-237). These words no doubt are an admission of the odds against a possible translation of his vision into practice.

Restated in this way, Marcuse's position would seem to be quite esoteric, and it falls or stands on mere faith, which one must obtain from metaphysical flights of the imagination. To make the world politically corrigible through a libidinal correction is no doubt an exquisite wish. But perhaps because such a wish refuses to be granted on the continuum of historical time and space, Marcuse is a theoretical prisoner of a circularity which allows him to be a prophet of bliss without ceasing at the same time to be a prophet of doom. And it may finally seem to be no more than a half-hearted gesture of desperation, when in order to find a material basis for his prophecy of bliss, he, in his retrospective "Political Preface 1966" to *Eros and Civilization*, concedes the lacuna in his vision, when saying :

Today the organized refusal to cooperate of the scientists, mathematicians, technicians, industrial psychologists and public opinion pollsters may well accomplish what a strike, even a large-scale strike, can no longer accomplish, namely, the beginning of the reversal, the preparation of the ground for political action. That the idea appears utterly unrealistic does not reduce the political responsibility involved in the position and the function of the intellectual in contemporary industrial society (p.XXV).

Here no doubt is all that is left for the thinking and conscientious man in a modern metropolis, and Marcuse must be lauded for not turning away, even though he may appear to some of us merely to conjure the spirit of Freud (while reinterpreting his letter) in aid of the vision of Marx, both before and after the breakup of the Soviet Union. □

THE VISION OF THE STATE IN *COMMUNIST MANIFESTO*

Sobhanlal Datta Gupta

I

It has become customary to treat the *Communist Manifesto* as a text of power, a call to action, which opens up a kind of grand narrative that proclaims the inevitable fall of capitalism and the victory of communism. Its burning optimism, its choice of words which are just stirring, its heroic style and impeccable logic, its penetrating analysis of the rise and fall of class societies leave any reader awe-struck. It is, therefore, quite understandable that the *Manifesto* has been rated as a kind of Bible by revolutionaries all over the world since the time when it was written, because it shows the road to power and victory, even if the future is dark and uncertain, its running theme being that they have a world to win. As a consequence, any discussion of the question of the state with reference to the *Manifesto* has been associated with an assault strategy concerning the state, an institution that has to be dismantled, for it has been the citadel of oppression since its birth. Besides, the text of 1848 gives one the impression that the destruction of the bourgeois state and the advent of the new revolutionary order will be accomplished in quick succession. David Ryazanov has quite rightly pointed out that it was the experience of the French revolution of 1789 which saw the coming to power of the Jacobins and its impact on the authors that largely explains this thrust of the *Manifesto*¹.

But did Marx and Engels continue to subscribe to this position in the years that followed? This refers to the defeat of the revolutionary struggles in France and Germany after 1848 and the onset of reaction, climaxing in the bloody and violent suppression of the Paris Commune in 1871. The distinct shift in their position from their early exuberance of 1848 when the manifesto was published, to a position of caution is evident in the Preface to the German edition of the *Manifesto* written in 1872

jointly by Marx and Engels under the shadow of the defeat of the Paris Commune. They now wrote :

Above all, the Commune of Paris has taught us that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purpose."²

The winning over of the bourgeois state power, then, is not enough for the attainment of socialism, since it is irrelevant for the new order. This observation largely anticipated the formulation of Althusser a century later that a distinction between state power and state apparatus has to be kept in mind, since even after the revolution bourgeois state apparatuses continue to outlive the seized bourgeois state power over a long period.³

II

It is this turn of argument which provides the clue to the conceptualisation of the vision of the state in the *Manifesto*. The explanation of why the bourgeois state machinery becomes unusable for the proletariat lies in anti-statism, which simultaneously justifies the necessity of destroying the state as well as its irrelevance in the post-revolutionary society. The linkage between the two acts is provided by the logic that the state being the symbol of organised violence and coercion, it has to be negated and dismantled and the establishment of the new order does not envisage creation of an alternative state but a new society free from violence and coercion which constitute the hallmarks of all states. To appreciate this spirit of pronounced antistatism, one has to go beyond the 1848 version of the *Manifesto* and look into such material as the correspondence of Marx and Engels which deeply reflect on the treatment of the question of the state in the *Manifesto*. A careful look at these evidences, however, indicates that the authors of the *Manifesto* were cautious enough, in their defence of antistatism, to differentiate their position vis a vis the viewpoint of the anarchists in the sense that they did not harbour such an illusion that the socialist revolution would be followed by the immediate withering away of the structure of the state, since the coercive power of the new state would have to be directed against the enemies of socialism and revolution for quite a long period. But the important thing is that the role of the state in the post-revolutionary order would be contingent, since force and violence cannot be regarded as permanent features of the new society. These will have to be

progressively reduced as such threats would subside. In other words, it was a dialectical understanding of the state in terms of both affirmation and negation. On 18 April 1883 Engels in a letter to Philip van Patten, Secretary, Central Labour Union, New York, wrote :

Marx and I, ever since 1845 have held the view that one of the final results of the future proletarian revolution will be the gradual dissolution and ultimate disappearance of that political organisation called *the State*; an organisation the main object of which has ever been to secure, by armed force, the economical subjugation of the working majority to the wealthy minority. With the disappearance of a wealthy minority the necessity for an armed repressive State-force disappears also. At the same time we have always held that in order to arrive at this and the other, far more important ends of the social revolution of the future, the proletarian class will first have to possess itself of the organised political force of the State and with its aid stamp out the resistance of the capitalist class and reorganise society. This is stated already in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1847, end of Chapter II. The Anarchists reverse the matter. They say, that the Proletarian revolution has to *begin* by abolishing the political organisation of the State. It may require adaptation to the new functions. But to destroy that at such a moment, would be to destroy the only organism by means of which the victorious working class can exert its newly conquered power, keep down its capitalist enemies and carry out that economical revolution of society, without which the whole victory must end in a defeat and in a massacre of the working class like that after the Paris Commune.⁴ (emphasis original).

However, that the ultimate goal of the proletarian revolution would be the creation of an alternative society and not a new state, the transient nature of the latter and its immediate justification in the aftermath of the revolution notwithstanding, is strikingly evident in the following letter of Engels written to August Bebel dated March 18-28, 1875. Engels wrote :

The *people's state* has been flung in our teeth *ad nauseam* by the anarchists, although Marx's anti-Proudhon piece and after it the *Communist Manifesto* declare outright that, with the introduction of the socialist order of society, the state will dissolve of itself and disappear. Now, since the state is merely a transitional institution of which use is made in the struggle, in the revolution,

to keep down one's enemies by force, it is utter nonsense to speak of a free people's state; so long as the proletariat still *makes use* of the state, it makes use of it, not for the purpose of freedom, but of keeping down its enemies and, as soon as there can be any question of freedom, the state as such ceases to exist. We would therefore suggest that *Gemeinwesen* be universally substituted for the *state*; it is good old German word that can very well do service for the French "Commune"⁵. (emphasis original).

The authors of the *Manifesto* visualised the non-statist character of the new social order by taking the cue from Russia and provided a new dimension to the understanding of the question of the state as delineated in the *Manifesto*. In the Preface to the Russian edition of the *Manifesto*, written jointly by Marx and Engels in 1882, they wrote :

The *Communist Manifesto* had as its object the proclamation of the inevitably impending dissolution of modern bourgeois property. But in Russia we find, face to face with the rapidly developing capitalist swindle and bourgeois landed property, which is just beginning to develop more than half the land owned in common by the peasants. Now the question is : can the Russian *obshchina*, a form of primeval common ownership of land, even if greatly undermined, pass directly to the higher form of communist common ownership ? ... If the Russian revolution becomes the signal for a proletarian revolution in the West, so that the two complement each other, the present Russian common ownership of land may serve as the starting point for communist development⁶. (emphasis original).

Besides, it can now be argued on the basis of newly available evidences that it was this spirit of anti-statism which lay at the very basis of the writing of the *Manifesto* even in its preparatory stage. This refers to the pre-history of the *Manifesto* when it was felt necessary to change the name of The League of the Just into Communist League in 1847 and when Engels was given the initial responsibility of drafting a preparatory programme for the new League. Although The League of the Just was formed much earlier, preaching somewhat utopian and anarchist views of equality, justice and humanism and with which were associated such names as Wilhelm Weitling, we do not come across any reference to the association of Marx and Engels with the League

before 1846, when a section of the members began to feel the necessity of changing its name and framing a meaningful programme. What is significant is the pronounced anti-statism that marked this change along with the accent on community. In a Circular dated 9 June 1847 sent to the members of the newly named Communist League for its first session, the explanation of this change of name was given in the following words :

We are not distinguished by wanting justice in general ... anyone can claim that for himself ... but by our attack on the existing social order and on private property, by wanting community of property, by being Communists. Hence there is only one suitable name for our League, the name which says what we really are, and this name we have chosen.⁷

As already stated, Engels was given the responsibility of preparing a draft programme of the Communist League and which is known as *Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith*.⁸ What is significant is that in the aforesaid Circular the importance of this document of Engels, which one may characterise as the first draft of the *Manifesto*, was highlighted in following words which warned against dogmatic as well as sentimental understanding of communism :

We recommended it for serious and mature consideration by the communities. We have tried on the one hand to refrain from all system-making and all barrack-room communism, and on the other to avoid the fatuous and vapid sentimentality of the tearful, emotional Communists.⁹

III

The being the vision of the state in *Communist Manifesto*, it would be appropriate to raise a pertinent question in this context. Has such a vision any relevance in our time ? The answer is an unambiguous yes, especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The crisis of the Soviet regime was constituted precisely by its legacy of justifying statism since the time of the October Revolution on the plea of containing class enemies within the society even after political and economic consolidation of the new order. This was paralled by the process of marginalising the soviets, the societal aspect of the regime, eventually leading to the establishment of a situation where the vision of the state in *Manifesto* was turned upside down. One commentator has remarked that although for Marx the ultimate goal of communism

was to usher in a economic and political democratisation of society

it is not at all clear how to dismantle organized political power once it has been established on a new ground. It is true, Marx never speaks about the power of the party, or of the *avant-garde* any kind --- he keeps speaking about the power of the whole worker's class. But experience has shown how easy it is for a small group within a class to monopolize the power of the whole class, and to manipulate the vast majority of the class. Marx could not have foreseen Stalinism.¹⁰

The argument is certainly worth considering. While Stalinism, which was virtually a new kind of statism, was certainly not the inevitable outcome of Marxism it is also undeniable that in the traditional understanding of Marxism this accent on anti-statism has been largely neglected. This, in fact, explains why Rosa Luxemburg remains ignored even today or why the strong anti-statist thrust of Lenin's *State and Revolution* is hardly mentioned in official circles of communist parties. Had this dimension been appreciated properly, the awareness could have been generated that socialism did not, after all, ultimately envisage replacement of the dismantled bourgeois state power by a new kind of statism. This is where the *Manifesto's* vision of the state retains its theoretical validity and significance even after more than a century and a half when the world looks forwards the new millenium.

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GREEN IN RED : ECOPOLITICAL THOUGHT OF HERBERT MARCUSE

Soumitra De

Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979) was associated with the Frankfurt School and participated in its attempt to adapt Marxism to changing historical conditions from the 1920's to the 1970's. He stood for a philosophical tradition the elements of which lay scattered in diverse philosophical traditions like romanticism, rationalism, phenomenology and Marxism. His works in philosophy and social theory lacked both sustained empirical and detailed conceptual analyses, yet they generated fierce controversies and were highly influential. In 1933 he made the first major review of Marx's newly published *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* of 1844 and set the tone for subsequent humanistic reinterpretation of Marx. His study of Hegel's *Ontology and Theory of Historicity* (1932) contributed to a revival of interest in Hegel in Europe. His critique of culture, scientism and instrumental reason, particularly in his *One Dimensional Man* (1964), had important bearing on contemporary radical theories such as the Praxis group of social philosophers in Yugoslavia.

Marcuse was a self-professed Marxist but the complex quality of his philosophical analysis also relates him to the legacies of Max Weber, George Lukacs, Ernst Bloch and Theodor Adorno and makes it hard to determine the exact way in which he was related to Marxism. He earned notoriety in the 60's as the 'father of the New Left'. He has also been perceived as a Young Hegelian Marxist (Kolakowski, 1978, vol. 3, p. 415) a Heideggerian Marxist (Bernstein, 1984, p. 72) as well as a Humanist Eco-Marxist (Eckersley, 1992, p. 93). The confusion stems from the general proclivity of the Frankfurt School, seen in an accentuated form in the writings of Marcuse, to avoid any turgid interpretation of classical texts of Marxism. In this respect Marcuse was similar to such Marxists as Antonio Gramsci and Jose Carlos Mariategui. Marcuse was also together with such theorists as Mao Tse Tung and Amilcar Cabral who set up a tradition of fitting Marxism to specific conditions.

The present paper does not propose to address the problem of determining the nature of Marcuse's alignment with Orthodox Marxism. It rather proposes to concern with the nature of legacies that Marcuse's engagement with Marxism has left for the posterity. Admittedly the specification of the legacies themselves is an arduous task and not yet taken up seriously. As such he has been maligned more and eulogised less for generally wrong reasons.² This is particularly distressing for those who seek to revitalise Marxism in the 90's when it is becoming increasingly unattractive to a generation confronted with a whole set of new issues and concerns. The present paper takes into account an aspect of the concern of contemporary social theory, ecology, to inquire how Marcuse's engagement with Marxism may help weaken the overworked differences between the 'Red' and the 'Green' and initiate a mutually profitable dialogue between them.

The Journey from Environmentalism to Eco-centrism

A spectre is now haunting world, the spectre of environmentalism. It began in Europe and has now spread to the rest of the world. In India too it has emerged as a powerful combination of science and ethics, so that judicial intervention has been quite common. But it has been a straightforward development. It has had a wide variety of policies and perspectives. Since the Club of Rome's dire predictions of the early 1970's 'resource conservationism' became an important policy orientation. Next, the focus was extended to 'environmental protection' to include consideration of issues like public health with respect of different types of pollutants. The concept of sustainable development was given considering the nature of trade-offs between environment and development but the nature of trade-offs never became fully clear. Considerable gap between research and practice in the field of development and those in the field of environment remained. Professionals have just begun to understand and appreciate the problems and priorities of the others (Rathore, 1966, p.16). A paralysis in policy directions has become a reality in view of the problem of choice among several viewpoints on environment policies. However, this has not stopped ecopolitical thought to proceed from environmentalism to a greener, more radical territory (Clark in Bellamy 1993, pp. 244, 251)³.

It has been observed by Robyn Eckersley that modern ecopolitical thought has been characterised by three themes of

participation, survival and emancipation (Eckersley, 1992, pp. 7-21). While the Green philosophy and Green political parties in the 1970's and the 1980's and works of such scholars as William Leiss, John Rodman, Theodore Roszak and Rudolf Bahro are seen as representing the third emancipatory moment, the New Left literature of the 1960's and the early 1970's with their concern for distributive justice are taken to represent the participatory theme. The survival theme has been associated with the Club of Rome's *The Limits to Growth* and the Ecologist Magazine's *Blueprint for Survival*. Of these three the third looks at the environmental crisis not only as its central concern but also as a crisis of culture in the broadest sense of the term. As such it is a new theoretical project of overcoming the destructive logic of capital accumulation, consumerism and all systems of domination including the domination of nature. The emancipatory theme is therefore recognised as a critique of Conservatism, Liberalism and Orthodox Marxism. Of these three, Marxism and Liberalism are accused of uncritical acceptance of the image of Humanity's mastery of nature.

The emancipatory theorists have further been subdivided between anthropocentric and ecocentric wings (Ibid, p. 26). the first is characterised by its concern to articulate an ecopolitical theory that offers new opportunities for human emancipation and fulfilment in an ecologically sustainable society. The favoured position may range from small tradition-bound community (Boulding; 1972, Schumacher: 1973) through open global debate on sensible policies (Dryzek: 1987) to enlightened despotism (Baumol and Oates 1979); from cautious optimism about maintaining the 'Biotic community' (Leopold, 1949) to extremely pessimistic vision of a chance-saving of the Titanic (Globe) (Sikora & Barry, 1978). However, emancipatory theorists generally accept a disjunction between a human and non-human world and accord a precedence to the former over the latter. In other words, they plead for special consideration for the *homo sapiens*, either as lords or stewards. By contrast the second wing refuses to recognise the inferior status and different sets of rights for the non-human world. This comparison between human and non-human world has been carried through in several influential distinctions between 'shallow ecology' and 'deep ecology' (Anne Naess), 'Environmentalism' and 'social ecology' (Murray Bookchin, 1980, 1989) and so on.

Marxism, Marcuse and Ecocentric/Emancipatory Critique

The ecocentric/emancipatory perspective has built on a similarity between Liberalism and Marxism. Both are said to differ in their respective preferences for social relations between humans and the rest of the nature, i. e., they see the non-human world in purely instrumental terms, as means to human ends (Pepper, pp. 8-9). In this respect Marx has been a heir to Lockean framework. Of course it must be noted that between Liberalism and Marxism the latter is seen as theoretically preferable to the former by many theorists because of its critique of capitalism as a source of environmental degradation. Paradoxically however Marxism's focus on the analysis of capitalism is also seen as the source of its inadequacy for a modern ecocentric perspective. Orthodox Marxism has been accused of treating environmental degradation as a mere epiphenomenon of capitalism and not of *industrialism*.

Marxism has been given the credit of revealing how under capitalism both labourer and soil, man and nature, were exploited. But it is shown to have a view of man as *homo faber*, a tool making animal, one with antagonistic relationship with nature. In Paris Manuscripts Marx had argued that both humanity and external nature transformed each other as labour process expanded humanity's productive powers. Although in later works like *Das Capital* he came to see limits to man's mastery over nature and consistently saw human freedom as inversely related to humanity's dependence on nature. This was the central feature of Marx's juxtaposition of freedom and necessity.

It has been suggested that this view of homo faber and the freedom-necessity distinction remained as enduring themes in the works of Herbert Marcuse. Like Marx, Marcuse also saw history as a progressive dialectical struggle from primitive to the advanced and had built on the freedom-necessity distinction. As he argued in *Eros and Civilisation* (1955), freedom lay in Eros and free play, not work, for work presupposed suppression of instincts. Unlike Freud however he argued that repression could not be a permanent feature of our civilisation. Development of technology now has made possible liberation from compulsive work or toil and therefore freedom and not repression is a condition of a post-scarcity economy. Where Marcuse differed from Marx was in his lack of faith in the working class as the agent of revolutionary change, both social and environmental. In *One Dimensional Man* (1964)

and *Counter revolution and Revolt* (1972) Marcuse hoped to transform science into a societal project through revolutionary praxis but his view of a 'new' science was said to be captive still of the image of man's mastery over nature and hence reflective of an irredeemable anthropocentric eco-Marxist position.

The above ecocentric reading of Marcuse represents a deeply flawed understanding of Marcuse's methodological position which has been described as 'Dialectical Imagination', something which Marcuse shared with other members of the Frankfurt School (M. Jay, 1973). At one level Marxist critique of ideology has been a critique of dualism in its theory of the nature of consciousness. Idealism and Empiricism are all different aspects of ideology. Likewise nature and man, mind and body can only be perceived in their interrelationships, in their unity and difference and transcendence from the existing one. As such man's social relation cannot be separated from the relations of nature. Marcuse did not deflect from this dialectical argument. But his attraction to other philosophical sources should not be overlooked. Where he differed from a deterministic dialectic was in his acceptance of the theory of utopia, powerfully put forward by Ernst Bloch (1918) to underline the unfinished character of reality as such to present nature as a set of unrealised potentialities which could become purposive if humanity decided to make them so. In Marcuse's case therefore his ecological awareness cannot be disentangled from his critique of social relations in industrial civilisation and anticipatory utopian projections. Any reading of Marcuse based on a non dialectical objective method therefore would fail to come to terms with Marcuse's ecopolitical thought. It appears that Eckersley has been influenced by the post-structuralist critique of enlightenment rationality with respect to environment and failed to appreciate deeply contradictory nature of post-structuralist argument on the relationship between man and nature. Hence he ends up with the dualist categories of man and nature and compresses all social theories into either anthropocentric or ecocentric. In so far as post structuralism retains the structuralist rejection of dualism we will find some similarity between the place of environment in post structuralist thinking in the thoughts of Marcuse. Eckersley does not see this and his dualist approach takes him to discover contradictions in Marcuse (Eckersley, p. 115) because he also finds Marcuse as mounting a serious challenge to anthropocentrism in his ecocentric moments (Ibid, pp. 10, 106). Let us now consider post-structuralist

thought on environment as foils or point of comparison with Marcuse's ecopolitical thought.

Post-Structuralist Thought and Environment

In an important sense Post-structuralist thought has grown from the socio-political and environmental awareness of what structuralism had established. Structuralism's legacy is thus contradictory, it both strengthened and weakened instrumental reason (Verena A. Conley, 1997, pp. 5, 42). The father of structuralist thought, Claude Levi Strauss developed a powerful critique of dialectics and existential humanism. Two central feature of his works are decentering of man and an inflection of ethics. He argued that nothing really was due to man, nature preceded him, so did language. Humans were not separate from nature. There was no hierarchy, no right to technologically order reality. One should not deethicalise the issue of progress. He strongly argued against the science of expansion based in Descartes which led to the physics separated from *cogito*. A focus on their unity could only be part of an overall aesthetic appreciation. His structural model is thus itself a myth, a vision of harmony and diversity.

Among contributions along post structural line the themes of decentering the human subject, renewed consideration of the ethical side of the relation between the human subject and the world, technological war on nature and celebration of plurality or diversity all are present. This is clear in the extension of post-structuralism in the field of social sciences, namely, postmodernism. Emancipation in this view is impossible through the project of enlightenment or 'meta narratives'; as Lyotard has put it. Likewise Derrida who was partially responsible for the shift from structuralism to poststructuralism developed a caustic critic of Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992) in his *Spectres of Marx* (1994) on the ground that Fukuyama blended apocalypse and evangelism in the tradition of modernity.

In its ecological dimension, post-structuralist thought can be shown to have an inherent contradiction with respect to subject-object relationship. As a sequel to structuralism it cannot recognise any analysis on the basis of man-nature relationship, any centre is an anethma to the effort at decentering. Quite expectedly, in Derrida's works there is a grounding dilemma of ecology, its ecological consciousness is at best, like Marx, a ghost, it defies even a name. Similarly in their effort to combine science with

praxis some have built on the chaos theory in the field of natural science and argued that such theory made it impossible to delimit an object, since moments of bifurcations and mutations yield totally new organisations in a system consisting of limits and differences. In ecological terms this translates into unforeseen climatic changes, changes in life-forms and entire civilisations. Insights from chaos theory contradict Thomas Kuhn's almost axiomatic concepts of paradigmshifts that define scientific traditions. Hence they envision a code of conduct that respects both the conditions and the improbabilities of nature. Arguing that nature cannot be submitted to our will they welcome a scientific attitude for discovering an orderly relationship between man and nature which however can only be an unstable one, as any order would retreat into a chaos. Thus they do not predict an apocalypse but hope to have an order, the basis of hope being the instability of the current order of things. (Prigogine & Stengers, 1986, p. 313).

In terms of political project however poststructuralism has set up a series of dualisms. Lyotard for instance argued in his essay entitled 'Oikos' (1989) that the post modern age saw a greater conflict between humans and nature and between the South and the North. The situation is at best awkward. If modernist philosophers were wrong in having an anthropocentric view, in equating technological progress with liberation from the impediments from the body and matter how could the poststructuralists be justify ecocentric without objectifying humanity? The contradiction between denial of unity and universality on the one hand and the emphasis on the necessity of a world wide women's network for activist purposes or the talk of a global feminism in ecofeminist writings (Conley, p. 152) is too obvious. But this also reveals a faith in transcendental reason or utopia at least as a political project that brings the ecofeminists nearer to the position of Marcuse.

Marcuse and Emancipatory Ecology

Marcuse, as Habermas has pointed out (In Bernstein 1984, p. 69), belonged to the first generation of critical theorists⁴ in the thirties like Horkheimer, Lowenthal and Adorno and was an embodiment of the spirit of the Frankfurt School in a professional sense but a distinctive affirmative feature of his thought set him apart from the rest. His works reflected the School's faith in the value of the individual characteristic of the works of Dilthey,

Nietzsche and Weber, especially in terms of the latter's preoccupation with the fate of the individual in modern capitalist society. At the same time he shared with other critical theorists the idea about rationalisation as a process of modernity which characterised Weber's imagery of 'iron cage' of modernity. Of course this pessimism was more stark in 'Horkheimer's and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944) but Marcuse indeed continued it in the pages of his *One Dimensional Man* when he described the new period as the totalisation of the instrumental reason (Bottomore, 1984, pp.19-20, 37). But he was different in keeping alive his hope, in his romantic faith in the eventual triumph of liberating reason over instrumental reason. He agreed with the threat of what Lukas described as the rational process of 'reification' but disagreed with his optimism about the role of the proletariat while at the same time accepting Luckacs's hope of combating the instrumental reason. One reason for this was the influence of Heidegger on him from whom he received his philosophical training in Freiburg and learned to appreciate Heidegger's critique of dualism in his *Being and Time*. But with his optimistic bent of mind he was searching for clues to surpass contemporary historical moment which Heidegger's linking of ontology to a metahistorical fate, as developed in his *Dasein*, effectively ruled out and which was on the contrary promised by the author of the *Paris Manuscripts* which he read and appreciated. He was at pains to accept the experience of Nazism as the substance of history and felt that the real history must be realised through praxis and anticipated from the viewpoint of phenomenological experience of the concrete. This is the reason why Habermas has described Marcuse as a 'Heideggerian Marxist'.

The affirmative feature of Marcuse's thought was not just reflected in his active political role, again something which set him apart from his fellow philosophers, it was also related to his theoretical position. This theoretical position was best presented in his *Eros and Civilisation*. If individual is constrained by the very process of individuation and rationality of the modern society, if the individual forms an aspect of the totalitarian society, then also he can rationally break free from it due to a dynamism of instincts which both preexisted the modern civilisation and lay below the processes of individuation and rationalisation. He developed this position by reinterpreting Freudian psychoanalysis. Following Freud, but rejecting the element of repression in a

postscarcity economy, he developed a metahistory of instincts in which the opposition between Eros and Thanatos dissolved in the utopia on the end of struggle for existence. Marcuse never explained the way through which the instinctive rebellion would take place and he hoped to find the source of opposition in the substratum of society, among 'the outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other races and other colours, the unemployed and the unemployable'. In the midst of the student rebellion he searched for hope in the revolt of the youth. Indeed this vision influenced Theodore Roszak's notion of 'counter culture' as an element of opposition to the technocratic society (ibid, p. 46), something important in connection with ecopolitical thought because Roszak has been hailed as an emancipatory theorist critical of Marcuse's vestigial faith in Marxism. It may therefore be argued that Marcuse's ecopolitical thought had both an aspect of a critique and an aspect of utopia. The critique is one of man's instrumental approach to nature, of a dualist anthropocentric view of nature and the utopia is one of nature's, including humanity, pacified existence, at peace with itself.

The general tenor of Marcuse's ecopolitical thought has been a critique of the domination by a traditionally conceived and practised science. Contrary to what Eckersley has observed, Marcuse was not only lamenting the 'unfreedom' of man, he was also lamenting the scientific conquest of man and nature. As he observed in *One Dimensional Man* (Marcuse, 1964, pp. xiii-xiv) :

Man must come to see it and find their way from false to true consciousness, from their immediate to their real *interest* They can do so *if they live in need of changing their way of life*, of denying the positive, of refusing. It is precisely this need which the established society manages to repress to the degree to which it is capable of "delivering the goods" on an increasingly large scale and *using the scientific conquest of nature for the scientific conquest of man* (Emphasis added)

Was Marcuse a captive of man's image of *homo faber* them ? Certainly not ! Marcuse did not perceive man as a tool making animal, did not see progress as coming from bigger and better goods, and more importantly, did not consider any opposition between work and play. He has been accused (Kolakowski, vol. 3, p. 420) of hating work and thinking of freedom as freedom from toil, of separating brain and brawn. This is a distortion of his

position. He was actually distinguishing between repressive work and freework, work for survival and erotic work, the former representing a separation between work, pleasure, struggle, enjoyment etc. and the latter uniting all aspects of human practice in the free play of instincts. Incidentally Marcuse's approach to work has that idealistic tinge which was so clear in a poem of Tagore which put the relation of work and play in this way :

Moder jeman khela, temni je kaj, janishi ne ki bhai; tai kaj ke kabhu amra na dorai, Khela moder lorai kara, khela moder bangha mara re (Don't you know brother that our work is our play ? So we are not afraid of work! Play is our struggle and a question of life and death!).

Like Tagore Marcuse too found the essence of man in Eros and playful activity. Work loses its positive quality in a consumer culture which is the target of his attack. His critique of consumer culture anticipated Bahro's suggestion that industrialised world should make fewer demands on a finite world (Bahro, 1982, 1984, 1986). Marcuse's emphasis on changing the way of life by way of changing consciousness was clearest in his *Aesthetic Dimension* (1978). Both Marcuse and Bahro believed in radical change of praxis and the force of utopia and it was not surprising that Bahro resigned from the party in 1985 when the Greens tended to reveal progressive political compromises.

Contrary to the charge that Marcuse undermined logic and scientific approach Marcuse was concerned to ethicalise not banish the use of scientific knowledge. It has been suggested further that his view of 'new' science was nothing but an image of man's mastery over nature. However it is important to realise that Marcuse's 'new' science was a newly conceived relationship of man and nature. The key word in his conception was 'pacification', an end of false dualism of man and nature. He argued that the development of man's struggle with man and with the nature under competing needs, desires and aspirations have been organised by vested interests in domination and scarcity. The liberating practice would transform these distinctive forms. He wrote :

We need new institutions ... the institutions which serve the struggle for existence could not serve the pacification of existence. Life as an end is qualitatively different from life as a means. (Marcuse, 1964, p. 17)

Far from a supporter of a technological war on nature Marcuse was a critic of industrialism. This was seen as an aspect of instrumental reason which was shown to be the problem both under capitalism and socialism. In the latter it was expressed through the neglect of the individual and diversity. In fact on this line he actually predicted the collapse of the Soviet Union, an achievement so far neglected probably because of general lack of interest in socialist countries (Gamble, Marsh & Tant, 1999). To him Soviet union would not collapse because of what Rosa Luxemburg described a wrong opposition between dictatorship and democracy⁹ (and consequent failure to apply dictatorship democratically) (Luxemburg, 1945, pp. 83) or what Trotsky described as a 'contradictory zigzags' of the ruling bureaucracy (Trotsky, 1945, p. 86) but of the "repressive morality associated with common requirements of industrialism" in capitalist and socialist countries. Marcuse noted a similarity in the values of "bourgeois" and "Soviet Ethics". He argued that "the progressive reduction of scarcity" (through technological innovation) was not enough for a qualitative transformation of life, the hold of repressive morality must be loosened too (Marcuse, 1958, p. 258). This needs to be emphasised because it exposes the hollowness of Kolakowski's criticisms that Marcuse strove to unify Eros and Logos in a totalitarian state (1978, vol. III, p. 416).

Conclusion :

Ecopolitical thought was tacit in Marcuse's works though not marginal by any means. His critique and anticipation of utopia contained his ecopolitical awareness. His conviction that much of Marxism was reduced to an orthodoxy and needed an immersion in phenomenology for revitalisation led him to anticipate some lines of departure from orthodox Marxism's handling of ecological and cultural issues. In this sense he represented the transitional stage of what Bahro described as a progressive movement from 'Red to Green'.

For Marcuse however a deepening concern with ecology did not imply a rejection of Marxism's promise of a better tomorrow. His critique of technology often attracted justified criticisms⁶ but he was not against science and technology per se. He merely refused to seek technological solution to the problem of technology. So he called for transcending bourgeois ethic by a Marxism immersed in phenomenology. Hence he might be seen

as one who was reworking the ecological awareness in Marxism with regard to modern industrial civilisation, someone who was 'Greening' the 'Red'.

Much of the contemporary ecopolitical thought, especially the biocentric/ecocentric wing of emancipatory ecopolitical thought is mediated by post-structuralism. In this respect Marcuse offers a clear advantage. Post-structuralist thought represents, we have seen, a continuous grounding dilemma of ecology. Although it pleads for noticing the unity of human with the non-human world it takes such unity to be illusory and unstable. Therefore it has to be relativistic in its judgement of any concrete historical outcome though it can be quite emphatic on the rejection of a definite anthropocentric perspective on ecology. Marcuse's ecopolitical thought is free from this grounding dilemma. His optimistic ecopolitical perspective was grounded in a dialectic of nature (including social and environmental relations) and his normative standard of judging the rationalist of any historical outcome was not a pretentious universality but a sensitivity to the particular condition of social domination. Even when Marcuse was terminally ill he told Habermas (Bernstein, 1984, p. 77) : "look, I know wherein our most basic value judgements are rooted ... in compassion, in our sense for the suffering of others." No wonder, he was the nemesis of all relativistic 'emancipatory' ecopolitical perspectives.

Notes :

1. The relative success of the workers' self-management in the 1950's and early 1960's in Yugoslavia generated a body of radical democratic political thought around the Praxis group of social philosophers most prominent of whom was Mihailo Markovic. This group started theoretical reinterpretations of Marx's thought for investigating contemporary problems concerning human freedom, effects of technology and bureaucracy. Among others, Marcuse attended the summer schools organised by the Praxis group.
2. Marcuse has been discussed in highly critical manner by Alasdair MacIntyre (1970) and Kolakowski (1978) because of his radicalism (while ignoring his faith in the individual) while David Kettler (1976) has praised him for strengthening liberal democratic approach (altering the terms Marcuse

set for his discourse). More balanced works include those of Martin Jay (1973) and David Held (1980).

3. The Green Movement began with small groups and local parties in several European countries. The first national party was formed in New Zealand in 1972 and was called 'Values Party'. In March 1983 Die Grünen (The Greens), an ecological party in west German elections won enough vote to obtain parliamentary representation. Green movement took shape. All Green perspectives make industrialism a super ideology, reject it and see themselves as bio-centric or eco-centric, as different from anthropocentric. Their ideological distinctiveness becomes less prominent because it is not clear what Greens are for. Hence some very very close to older ideologies (Porrit & Winner 1988).
4. Raymond Geuss (1981) gives a lucid introduction to Critical theory and compares it with empirical social theory.
5. It has been argued that Marcuse not only rejected the notion of *homo faber* but he also saw that in certain respects Marx had appropriated the ideas of some of his intellectual opponents without actually transcending them, as Marx claimed to have done (Schechter, 1994, p. 151).
6. Marcuses came in for attack from Habermas in his *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1971) because Marcuse failed to note that the modern societies must attempt to legitimate themselves through appeal to rational norms that have improved considerably (for instance, ecological consciousness could improve due to the reports of sophisticated tests of pollution) and therefore neither pure historicism nor pure transcendentalism (which Marcuse seemed to offer) could be the adequate response to radical pluralism. In his *The theory of Communicative Action* (1984) Habermas tried to give an outline of his "reconstructive sciences" which would be subject to canons of confirmation and falsification but would not exclude "pretheoretical knowledge".

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PROBLEMS OF ORGANISATION : ANTAGONISM BETWEEN THE *COMMUNIST MANIFESTO* AND THE POST MODERNIST AGENDA

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In the social milieu, any theory, whatever might be its colour, demands attention only when it can organise itself or bears the potentiality to do so materially, the substance of which is obviously the social human being, the blood-bone creature, who can think and act. In the twentieth century, the discovery of the theory of relativity has definitely influenced deeply the understanding of *concrete* and *abstract* and their interrelationships. The 'laws', previously known as 'universal' were found many a times, unable to accomodate the 'whole' range of physical phenomena, micro to mega, within the same ambit, hence felt inadequate. Inadequacy leads to search gaps in theory and practice which is manifested by crisis in the existing organisational models, sometimes creating serious ruptures. Here it requires intervention by the scientists. In the mediation between the theory and practice, hitorical experience shows that the path finding breakthrough missions were always surrounded by some pseudo-scientific solutions which acted as froth between the path of potential-difference-barrier and thereby inhibit easy flow of current. To dissolve these resistances, besides concentrated efforts to find scientific solutions, additional strength on the part of the scientists is needed with special emphasis in the domain of philosophy. It of course does not lead into the wastage of energy rather emboldens the path finding theories in furthering refinements. One should not confuse this approach with fatalism or a tendency to side with the linear interpretation of history. Also, it has got nothing to do with the violation of democratic norms. After all, in a class divided society, talking uniform democracy is simply bizarre. What is meant by democracy is usually 'minimum democracy', the scope of which shrinks continuously with increasing arrogance of imperialism, finding no way to come out of its internal contradictions, circumventive

props falling rapidly, tries to crush every dissent under the vulgar weight of its sin alone. Amidst the bevy of pseudo-scientific prescriptions, one common brand, apparently wrapped up in the cloak of iconoclastic epithets has always surfaced from time to time, the basic substance of which is to hush up the term 'organisation' itself. These prescriptions usually try to do away the categories like 'state', 'class' etc. by ignoring their internal dynamics and accepting them either as a part of the nature or simply nonexistent and put forward some kind of panacea which in essence suggests to kill the patient as the best cure.

"Organisation is the form of mediation between theory and practice"¹, Georg Lukacs, the Hungarian Marxist, in his famous book *History and Class Consciousness* adds farther, "On the level of pure theory the most disparate views and tendencies are able to co-exist peacefully, antagonisms are only expressed in the form of discussions which can be contained within the framework of one and the same organisation without disrupting it. But no sooner are these same questions given organisational form than they turn to be sharply opposed and even incompatible."²

During the heydays of feudalism, the principal mode of appropriation was 'living labour'. To justify this practice, the theoretical framework was mainly provided by religion. The starting point was an omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient entity, the centre of the universe and of course living simultaneously beyond the reach of five sense organs of the common people. In the social domain, the person maintaining closest link with this hypothetical 'centre' was supposed to protect a race from all sorts of incoming danger and therefore reserved the right to assign jobs according to his/her sense of judgement to maximise the security and prosperity of the race. To avoid confusions related to choosing 'proper person for the proper place', to maintain status quo of the nobility generation after generation, and to pacify frustration of the common toiling masses, the theory of rebirth, concepts of heaven and hell and 'profession according to the place of birth' was essential. Organisational framework mediating the abovesaid practice and theory was a social hierarchy. Of course, those who refused to accept this system, used to become saints, bandits, vagabonds, journeymen etc. One important thing to note is that theory, practice and organisation should not be considered entirely separate entities. These are very much interdependent.

Theorisation of certain practices might cause setting up different organisational models, some of which might suffer redundancy later on, again that might unleash new practices which could necessitate containment within different types of organisational structures, so on and so forth. The source of attrition in the feudal mode of structures was looming large owing to the forcible squeezing of the 'living labour' mainly associated with agrarian production relations specially when the privileged aristocracy used to make the society top heavy. With the growth of manufacturing goods, setting up of industries, the call of 'freedom' from the age-old bondage as well as forcible evacuation of the countryside tacitly sponsored and supported by the state in favour of industrialisation, caused crumbling of the existing social organisation.

After industrial revolution, certain significant changes took place.

Wherever large-scale industry replaced manufacture, the industrial revolution developed the bourgeoisie, its wealth and its power, to the highest degree and made it the first class in the land. The result was that wherever this happened, the bourgeoisie obtained political power and ousted the hitherto ruling classes the aristocracy, the guild-burghers and the absolute monarchy representing both.³

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls...⁴

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.⁵

In proportion as the bourgeoisie, i. e., capital is developed - a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labour increases capital.⁶

All the above developments were social reorganisations meant for maintaining and advancing the practice of profit maximisation and accumulation of capital. The theory was 'laissez-faire', every participants in this process were free to join the competition and become masters of their destiny. But the instability of the system came to surface almost in regular periodicity

in the form of acute commercial crisis, "the epidemic of overproduction".⁷ This sort of crisis was never witnessed in the entire history of mankind. These recessions used to bring the entire social fabric into shambles.

And how did the bourgeoisie get over these crisis ?

- a. by enforced destruction of mass of production forces
- b. by the conquest of new markets
- c. by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones.

These peculiar solutions were also unprecedented in history.

Why destruction ? "Because there is too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce."⁸

It was really very strange. Obviously, the system was suffering from certain dichotomies which were congenital in character. In the earlier days the word 'capital' was treated as a means to meet certain ends, say adding 'values' to life but in the changed scenerio, the 'means' itself started representing 'ends' and quite obviously, its enlargement the basic motive of the system which diverged sharply from the actual needs of the society, hence dumping and sometimes massive destruction to keep the industrial wheel running. If socialisation of labour infused a tremendous leap in productivity and quality of products, unprecedented in the annals of erstwhile production systems, lack of social ownership of the products of labour, lack of social decision making on the thrust areas of production, unleashed total anarchy in the system of production. Regarding manpower and natural resources mobilisation, common social consensus hardly mattered. And regarding work motivation,

Owing to the extreme use of machinery and to division of labour, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him.⁹

So we find that rapid changes were taking place in the realtions of production, means of production, condition of life etc., but so far as addressing the simple question 'For whom ?' was concerned, a mythical hush was looming large in every corner of the society. 'Socialism' became a catchword and amidst the thinkers, the hubbub concerning reorganisation of the society on different paths was growing stronger. As discussed by Marx

and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*, all these shades of socialism could be broadly classified into three categories :

1. **Reactionary Socialism**

To this class belonged Feudal Socialism and Petty-Bourgeois Socialism. Feudal Socialism was

half lamentation, half lampoon; half echo of the past, half menace of the future; at times, by its bitter, witty and incisive criticism, striking the bourgeoisie to the very heart's core; but always ludicrous in its effect, through total incapacity to comprehend the march of modern history.¹⁰

In political practice,.... they join in all coercive measures against the working class; and in ordinary life, despite their high-falutin phrases, they stood to pick up the golden apples dropped from the tree of industry, and to barter truth, love, and honour for traffic in wool, beetroot sugar, and potato spirits.¹¹

The petty bourgeois school of socialism dissected with great acuteness the contradictions in the conditions of modern production. It laid bare the hypocritical apologies of economists. It proved, incontrovertibly, the disastrous effects of machinery and division of labour; the concentration of capital and land in a few hands; over-production and crises; it pointed out the inevitable ruin of the petty bourgeois and peasant, the misery of the proletariat, the anarchy in production, the crying inequalities in the distribution of wealth, the industrial war of extermination between nations, the dissolution of old moral bond, of the old family relations, of the old nationalities.¹²

But as solutions to these discrepancies, its last word was,

Corporate guild for manufacture; patriarchal relations in agriculture.¹³

German Socialism, representing the same class proclaiming itself as "True" socialism, realised that,

The industrial and political supremacy of the bourgeois threatens it with certain destruction; on the one hand, from the concentration of capital; on the other, from the rise of a revolutionary proletariat, "True" Socialism appeared to kill these two birds with one stone.¹⁴

It proclaimed the German nation to be the model nation and the German petty Philistine to be the typical man. To every villainous meanness of this model man it gave a

hidden, higher, Socialistic interpretation, the exact contrary of its character. It went to the extreme length of directly opposing the "brutally destructive" tendency of Communism, and of proclaiming its supreme and impartial contempt of all class struggles.¹⁵

2. **Conservative, or Bourgeois, Socialism**

"To this section belong economists, philanthropists, humanitarians, improvers of the condition of the working class, organisers of charity, members of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, temperance fanatics, hole-and-corner reformers of every imaginable kind."¹⁶

"They desire the existing state of society minus its revolutionary and disintegrating elements. They wish for a bourgeoisie without a proletariat."¹⁷

Also, they want administrative reforms- "that in no respect affect the relations between capital and labour, but, at the best lessen the cost, and simplify the administrative work, of bourgeois government."¹⁸

Manifesto with its unparallel sense of humour and wit, summarises the last word of this school of Socialism very beautifully "Free trade : for the benefit of the working class. Protective duties : for the benefit of the working class. Prison Reform : for the benefit of the working class",¹⁹ with the undisputable standing assumption - "the bourgeois is a bourgeois - for the benefit of the working class."²⁰

3. **Critical-Utopian Socialism**

"The undeveloped state of the class struggle, as well as their own surroundings, causes Socialists of this kind to consider themselves far superior to all class antagonisms. They want to improve the condition of every member of society, even that of the most favoured. Hence, they habitually appeal to society at large, without distinction of class; nay, by preference, to the ruling class."²¹

"They attack every principle of existing society. Hence they are full of the most valuable materials for the enlightenment of the working class. The practical measures proposed in them- such as the abolition of the distinction between town and country, of the family, of the carrying on of industries for the account of private individuals, and of the wage system, the proclamation of social

harmony, the conservations of the State into a mere superintendence of production, all these proposals point solely to the disappearance of class antagonisms which were, at that time, only just cropping up, and which, in these publications, are recognised in their earliest indistinct and undefined forms only. These proposals, therefore, are of a purely utopian character."²²

These represented different schemes of societal reconstruction before the Communist Manifesto was jotted down. In this thin book having only forty pages, the synopsis of the entire gamut of human civilisation, its major trends and tendencies, pitfalls and potholes, possibilities and prerogatives, principally for the use of the newly emerged force at that time, the proletarians, are so neatly and boldly addressed that one might disown it but no body can deny its towering presence.

Refraining from biblical sermons, it declares,

"The theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered by this or that would be universal reformer.

They merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes."²³

What were those theoretical conclusions? These are three basic laws of Applied Social Science.

First law :

Economic production and the structure of society of every historical epoch necessarily arising therefrom constitute the foundation for the political and intellectual history of that epoch.

Second law :

Ever since the dissolution of the primeval communal ownership of land, all history has been a history of class struggles, of struggles between exploited and exploiting, between dominated and dominating classes at various stages of social development.

Third law :

Class struggle has now reached a stage where the exploited and oppressed class (the proletarian) can no longer emancipate itself from the class which exploits and oppresses it (the bourgeoisie), without at the same time for ever freeing the whole of society from exploitation, oppression and class struggles.

These three laws constitute the pivot around which the entire Marxist philosophy revolves. Engels in his preface to the German edition of 1883 of the *Communist Manifesto* wrote that, "this basic thought belongs solely and exclusively to Marx."²⁴ Anybody, who holds slightest of doubts about these three laws, knowingly or unknowingly tries to distort it, can not claim her/himself a true Marxist. Understanding these laws means to get oneself involved in practice.

What should be the basic aims and objectives of the activists ? Three aims :

1. Formation of the proletariat into a class
2. Overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, and
3. Conquest of political power by the proletariat.

There are certain corners from where a common allegation is raised that Marx gave too much emphasis on economic relations and as a result failed to weigh other factors influencing the social dynamics. But if probed deeply, it can very easily be observed that to understand the laws of motion of history, when the philosophers were confused and deperately searching for a 'baseline', by his critical observations, only Marx could put forward a solid platform under their feet to stand upon. For the first time, a rational yardstick was discovered to understand the chain of historical events properly. Even those who are not Marxists use Marxism as a tool for their research activities. Before the advent of Marxism, the history of human civilisation was understood as the chronological account of victories and defeats of individuals, detail study of different wars and battles, rise and fall of different empires and dynasties etc. Many philosophers used to perceive these events merely as the aberrations of the human mind. Even a contemporary philosopher and historian of Marx, Nietzsche, whom, many of the post modernists treat as their 'Guru', built up his system of studies on the basic assumption that the causative factor behind most of the significant events could be attributed to the dormant cravings of the human mind to establish its rule over others. He sided directly with the ruling class and extending his whole hearted support to wars, tried to establish that for the development of culture and attainment of greater heights, a society must have two classes - one class of people will work and the other class of people will extract work from them - there is nothing wrong in it. The credit of Marxism lies in the fact that in the debate over 'mind' and the 'matter', what

is primary and what is secondary, in resolving this question, it helped the philosophers to get rid of the ambivalence of Hegelian philosophy which assumes certain basic categories of political science such as state, laws, ethics etc., as the agglomeration of certain positive and negative thinking regulating the social dynamics, controlled it historically and would be doing so in the future. Marxism could identify unequivocally the historical role of different classes in understanding the dialectical relationships between the individual and the society, class and the society.

Among the academic economists, a general tendency is observed to treat economic problems as the matters concerning man versus material rather than man versus man thereby surreptitiously discarding the social contents of the subjects so that uniform laws can be framed which are applicable to any type of system of production. Not only in the field of economics, from the last part of the nineteenth century onward, History, Law, Philosophy - in the domain of most of the social sciences, a conscious effort was working to prove that these subjects had nothing to do with class contradictions and class struggle. To pacify the intellectuals to neutralise them, the international bourgeoisie was always working and helping such efforts directly or indirectly. Besides this, McCarthyian witch-hunting of the communists as a clandestine or open state policy was operating in various forms in most of the capitalist societies through out the post world war era to intimidate the intellectuals from activism. On the other hand, from the entire treasure of the Marxist Leninist literature, if a person decides to choose just the *Communist Manifesto* and reads it carefully, s/he can definitely evolve out means to analyse the society systematically in relation to the system of production, its nature of development in the historical context, thereby identify immediate tasks to remove the bottlenecks in the course of societal development by reorganising the resources. This philosophy never claims to give a panacea, neither it offers answers to all questions like religious texts do. Like other philosophies it too provides a nice interpretational tool but unlike other philosophies, the significance of those interpretations are bound to reduce to impotent bickerings if not realised in association with praxis meant for changing the existing reality. that is why it has rightly been identified- "The communist revolution is the most radical rupture with traditional property relations; no wonder that its development involves the most radical rupture with traditional ideas."²⁵

Post modernists claim themselves hardcore materialists. Its degree can be judged from a sentence by the principal theoretician of post modernism Jacques Derrida-

I do not believe that there is any 'fact' which permits us to say in *the* Marxist text, contradiction *itself*, dialectics *itself* escapes from *the* dominance of Metaphysics.²⁶

So, what is that central question which prompts Derrida even to treat Marxism within the bracket of metaphysics ?

I have attempted more and more systematically to find a non-site or a non-philosophical site, from which to question philosophy. But the search for a non-philosophical site does not bespeak anti philosophical attitude. My central question is : how can philosophy as such appear to itself as other than itself, so that it can interrogate and reflect upon in an original manner.²⁷

Why all other philosophies did not seem sufficiently original ? Keep aside for the time being, what this originality of knowledge is meant for or where this 'non-site but not anti' can be located after all-what were those changes in objectivity for developing understanding of which all the philosophies seemed inadequate ? Here, the objectivity is nothing other than the stage of development of capitalism. Fred Jameson and David Harvey identified post modernism as a new phase of capitalism altogether different from modernity. According to their accounts as given by Allen Meiksins Wood,

The project of modernity had its origin in the Enlightenment, though it came to fruition in the nineteenth century. The so called Enlightenment project is supposed to represent rationalism, technocentrism, the standardization of knowledge and production, a belief in linear progress and universal, absolute truths. Postmodernism is supposed to be a reaction to the project of modernity Postmodernism sees the world as essentially fragmented and indeterminate, and rejects any "totalising" discourses, any so called "meta-narratives", comprehensive and universalistic theories about the world and history. It also rejects any universalistic political projects, even universalistic emancipation projects - in other words, projects for a general "human emancipation" rather than very particular struggles against very diverse and particular oppressions.²⁸

This has become possible because capitalism has entered into a phase of "disorganized capitalism".²⁹ In this phase of capitalism,

mass production of standardized goods, and the forms of labor associated with it, have been replaced by flexibility : new forms of production such as "lean production", the "team concept", and "just-in-time" production; diversification of commodities for niche markets; a "flexible" labor force; mobile capital, and so on, all made possible by new informational technologies.³⁰

So, what are the subjects of immediate concern to postmodernism ? Brenda K. Marshal, a renowned postmodernist says,

Postmodernism is about race, class, gender, erotic identity and practice, nationality, age, and ethnicity. It's about power and powerlessness, and about empowerment. It's about threads we trace, and trace, and trace but not to a conclusion. Tease knowledge, yes. But never to get pure insight. Postmodernism is about history. But not the kind of 'History' that lets us think we can know the past. History in the postmodern moment becomes histories and questions. It asks : Whose history gets told ? In whose name ? For what purpose ? Postmodernism is about histories not told, retold, untold. About histories forgotten, hidden, invisible, considered unimportant, changed or eradicated. It's about the refusal to see history as linear, as leading straight up to today in some recognisable pattern - all set for us to make sense of... The postmodern moment is not something that is to be defined chronologically; rather it is a rupture in our consciousness.³¹

Fred Jameson and David Harvey identified this "rupture" around 1970, (Harvey actually gives it a very precise date : 1972)³² So, modernity seems to be everything from the eighteenth century until the 1970, and then onward, it is postmodernism! Before this the entire history of mankind was concerned with various forms of structures. After this rupture the general tendency of the system is to deconstruct itself, having hardly any sign to repolarise itself about any centre!

So, Derrida adds,

...the entire history of the concept of structure, before the rupture of which we are speaking must be thought of as a series of substitutions of centre for centre, as a linked chain of determinations of the centre successively and in a regulated fashion, the centre receives different form of names.³³

Regarding the class and class struggle Derrida says, At least in an indistinct way, I felt that the concept of class struggle and even the identification of a social class were ruined by capitalist modernity.³⁴

He adds farther,

I believe in the gross existence of the social classes, but the modernity of industrial societies (not to mention the third world) can not be approached, analysed, taken into account within a political strategy, starting off from a concept whose links are so loose.³⁵

In this backdrop of postmodernist discourse, it is difficult to restrain the temptation of raising a few questions -

1. From Derrida's account we have already come to know that in the modern industrial societies, class factor has diluted very much-then within specific historical, social and cultural matrices when it is asked how we are defined, who are these 'we'? When different identities coincide within the same person, what will be the principal identity?
2. It has also been observed that the 'class' factor is weighed with so many other categories like gender, nationality, age, ethnicity etc. Then is there any resultant direction of the movements taking place in the society? Is there any motivating force? What is the role of a postmodernist in these mesh of identities? To take refuge inside different identities at different times and identify 'differances'?
3. When a postmodernist philosopher keeps on searching the root and nature of power and refuses to draw any firm conclusion because there is no such absolute answer to something so abstract, does he feel at least the need for some 'working laws', otherwise what is the use of so meticulous a search?
4. If we assume that postmodernism has got some definite contribution in evolving a reading methodology by which one may know about histories not told, retold, untold etc., then the question comes for whom this reading is meant for? What motivated the postmodernist historian to free history from 'authoritarian' elements? Search for truth? what is the definition of truth for the postmodernist historian?
5. The refusal to see history as linear, as leading straight up to today is definitely praiseworthy. But what type of historical account is being termed as linear? In what way does multi-dimensionality of history conform to deconstruction?

We get some answers from Terry Eagleton's writing 'Where do postmodernists come from?' "...almost every central feature of postmodern theory can be deduced, read off as it were, from the assumptions of a major political defeat"³⁶ At a time when revolutionary forces become weak, mass actions pass temporarily through a dull period and particularly that young generation which could not witness revolutionary actions but at the same time have some familiarity with the concepts of socialism, for them the existing system might appear to be something absolute, as if a part of the nature, unchangeable. They suffer from a peculiar kind of 'Libertarian pessimism'. Terry Eagleton says,

The typical style of thought of such a period, then, might be described as libertarian pessimism - libertarian, because one would not have given up on the dream of something quite other than what we have; pessimism, because one would, be much too bleakly conscious of the omnipotence of law and power to believe that such a dream could even be realized. If one still believed in subversion, but not in the existence of any flesh-and-blood agents of it, then it might be possible to imagine that the system in some way subverted itself, deconstructed its own logic, which would then allow you to combine a certain radicalism with a certain skepticism.³⁷

In postmodernism, Eagleton noticed farther,

Its nervousness in the face of concepts like truth has alarmed the bishops and charmed the business executives. It consistently denies the possibility of describing how the world is, and just as consistently finds itself doing so. It is full of universal moral prescriptions - plurality is preferable to singularity, difference to identity, otherness to sameness - and denounces all such universalism as oppressive. It dreams of a human being set free from law and constraint, gliding ambiguously from one "subject-position" to another, and sees the human subject as no more than the determined effect of cultural forces.³⁸

Why postmodernist agenda stands in antagonism with the *Communist Manifesto* ? If we compare the outcome of postmodernist agenda with the *Communist Manifesto*, we find that,

1. Criticising the Marxist philosophy for putting fundamental thrust on economic production, it rather tries to replace it by cultural infrastructure and rather tries to prove that

economic, political and intellectual history of a particular epoch is basically guided by cultural diversities.

2. It believes 'in an indistinct way' that the concept of class struggle and even the identification of a social class were ruined by capitalist modernity. Within specified historical, social and cultural matrices, the society is rather represented by different identities based on race, class, gender, erotic identity and practice, nationality, age, and ethnicity.

3. Any action plan aimed at freeing the whole of society from exploitation by sharpening class struggle is absurd. Because after the historical 'rupture', deconstruction is the leading phenomenon. The basic task of a postmodernist activist is to study 'differance' (here, two words, 'differance' and 'deferment' have been combined phonetically to form 'differance') of different identities with respect to the rest.

As if in the postmodernist consideration, as Eagleton remarks, "the subject as producer (coherent, disciplined, self-determining)....have yielded ground to the subject as consumer (mobile, ephemeral, constituted by insatiable desire)."³⁹ Most obnoxious aspect of postmodernism lies in its objection to any form of organisation having a centre but without providing any alternative form of organisation and thereby indirectly preaching spontaneity. But when dissected what all these so called spontaneous activities reveal? Mostly, the decision making body remains confined to a very small nucleus and generally chances of heavy losses are always associated with such movements. On the other hand, imperialism is grossly accepted as something formless, without paying any attention to the large contingent of standing armies and stockpile of nuclear arsenals. Instead of studying its style of operation for maintaining global control, it is assumed non-existent. Whereas even the so called free media manufactures news so that it can act as an efficient and obedient prop for imperialism. Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman⁴⁰ in their book *Manufacturing Consent : The Political Economy of the Mass Media* answers the question 'What is the propaganda model and how does it work?' very efficiently. They have noted that five factors are involved - ownership, advertising, sourcing, flak, and anti communist ideology - which work as "filters" through which information must pass and individually or often in additive fashions they help shape media choices. The propaganda model describes a decentralized and non-conspiratorial market system

of control and processing, although at times the government or one or more private sectors may take initiative and mobilize coordinated elite handling of an issue.

The extent to which the imperialism can keep on adding fads in public life in the conceptual plane as well as action plans to overcome its internal crisis is difficult to predict but in its chessboard, postmodernism holds a very favorable position. The choice theory which is in perfect harmony with the existence of different social 'categories', is extended to the level of even school syllabus. Recently the school board in Kansas has voted to delete evolution from the state curriculum.⁴¹ The vote is the culmination of a movement spearheaded by US creationists, who pit the Book of Genesis against Darwin's scheme of natural selection, faith against science. In other words, if Darwin's is no more than one possible explanation, then science becomes a matter of choice, or rather belief. Perhaps, postmodernist doctrine will not find anything wrong in such types of state sponsored moves.

Notes :

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MARCUSE'S MARXISM : THEORY OF ALIENATION AND REVOLUTION

Girin Phukon

Marcuse demonstrates his political experience of contemporary advanced industrial societies. He contributes certain new ideas in the light of new reality of both the affluent capitalist and socialist societies. Indeed, he focuses attention on the fact that the human freedom is suppressed in such societies. Marcuse put forward his unique philosophy in order to safeguard the human being from the clutches of industrial and totalitarian societies. It may be noted that in the mid-nineteenth century Marx conceptualised his basic socialist doctrines on the basis of emerging capitalist society. The Marxism materialised in the erstwhile Soviet Union in the twentieth century was, however, different from one originally visualised by Marx. In the mid-twentieth century when capitalism had undergone a sea-change, Marcuse reshaped and re-interpreted Marxism to suit the emerging new realities and their influence on human life and freedom. As a matter of fact, he articulated a new philosophy in the context of new reality of capitalist society and emerging communist society as well. Although Marcuse, echoed the fundamental premises of Marx in his thought, he adopted an independent position from the orthodox Marxist frame-work. The reason for this was that perhaps he was unable to explain the post-Marx changes with the help of Marxist concepts which proved to be inadequate to deal with the emerging political problems in the face of rapid growth of capitalism. In view of this, it will be interesting to examine what type of alternative frame-work Marcuse seeks to adopt different from the classical Marxism ? This paper is, however, limited to understand the question as to how his experience of affluent capitalist and emerging socialist society influenced him in formulating basic ideals of "alienation" and "freedom" ? How he deals with the problem of revolution as a means of establishing a "non-repressive" society ?

II

Marcuse maintains that basic character of industrial civilization is the domination of man by man. In an affluent capitalist society, the satisfaction of majority of people is determined by their own labour; but they cannot control their own labour. Thus he argues, "men do not live their own lives, but perform pre-established functions while they work, they do not fulfil their own needs and faculties but work in alienation".¹ In fact, this view demonstrates that man does not realise that his life has become an instrument of labour. More importantly, according to Marcuse, it is the capitalist who makes man to work more than necessary. Thus increasing greed of the capitalist inflicts the "surplus repression" on individual. Therefore, the main task before the society is to eliminate such repression. In his criticism on the advanced industrial society, Marcuse argues that technology 'has created a world of artificial needs, mass consumption and irrational goals which men are too eager to accept. the exploitative relation of capital and labour is thoroughly hidden by the "false consciousness which follows directly from the one-dimensional awareness of modern man."² Such society makes optimum use of science and technology and minimises the need for human labour, Marcuse asserts. The working class becomes disorganized and reconciled to the established society. It is no longer the main antagonistic force in capitalist society. He believes that in the industrial society a new type of slavery has come into existence. In such situation, man has lost the ability to distinguish between 'true' and 'false' needs. Further echoing the basic premises of Marx, Marcuse observes that a technocratic and bureaucratic elite effectively controls the mass media and high "irrational consumption". Thus the rationalisation of culture is completed and Marx's vision of proletarian revolution becomes utopian.³

Besides, Marcuse believes that freedom is denied in socialist system as in advanced industrial democratic system. He is of the firm opinion that socialist countries are no longer revolutionary as they have accepted the ideology of the status-quo rather than that of social radicalism. The labour class has lost its revolutionary capabilities. Marcuse alleges that the socialist countries are following the western model of development of industrialisation and consumerism. This process of industrialisation

and modernisation still continues in socialist countries, he maintains. Marcuse seemed to regard the erstwhile Soviet Union as simply another modern industrial society like the United States of America. Thus man under all social systems, he argues, faces defeat and frustration. Both capitalism and communism are destructive of human personality. The classical doctrine of "class conflict" has become inapplicable to modern society, he asserts. It happens because of the fact that Industrial society has destroyed the urges for resistance. The "class war" between bourgeoisie and workers has ended not only in "collusion" between the labour unions and the employers but in reconciliation of the workers to their own conditions. They seem to be so well-off in their eyes that they can no longer act as the agent of "historical transformation". Both the workers and bourgeoisie want to preserve the existing institutions as they believe that productivity and industrial output are to be everyone's benefit. The technological control appears to be the embodiment of reason for the advantage of all social groups and therefore all contradictions seems to be irrelevant. This is the most lamentable feature of the present era, Marcuse observes.

III

The situation as noted above which prevails in the highly industrialised society led Marcuse to explain 'alienation' at the societal level from a Marxian perspective. The theory of alienation is the intellectual construct in which Marx displayed the devastating effect of capitalist production on human being, on their physical and mental states and also on social process of which they are a part.⁴ According to Marx, alienation is a process whereby man forfeits something what is essential to his nature - to be in control of his own activities. He describes the estrangement of labour or "alienation of the workers in this object" as appear in three major forms : alienation of labour from its product; alienation from society and self; alienation of man from nature and fellow being.⁵ Thus it appears that alienation of man is the product of capitalist society which has created a situation where man has been alienated both from himself, his surroundings, labour and products.

Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man* (1964) is the most important work which discusses the question of alienation in

contemporary society. He states that our society is dominated by technological rationality and repression of freedom, leading to domination of man's inner-self. Therefore, Marcuse asserts that advanced industrial society is a totalitarian one in which domination of its members are pervasive. Irrationality is endemic but it is seen as rationality by the masses who have been conditioned by society's perversion of reason.⁶ Thus it seems obvious Marcuse's *One Dimensional Man* is the personification of Marx's alienation.⁷ It has made the workers incapable of revolting against a situation not acceptable to them. As such alienation has made the workers an abstraction and resulted in their moral degradation. Unlike Marx, Marcuse, envisages the transformation of labour into pleasure as the solution of the problem of alienation. He believes that this "can be achieved only by complete change in social institutions, a distribution of social products according to need, the assignment of functions according to talent."⁸ However, Marcuse differs from Hannah Arendt, C. Wright Mills and many others who deplored the human condition in contemporary industrialised society and had suggested a return to the pre-industrial age. On the other hand, he believes in industrialisation and all its benefits and advocates not to go back into the pre-industrial age but forward into a post-industrial age. Because the objective before the individual should no longer, he argues, be "performance" but "happiness".⁹ In this case, Marcuse differs from Marx who never thought of happiness of the individual.

Similarly, Marcuse's concept of freedom is quite different from Marx. Marx does not believe in the desirability of complete automation. In fact, he is more concerned with the "changed relations" of production. He seeks to emancipate the workers from alienation by setting up a non-exploitative relations of production where real freedom lies. It necessitates the abolition of the division between mental and manual labour. In contrast to Marcuse, for Marx, work and freedom are compatible.¹⁰ He maintains that work is a means to the realization of human potential and creativity. It is a unique human activity, he asserts, that results in the development of human personality.¹¹ But for Marcuse freedom can be achieved by substituting automation for human labour.¹² In fact, Marcuse is trying to create a new man and a autonomous man. For this purpose, he moulded a new philosophy out of the classical Marxist premises. In his state of freedom, creativity, love and happiness shall prevail. He is an

advocator of absolute freedom which will eliminate all social regulations whatsoever. According to him freedom is the free development of human need and faculties in the society with autonomy and self-determination.¹³ Thus it appears that Marcuse gives up the Marxist theory of state and the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the words of Wiatr, contrary to Marx, Marcuse is the theorist of "unbounded individualism and anarchist freedom."¹⁴

IV

Though Marcuse did not pronounce definitely the means of revolution, yet certain indication is visible in his philosophy about the ways to be adopted to achieve the desired change. In a situation in which the working class constitutes highly qualified salaried employees, technicians and specialists holding white colour jobs and important position in the material processes of production cannot be expected to provide strong mass base for a revolution, Marcuse observes.¹⁵ As such democratic persuasion is not likely to prove effective for this purpose because satisfaction of classes make class struggle outdated, Marcuse believes. The individualism has been absorbed and assimilated into the system of domination. As a result, freedom has become illusory. The system rules over the individuals and the pluralism becomes only a false reality. Thus it seems obvious that there is a difference between Marx and Marcuse in regard to the means of transforming capitalism and achieving the state of freedom. According to Marx revolutionary proletarian class is the agent of social transformation.¹⁶ But Marcuse believes that proletarian class bound to be impotent in the face of well-advanced affluent capitalist system. The proletarian class has lost its revolutionary potential and instead become an integral part of the system. Hence Marcuse depends a small politicised minority for revolution and suggested not a large centralized and co-ordinated movement but local and regional political action against specific grievances.¹⁷ It is, therefore, evident that Marcuse repudiates the classical Marxist theories of state and revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In any case, according to Marcuse, revolution is needed by which he means development of a, what he calls, "subversive majority". He suggested leaders of this "subversive majority" to

bring out a revolution using undemocratic and violent means if necessary. He further, calls for control over teaching and other related practices in educational institutions, which he, characterises as "liberating tolerance".¹⁸ In other words, he defines it as intolerance against rightist movement and toleration to leftist movement. Thus he is in favour of encouraging leftist movements and tolerating violence directed against rightists.

Marcuse is, however, not in favour of setting up of political parties and he does not believe in alliances. In fact, he is in favour of an overt organization, diffused concentrated in small group around local activities. A small contesting and completing group, a kind of political guerilla forces will be much effective, he asserts. Though he emphasises on 'political education', it is not clearly spelt out. In the sixties, as a part of such effort, Marcuse encouraged student movement and he thought that it would not merely change the institution but the human being themselves in their attitudes, instincts and values. He argues that student movement in itself may not be revolutionary, but it is a possible prelude to revolutionary action. Indeed, his support of the students' revolt is based on the idea that it will be converted to political and social forces in the society.¹⁹ But such strategy for socialist transition, appears to be childish and irrational. It is interesting to note that till late sixties he had still hoped that these alleged infantile radicals will be the true historical heirs of the great socialist tradition. However in last days, Marcuse realised the "counter culture" what he advocated for a long time which had proved a flop. He, therefore, felt that no revolutionary force had been left in the society and as such his search for freedom and happiness appear to have been futile.²⁰ Thus the concept of revolution that Marcuse advocated is vague. In fact, the means and strategy of revolution are neither comprehensive nor effective. He has exclusively depended on intellectuals, students and other minority groups to spearhead the revolution of this concept. Student community constitutes floating population and the intellectuals mostly live in their ivory towers. On the other hand, Marx is of the view that in socialist transition, it would be the working class that would be the leading and most consistently revolutionary class. Marx's thesis on the revolutionary role of the working class depends upon the fact that it is the inevitable product of capitalism that its position is bound up with the most developed forms of

production, the working class in its struggle come face to face with capitalist and its emancipation could only be achieved by doing way with the private ownership of the means of production.²¹ But Marcuse becomes the victim of pessimism. Nobody will take seriously the possibility of a revolution by the "non-integrated out siders" that is the lumpen elements and some violently excited students.

V

From the above discussion it clearly emerges that Marx advocates basic changes whereas Marcuse pleads for super-structural changes only. Marcuse emphasises that social progress does not depend on material basis. Instead, his utopia will be accomplished through a cultural revolution in which a radical alteration in men's consciousness (not class consciousness) takes place without any basic change in the ownership of the means of production or in the present relations of production. Thus it appears that Marcuse's utopianism is repudiation of Marx's materialism in favour of a system of what he calls 'technological rationality'.²² However, Marcuse continued to be a Marxist like other new left intellectuals and used the concepts such as 'class struggle', 'alienation', 'economic' forces of 'production' and material pre-requisites of freedom which are part and parcel of Marxist approach. It seems that Marcuse did not adopt either an anti-communist or pro-capitalist posture. In fact, he appears to have maintained independence from the orthodox Marxist framework. The reason for this was that he perhaps failed to explain the post-Marx changes with Marxist paradigm which proved to be inadequate to deal with the problems emerged out of changing nature of capitalism. In effect, Marcuse modified the form of Marxist terminology in a way that classical Marxian terms become unidentifiable. Thus Tim Luke maintains that Marcuse opens his redefinition of the socialist tradition by recasting Marxism as 'critical theory' or as Marxism without the proletariat.²³ In order to render the new situation posed by the late capitalism he made Marxism more comprehensive.

Marcuse seems to have accepted the pre-established technics of advanced industrial society because of their unprecedented productive capabilities. If Marxism regards science as a mere instrument of the bourgeoisie, then there must be also specially built non-bourgeoisie socialist technology. But Marcuse

is not aware and critical of the corrupted 'one dimensional' subjectivity. Though he is critical of both the capitalist and socialist societies, he is not definite about their alternative. The alternatives that he suggests such as 'new society', "non-repressive civilization", Libertarian socialism", utopian "Anarcho-Socialism", "State of Freedom" are ambiguous. He has not explained clearly the measures to be adopted to achieve them. His concept of revolution that he advocates is also vague. Therefore, all these remains a pious wish as it failed to make any dent in either capitalism or socialism. More importantly, Marcuse fails to understand that lack a revolutionary situation at any particular moment does not necessarily denote the absence of objective conditions and contradictions of an antagonistic nature. It is wrong to assume that the scientific-technical revolution has given enormous powers to the establishment that it can do whatever it likes. Contrary to this, it may be argued that like all phenomena the scientific-technical revolution bound to posses its own inherent contradictions.

Nevertheless, Marcuse's major contribution to the contemporary political thought is his analysis how the mass media keeps on changing our one-dimensional thought which is digested by men and self-validating assumptions are accepted by him as self-evident truth. The positive aspect of his thinkings is that he has highlighted the short-comings of technical rationality, adversity in the midst of affluence and repression.

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3. *Ibid*
4. See, Bertell Ollman : *Alienation : Marx's Conception of man in Capitalist society*. Cambridge University (London, 1976) p. 131.
5. *Ibid* pp. 131-155
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15. S. P. Verma : op. cit, p. 331
16. See, Cliff Slaughter : op. cit. pp. 46-59.
17. Girin Phukon "Marcuse's Ideas of Technological Rationality" *Journal Politics*. Vol. V. 1997, p. 39.
18. Marcuse : *A critique of Pure tolerance*, Beacon Press, 1965, p. 109. cited in S. P. Verma, op. cit p. 329.
19. See, Girin Phukon : op. cit. p. 33
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COMMUNISM WITH A HUMAN FACE : THE DUBCEK EXPERIMENT

Abu Nasar Saied Ahmed

M. N. Roy can be rightly regarded as the forerunner of the idea of 'communism with a human face' as he wanted to restate the "humanist, libertarian, moralist" kernel of Marxism after liberating it from the dogmatic of economic determinism.¹ He argued that "Historical Determinism come to grief whenever its exponents take a superficial one-sided view, ignoring the dynamics of ideas".² Such theoretical reformulation of the basic tenets of Marxism was experimented only once in the entire history of Marxism since the publication of *Communist Manifesto*. It was Alexander Dubcek who tried to make an experiment with communism with a human face in his country Czechoslovakia. The short-lived experiment which began in 1968 had a long historical background.

Czechoslovakia, created at the end of World War II from the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian empire was the last East European country to fall under communism in the post World-War II period. To revisit the history, like many of the East European countries, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (hereafter referred to as CPC)³ sprang out of a socialist wave in the tumultuous revolutionary upsurge after World War I. Two decades of extensive organisational activism paved the way to communist take over in February 1948. The West had its unwitting and indirect role in this transformation. The Western appeasement policy of Hitler led to the conclusion of the Munich agreement, a symbol of great powers' surrender to an aggressive power with unlimited territorial ambition and this accelerated the process of communist emergence in the political scene of Czechoslovakia. Following the entry of the German troops into Sudetenland on October 1, 1938, wrote David W. Paul, "The Czechs, who had prided themselves on their political kinship with the West, learned in 1938 that the West considered them

dispensable - lesson that was subsequently confirmed in 1984 and 1968".⁴ It is matter of history that taking the advantage of the pitiable condition, Poland captured Tesin (Cieszyn), Hungary seized a strip of land in southern Slovakia and the eastern region known as Subcarpathian Ruthenia. On March 14, 1939, Slovakia seceded to become a separate state allied with Germany. On the following day German troops occupied Bohemia and Moravia and even before the outbreak of World War II, the country was crushed to pieces while the West helplessly saw the entire proceedings from a safe distance.⁵

During the War, various resistance groups helped the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (hereafter referred to as CPC), formed in 1921 after a split of Czechoslovakia Social Democratic Organisation, to grow from strength to strength and to establish a special relationship with the Soviet Union. These developments compelled Eduard Benes, the head of the exile government of Czechoslovakia to agree to the inclusion of the communists in the post-War coalition government and in this way he dreamed of liberal and democratic policy with moderate socialist temper.⁶

Although both American and the Soviet troops advanced towards Prague during the last phase of the War, the Red army accomplished the actual task of liberation⁷ and thus the Soviet Union gained advantage in Czechoslovakia, which eventually was reflected in the 1947 general election. The CPC secured 46.17% votes which gave the party greater political leverage. It enabled the party to secure several important portfolios like interior, agriculture, finance, information, internal trade. In this process the coalition government became unbalanced, making the non-communist partners uncomfortable. In spite of these inherent disabilities, President Benes tried to present a liberal face of his country by expressing willingness to participate in the European Recovery Program popularly known as Marshall plan in a bid to build a bridge between east and west, which was frustrated by the quick intervention from Moscow.⁸ On the other hand, Prague witnessed a bloodless coup in February 1948 in the wake of mass resignation by non-communist from the coalition ministry of Klement Gottwald, marking the end of the prospects of a liberal coalition politics within the Soviet sphere of influence. President Benes himself had to resign on June 6, 1948 and was succeeded by Gottwald.⁹

Czechoslovakia continued to pass through a rigid and conservative form of communist rule despite the evidence of the impact of de-Stalinisation in Eastern Europe. Gottwald's successor Antonin Novotny preserved the Stalinist style of conservatism. The internal political situation remained unchanged till the 4th Congress of Czechoslovak Writers' Union held in Prague on June 27-29, 1967 which launched explosive criticism against the Party and the Government.¹⁰ In October 1967 in the meeting of the Central Committee of the CPC, Alexander Dubcek, a relatively unknown young Slovak of 46 years, openly criticised Novotny on a number of fronts. The open revolt in the party against Novotny eventually led to the replacement of Novotny by Dubcek on January 5, 1968 marking the preface of the Czech experiment of communism with a human face.

Dubcek, born on November 27, 1921 in Uhrovec, western Slovakia, educated in the Soviet Union in 1925-1938 and joined the Czechoslovakia Communist Party in 1939, rose to the position of Party's secretary in 1962, before he replaced Novotny in January 1968 as the First Secretary¹¹ demonstrated restraint in spearheading a reform movement until the publication of the 'Action Programme' of April 5, 1968. This was done to avoid possible reactions from the internal opponents which could provide them with a pretext to stage comeback and create enough scope for external intervention. He tried to strike a balance between the demands of the intellectuals on one hand, and the opposition to his reforms by the conservatives in the party and the state bureaucracy, the army and the police on the other.¹² The "Action Programme" published on April 9 was a 60 page document entitled "The Czechoslovak Road to Socialism" was drafted by a group of intellectuals at the instance of Dubcek and was approved by a resolution of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. Its purpose was to purify communism of its "former aberration" and to "build socialism in this country in a way corresponding to our condition and tradition". The Document pledged among others (1) to guarantee freedom of speech for minority interests and opinion within the framework of socialist law; freedom of assembly and association and religious observance; (2) to reframe electoral laws to provide a broader choice of candidates and greater freedom of non-communist parties with the National front, because "socialist power cannot be monopolized by a single party or coalition of parties",

(3) to upgrade the National Assembly (parliament) and the government with regard to the power of the communist party apparatus; (4) to broaden economic reform to give enterprises greater independence and to increase trade with the western countries; (5) to institute an independent judiciary; (6) to grant federal status for Slovakia on an independent basis; and (7) to draft a new constitution by the end of 1969. It also outlined the international status of the country and its foreign policy within the framework of "democracy and socialism" in the context of the struggle "against the aggressive attempts of world imperialism". The basic orientation of the Czechoslovak foreign policy shaped during the struggle for national liberation would be adhered to by way of maintaining "alliance and cooperation with the Soviet Union and other socialist states" on the basis of mutual respect for equality, sovereignty and international solidarity. The Central Committee also pledged a "full and just rehabilitation of all persons" who had been unjustly persecuted during 1949-1954. It guaranteed "moral, personal and financial compensation" to persons affected by the persecutions. It also vowed that "persons who took active part" in the persecution would not be allowed to hold any important position in the social and political life of the country.¹³

The publication of the "Action Programme" and the discussions thereafter steered an emotionally charged process of liberalisation and reform in Czechoslovakia symbolically associated with the ouster Novotny. Five factors appeared to have contributed to the speedy reform movement. *First*, and undoubtedly de-Stalinization and revelation of Novotny's complicity in repression and crimes. *Second*, the economic crisis marked by negative rate caused by low agricultural and industrial productivity, disruption of trade relations with China, extensive Soviet-decreed credits to the Third World. *Third*, the re-coalescence and reemergence of a large number of Czechoslovak intelligentsia consisting of writers, journalists, economists and social scientists made the call for liberal and tolerant face of communism stronger and formidable. The ideas of Rosa Luxemburg and Antonio Gramsci induced the intelligentsia to search for a synthesis of democracy and socialism. *Fourth*, there was a noticeable change in the attitude and perception of the Czech intellectuals towards the Germans and the Russians (Slovaks were neither pronounced anti-German nor were they pro-Russian) lowering the Soviet

prestige and authority in Czechoslovakia. *Fifth*, there was a boiling cauldron of discontentment among the Slovaks communists against the domination from Czechs in Prague.¹⁴ The principles of reform which had been formulated by a highly respected economist, Ota Sik in September 1964, to change the contours of communism adaptable in the Czechoslovakia were well known. These were interwoven with multi-faceted economic principles designed to introduce a second and intensive stage in the economic development of the country coupled with measures to stimulate workers' interest in production, to reorganise the centralised-directive planning and to revalidate the "tremendous advantages of socialism".¹⁵ On this line of thinking another important document was prepared in June 1968 entitled "2000 Words to workers, farmers, scientists, artists and everyone" drafted by a writer Ludvik Vaculik and signed by a hundred people from all walks of Czechoslovakian life.¹⁶ While accepting socialism as an infallible way of economic and political life of the people the document attempted at retrospection: "We are all responsible for the present state of affairs, and the Communists among us are more responsible than others. The main responsibility, however, rests with those who were component parts or instruments of uncontrolled power". It launched attack on the rulers for the arbitrary rule, decline of economy, crimes against innocent people, censorship and limitations on freedom of expression. Within the framework of socialism it contemplated a democratic and tolerant system in which the press would be a mouthpiece of official views but would be "a platform of all positive political forces". "Let us establish committees for the defence of the freedom of expression". Moscow's reaction to "2000 Words" was strong and understandable as it feared that Prague's clamour for greater freedom and liberalisation had deeper implications. Once it is tolerated there would be spill over impact in other East European countries living under Soviet sphere of influence. It feared that the demand for freedom of expression, formation of a National front leading eventually to the emergence of a multiparty system, inquiry into the allegations of repression would destroy the basic foundation of socialism not only in Eastern Europe but also in the Soviet Union. Therefore, it immediately published a statement in *Pravda* disapproving "2000 Words" as "an attack on the socialist foundations of Czechoslovakia".¹⁷ In continuation of the spirit already set by the "Action Programme" and "2000 Words" Dubcek made an important statement in the

party general meeting on July 19 following the barrage of criticism from the socialist countries of Eastern Europe and Moscow reaffirming his commitment for socialism, and at the same time he was steadfast in his stand to further economic and political reform. The essence of his political reform tied with the commitment to abolish censorship so that even a dissenting voice was heard and respected, to induct expanded opportunities for "the right to assembly and association" and for a National Front which could accomodate various shades of life. The basic tenets of political pluralism were addressed to and identified. He was at the same time consistent in his adherence to socialism and fraternal relations with the Soviet Union.¹⁸ He instituted a commission of inquiry to go into the allegations of mock trial, secret killings, oppressive police brutality which were the manifestation of a despotic political bureaucracy nurtured by Novotny. The core of *raison d'être* of reform was that if socialism was to remain socialism, it was not to degenerate into a well functioning but still inhuman society, where human values and conditions are sacrificed to perpetuate dogmatism. If socialism was to survive, productivity, rationality and humanism had to go together. Dubcek was not in favour of Western model of democracy and was critical of "insensitively following in the footsteps of the dehumanized civilization of the American type."¹⁹ What he wanted was to rehabilitate communism by reforms and to see that three essentials of communism in his country go together harmoniously-alliance with Moscow, continuing economic reform for better standard of life, and a party federalised but retaining control of the commanding heights of the society so that oppressive apparatus could be eliminated. Other interests groups would be consulted in the decision-making process but would not be allowed to form opposition parties. In other words, it would be a kind of 'communist corporative state.'

Dubcek's experiment to create something the world had never experienced, to realise "communism with a human face", a quiet revolution without guns and tanks or barricades attracted the attention of the media, scholars and politicians during that short span of eight months of the year 1968. The experiment was talked about as though all that required to be done was to allow Dubcek to go ahead with his programme, which, if succeeded, would bring forth new interpretation of Marxism-Leninism. The New Left in Western Europe was enthusiastic and

optimistic, although erroneously and forgetting the lessons of the Hungarian revolution of 1956, with the hope that the old oppressive, bureaucratic socialism might be liquidated and new tolerant and more democratic model of communism would be applied. Therefore, *Guardian*, March 25, 1968 reported :

Czechoslovakia's peaceful revolution not only marks a new stage in the development of Communism, but it may alter the political shape of the world, if the powers in both East and West see their opportunity as take it.

Such optimism was unfounded. The great powers had already acknowledged their respective sphere of influence which should at that given point of time remain undisturbed. At any rate, the month of July 1968 saw hectic activities in support of and against Dubcek's human face of communism. Before he could consolidate his position the Warsaw Pact countries headed by the Soviet Union marched into Czechoslovakia on August 21, intervened militarily and arrested key reform leaders including Dubcek, installed a new government headed by Gustav Husak. And the whole exercise of giving communism a human faced ended in a fiasco.

Where did Dubcek fault ? Although Dubcek's name is primarily associated with the concept of communism with a human face, its original thinker was Ota Sik. What Dubcek wanted to do was basically an attempt to transform those lofty words of liberalisation and democratisation into a reality through a set of programme. But he suffered from certain serious weaknesses. *First*, his reform movement undoubtedly had the support of the intelligentsia, but not of the workers who remained far away from it.²⁰ Therefore, as interventionist forces reached Prague, the intelligentsia gave a veil and passive resistance while workers witnessed it with no concern and the pro-interventionists could easily brand the 'Prague Spring' as a counter-revolutionary exercise despite the fact that the leaders of reform were all through in favour of retaining their fraternal relations with the Soviet Union. *Second*, the history of past revolutions including the Hungarian one (1956) warns against the assumption that the Prague Spring, even in the absence of Warsaw intervention, would have proceeded directly to a preordained victory for fundamental reform, more so when Moscow was not prepared to experiment with a liberal and tolerant face of communism.

Third, it was not clear what type of human face of communism was going to be projected and displayed when the politics of centralism in the party was advocated. Pavel Tigrid, in his study has stated that the Dubcek experiment was not possible. The inherent contradictions of the Czechs and the Slovaks were not resolved and in such a situation the party leaders were not prepared to go beyond certain points at which the threat to their power and position was clear and profound. He wrote : "A communist dictatorship is by its very nature permanent, able to change its costumes but never its skin".²¹ The reformers were thrilled with illusions as they thought that possibilities of market socialism and 'open Marxism' were wide open, and the same time they forgot to assess the global environment still charged with the Cold War psyche. A moderate and more restrained course on the line of what had been initiated by Janos Kadar in Hungary after the 1956 upheaval. *Fourth*, Dubcek was surrounded by firm believers of reform, and under the pressure of the radicals and the public opinion he identified himself with the bourgeois and prepared to forge ahead with radical reforms in a system in his country which was not independent of external pressure. If he had refused to march along the line of the radical as there was the possibility of his ouster, and caught in between the radicals and the external compulsions, Dubcek decided to go by the emotions of 'Prague Spring' without a well-defined blueprint. Therefore, after the military intervention of August 21, 1968, Dubcek was censured by both the Czechs and the Slovaks for the opposite reasons - for his excessive caution and moderation, and his failure to resist external intervention.²²

A well-known new left scholar presented a Marxist interpretation of Dubcek's experiment and argued that it was nothing but a handiwork of westernised, counter-revolutionaries who had no roots with the masses and therefore, it was essentially a counter-revolution engineered by Prague's middle class. Such a reformist attempt was doomed to fail.²³

In the post-August era Dubcek continued to have faith in the cardinal principles of human rights and autonomy of individuals even in the socialist framework. Therefore, although his experiment was crushed and his political position was eventually dismantled, but unlike Imre Nagy he was not victimised. He continued to function as the First Secretary of the party till April 1969.

Disgraced but not demolished he remained committed to the principle of socialism with a human face. In an important speech delivered in the Central Committee meeting of the CPC on January 8, 1969 he admitted some of the shortcomings which had crept into the reform programme under the banner of 'Prague Spring' but his conviction in the "principle of legal guarantees to every citizen and of the consistent observance of the citizens' rights and legality in the life of society" remained unaffected.²⁴

Gaustav Husak, who succeeded Dubcek, brought about a tolerant system, though not equivalent to the norms of western democracies, in which individuals' rights and liberties were not threatened by a regimented political bureaucracy. There was no instance of secret and mock trials, physical extermination and suppression of freedom of expression. One can relate these processes of de-Stalinisation to what Dubcek tried to achieve in a speedy and radical manner. To that extent Dubcek's attempt did not go in vain. It took three more decades to see whatever Dubcek thought and tried fully realised as communism was replaced by western model of democracy in entire Eastern Europe. But with that the inherent contradiction for the Czechs and the Slovak surfaced and the country was divided on ethnic lines proving once again that ethnicity and not political doctrine can play a decisive role in the process of nation-state formation.

Notes :

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MARX, MARCUSE AND THE WOMEN'S QUESTION

Alpana Borgohain Handique

I

Marx the great philosopher of the oppressed proletariat used the dialectic and the class analysis for the critique of power rooted in the bourgeoisie-proletariat under capitalism. His analysis failed to question the patriarchal unequal power equation that exists between man and woman in society both capitalist and socialist. Therefore the dismantling of the class system through a Marxian Proletariat Revolution will not be able to liberate women. On the other hand, approximately half of the human race consists of women. Equality between man and woman is therefore indispensable for social equality in any societal system. Therefore any philosophy which promises a future society free from exploitation has to take into consideration the women's problem.

To make an evaluation of Marx's contribution to the women's question, a critical appreciation of his works is essential. In the *Communist Manifesto* (1848), he severely criticizes the bourgeois family, which reduces the family relations to mere mechanical, profitable, money relations devoid of sentiments.¹

On what foundation is the present family, the Bourgeois family based? On private gain. In its completely developed form, this family exists only among the Bourgeoisie ... The Bourgeoisie clap-trap about the family and education, about hallowed correlation of parent and child, becomes all the more disgusting, the more, by the action of modern industry, all family ties among the proletariats are torn asunder, and their children transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labour.²

Marx also quotes in the *Manifesto* as such *The Bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production*.³ Thus, it can be deduced that to Marx, wives and children in the bourgeois family are treated as instruments of production to be exploited and commodified. They are to be owned, dominated and used by the bourgeois man to increase his share of profits.

Marx unveiled the actual nature of bourgeoisie marriage as a kind of prostitution both public and private. The *Manifesto* regards this institution as a *System of wives in common*.⁴ The bourgeois not content with having the wives and daughters of proletarians at their disposal, also takes great pleasure in common prostitutes and in seducing each other's wives. The wife performed the function of producing legitimate heirs for the transmission of property in return for boarding and lodging. Engels too regarded this as a form of prostitution and contrasted this with what he considered to be the true sexual love of the proletarian family.⁵ Marx saw the solution of women's problems in the Socialist Revolution. The proletarian revolution will abolish the present system of production and bring with it the abolition of the community of women springing from that system, i. e., of prostitution, both public and private.⁶

To Marx, woman's oppression is her exploitation in a class society through bourgeois marriage and the family. Woman is perceived as just another victim, undistinguished from the proletariat in general. The exploitation of woman differs from that of the proletariat because this gender undergoes exploitation in both spheres, public and private. The sexual division of labour within the family has no unique existence for Marx. He failed to see that gender based private inequality had a bearing on public inequality.

Marx was hyper critical of the bourgeois family but romanticized the proletarian family which too is characterized by male dominance and exploitation. Marx paid no attention to the fact that the wife in the proletarian family is overburdened with the triple shift of work - productive work outside the family, maternal functions within the family, and household chores. This unequal division of labour at home, with woman assuming a disproportionate share of domestic responsibilities deprive woman of the essential political resource of time, and thus, compromises her ability to be active in politics. With the under representation of woman in the political power structure, patriarchy continues to persist without any challenge.

Marx's writings in the *Capital* indicate that he was primarily concerned with male workers and regarded woman and children as a potential source of threat to them in the form of substitutable cheap labour. Therefore, Marx failed to guarantee

a future in which the equal participation of women at par with men in the public sphere would be a reality.

Any evaluation of Marx on the woman's problem is incomplete without referring to Engels and his *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, for many of Marx's ideas got reflected through his friend Engels. Engels developed a more or less systematic analysis of the origin of the family and the structure of the bourgeois family. The progress of civilization and the increase of wealth gave man a more important status in the family than the woman, and the man utilized this position to overthrow the traditional matrilineal order of inheritance.

The overthrow of mother right was the World historic defeat of the female sex. The man seized the reins in the house also, the woman was degraded, enthralled the slave of man's lust, a mere instrument for breeding children ...⁷.

Woman was transformed to an instrument of reproduction, to beget children of undisputed paternity, this paternity being required in order that these children may in due time inherit their father's wealth and family name as his natural heirs.

II

Herbert Marcuse of the Frankfurt School was basically a critique of both the industrialized societies of the United States of America and the erstwhile Soviet Union. His philosophy tries to emancipate man from the excess repression of civilization. In spite of the fact that he belonged to modern times, his philosophy did not directly deal with the exploitation of women. Nevertheless, he makes indirect references to the women's question and his philosophy can be said to have feminist potential.

In his *Eros and Civilization*, Marcuse while dealing with the origin of the repressed individual introduces the term surplus-repression. The restrictions on the eros necessitated by social domination is what signifies surplus repression.⁸ He also recognizes the need for basic-repression for the perpetuation of the human race in civilization. With regard to surplus repression, he cites the example - of the modifications and deflections of the instinctual energy necessitated by the perpetuation of the monogamic-patriarchal family or by the hierarchical division of labour.⁹ In this set up of the family, the relations between man and woman is not based on equality. the man enjoys power, which he exercises

over his woman. Therefore it can be deduced that in order to liberate woman the institution of monogamic marriage must be abolished which is a radical feminist view.

Marcuse in his *One Dimensional Man* criticizes the industrialized society and quotes that one of the main trends of the 'New Society' is the invasion of the private household by the togetherness of public opinion i. e., opening of the bedroom to the media of mass communication.¹⁰ The Feminist slogan of making the private public is in conformity to it but not in principle. The change in the function of the family plays a decisive role, its socializing functions are increasingly taken over by outside groups and media.¹¹ The experts of the mass media transmit the required values and attitudes, they offer the perfect training in efficiency, toughness, personality, dream and romance. The authority of the patriarchal father within the monogamic family is substituted by the makers of public opinion.

In this society, the private has been made public - to the experts of the mass media. But this has not decreased the violence against women. Media, both print and visual are very influential. Therefore programme directors are powerful but most of them are men, moulded with patriarchal norms. Women in media are mostly employed as reporters and presenters and fail to contribute to woman's issues.¹²

The media is owned by the industrial magnates and they use it for their vested interests.¹³ These business houses through the media manipulate the interests of the people for increasing their share of profits. In the business world, woman at top are very few - not more than 1 or 2 percent of the senior management positions are occupied by women.¹⁴ This situation has intensified the commodification of women, where women's bodies are used to sell products intensifying crimes like rape, prostitution, sexual abuse of woman, pornography, etc.

The media by portraying women as a class of objects for sexual exploitation and abuse have a negative impact on the individual's sense of self-worth and acceptance. The consumerist culture has used women's bodies to sell products, catering to the sexuality of men. This has intensified the commodification of women, when women are regarded as commodities to be measured, and standards set with regards to its size and shape, which has internalized the women.

Marcuse talks about the transformation of life into an aesthetic reality, a reality in which relations between man and man and between man and things are permeated with eros, though not in the sense of genital sexuality. Sexuality would be less intense but more diffused - i. e., it will be polymorphous as a consequence of the conquest of scarcity and alienation. The altered societal condition would therefore create an instinctual basis for the transformation of work into play. For this transformation of life Marcuse appealed for a feminization of life.¹⁵

Prior to Marcuse, the world of culture considered femininity as sexuality and pleasure, which is a curse that is disruptive and destructive. Women's economic unproductivity made them useless drones and a luxury item in a poor man's budget.¹⁶ Contrary to this view, Marcuse attributed libidinal work relations to a general maternal attitude. Where nature is taken, not as irrational to be dominated and exploited, but as a garden which can grow while making human beings grow.¹⁷ Nature here is considered as a mother with rationality, who is a provider for her children. Through this attitude, Marcuse wanted to establish a non repressive and functioning order between man and nature. This feminization of life will lead to transformation of sexuality into eros and its extension to lasting libidinal, maternal work relations.

Marcuse eulogized and assigned a special status to femininity and called for a feminization of life. His critique of industrialized society can be used to unveil the root causes of exploitation of women in the present civilization. The material human being irrespective of the genders is satisfied so long the freedom of want is satisfied. This hunger for ever new products is insatiable. Therefore the need of the time is to liberate the genders from this existing one dimensional thought and make preparations for a revolution which will emancipate both the genders.

III

Marxian analysis of the exploitation of women was limited to the bourgeois family in particular. Engels on the other hand makes an indepth analysis of the origin of the exploitation of woman throughout human history. Herbert Marcuse has not explicitly dealt with the exploitation of this gender. Nevertheless they were in agreement that with the growth of the forces of production there would be a simultaneous increase in the exploitation of women.

In other words, a consensus evolved amongst them that the advent of the industrial economy intensified the exploitation of this particular gender. To do away with this exploitation, revolution is inevitable. In the context of revolution, women's movement to be successful will have to make common cause with the Marxian world proletarian revolution. It is only by creating an alliance with the oppressed groups such as proletariat, peasantry, and the other subaltern groups can woman acquire their freedom, equality and justice.

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Review :

MAO ZEDONG : THE MAN AND THE REVOLUTION RE-ASSESSED

Mao Zedong and Social Reconstruction, ed. By Girin Phukon & Dhiren Bhagawati,
South Asian Publishers, New Delhi, pp. X+184, 1996, Rs. 250

Udayon Misra

It's more than twenty years since Mao Zedong died. And, in these two decades Mao's China has passed through momentous changes and adjusted itself in a very practical manner to the sweeping forces of globalization. To many a third world nation still struggling against global inequalities and exploitation, this may appear to be a negation of those very ideals that Mao stood for. For, even today armed movements fighting for secession or ethnic autonomy in many parts of the world still swear by Mao, even if their agendas have little to do with Mao's theories. But, to the Chinese, strengthened by centuries of political and social wisdom, the achievements of Mao the practical revolutionary and nation-builder seem to have far outweighed the limitations of Mao the individual. Their acceptance of Mao as the Great Helmsman during his lifetime has now been replaced by a realistic appraisal of the great leader which has helped in so many ways to strengthen the legacy that he has left behind. China watchers, particularly of the West, were in for a surprise when, following Mao's death, their simple equations of a desperate power struggle resulting in a denigration of Mao and a re-writing of Chinese history were proved completely wrong. But those who had predicted that with Mao's death, his theories of social change would quickly be abandoned by the new leadership headed by Deng Xiaoping, were proved at least partially right when the CPC in its 1981 meet virtually gave up the idea of class struggle in a socialist society in favour of class collaboration aimed at economic reform. Nevertheless, Deng and his followers maintained that they were continuing Mao's legacy and selectively incorporating it in the reform programme. This is what has come as a disappointment for those who wished for a total eclipse of Mao under Deng Xiaoping. The man who suffered a lot during the Cultural Revolution and was dubbed a capitalist roader by Mao, took the initiative in lauding Mao's contribution in building

modern socialist China while at the same time drawing the attention of the Chinese masses to the mistakes committed by Mao and the danger inherent in turning him into a cult figure.

The book under review, which is a collection of fifteen essays on Mao Zedong's thought and practice, tries to cover some of the major aspects of Mao's revolutionary philosophy and the projectory it took while implemented in China and the influences it exerted in the international arena. Though the book has been called a tribute to Mao on his birth centenary, yet it is more in the form of a critique of Mao Zedong and his theories of social change and reconstruction. In his essay "Power of History, Mao Zedong Thought and Deng's China", Manoranjan Mahanty begins by saying how instead of turning Mao into a cult figure and adulating him while neglecting his ideals, the post-Mao leadership headed by Deng Xiaoping in its assessment of Mao applied that very criteria of judgement which Mao himself had applied to Stalin. Just as Mao had refused to completely denounce Stalin despite all the resistance he got from the Soviet leader in trying to chart out a typically Chinese path for the revolution, similarly Deng, while dismantling the cult of Mao which had grown up during the Cultural Revolution, accepted the social basis of Mao's legacy. Mahanty finds "the continuity of Chinese nationalism" to be an important link between Mao and Deng and says that the distinction made between Mao Zedong and Mao Zedong Thought has helped in the creative application of Mao's ideas to a post-Mao China passing through a period of swift economic reform. Referring to the 1981 Resolution of the Chinese Communist Party which detailed Mao's "errors" during the Great Leap Forward of 1958 and the Cultural Revolution, Mahanty highlights the fact that the same Congress put on record that Mao's contributions far outweigh his mistakes. He says that the two errors of Mao pointed out by the 1981 Resolution referred to his "broadening the scope of class struggle" and "undermining the principle of collective leadership". Obviously, the first "error" was highlighted so as to repudiate the idea of a continuing class-struggle in favour of a policy of a collaboration leading to economic liberalisation. Mahanty clearly states that Deng repudiated Mao's model of socialist construction while at the same time working out a method of empirically utilising Mao's ideas on particular problems. He further says that in the last two decades or so, whenever China has faced a crisis, Mao's ideas have been applied

selectively, as was the case in the Tiananmen Square incident. This clearly shows that continuing relevance of Mao's philosophy and its hold on the masses even though in Mohanty's words, Deng has clearly rejected "Mao's theory and policies on class struggle in socialist society". One wishes that Mohanty had further developed this point because the total rejection of class struggle in society would be tantamount to a rejection of the very principle of Marxism on which the ideas of Mao are based. Mohanty ends his essay on a cautious note regarding the policies of Deng. Though the economic successes of China and its growing world status seem to have vindicated Deng's line for the time being, Mohanty says that while for Deng the stress was on emancipating and developing the productive forces under socialism, Mao stood for the creation of a socialist human being with a moral-political consciousness. But the truth of the matter is that the Chinese people seem to be happy with the shift of emphasis, irrespective of the fact that Mao and his model of revolution no longer has the appeal for the toiling masses of the world as it did some two decades ago.

The papers by Girin Phukon, Dhiren Bhagawati and M. Hussain deal with some of the prominent aspects of Mao's philosophy. While Girin Phukon discusses in detail Mao's formulations as laid down in his seminal essay "On Contradiction", Bhagawati in his perceptive piece focuses on Mao's ideas, their sources and methods of knowledge. Phukon rightly draws attention to Mao's emphasis on the continuity of class struggle even as the socialist revolution is in progress. But, not many would agree with him when he says that it was Mao who put forward this idea for the first time. However, Phukon correctly points out that Mao's handling of antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions against the background of the Chinese Revolution was indeed something which enriched the treasure-house of Marxist-Leninist theory. Centering his discussion on Mao's "On Practice", Bhagawati draws a distinction between Lenin and Mao on the question of the relationship between revolutionary theory and practice. While he is right suggesting that for Mao practice often seemed to override theory, yet it would be a simplification of Marxist dialectics to state that for Mao practice was the sole criterion of truth and knowledge. Without a firm base in revolutionary theory, Mao would not have been able to bring about the revolution in China. If he often stressed the importance

of practice over theory, it was because the path his Chinese revolution was taking appeared at times not to conform to the accepted Eurocentric Marxist approaches on revolution. It was because of the uniqueness of the Chinese revolution that Mao had to stress the importance of practice. But that he was at every stage acutely aware of the importance of theory as a guide to action may be seen in his essay "Where do Correct Ideas Come From". In his "On Practice" as well as "Where Do Correct Ideas Come From", Mao argues very much within the parameters of Marxist dialectics. Bhagawati's is a thought-provoking essay in which he tries to carve out a separate place for Mao in the sphere of Marxian epistemology. M. Hussain too concentrates his attention on "On Practice", but tries to make a comparative analysis of Mao and G. H. Mead as far as the theory of knowledge is concerned.

The essays of Shanti Swarup, Buddhadev Bhattacharyya, S. N. Ray and A. K. Ray deal with the distinct features of the Chinese revolution and Mao's role in creating socialist China. Swarup, in his distinctive style, points out the uniqueness of Mao's revolution in that it was a "piecemeal" one when compared to the idea of revolution generally found in Marxist thought and tradition. Stating that the conception of political revolution in traditional Marxist thinking differed fundamentally from "the manner in which the Chinese revolution developed", Swarup tries to show the difficulties faced by Mao in sustaining the momentum of such a revolution. He credits Mao with being highly successful in synthesising conflicting demands of the rural proletariat and the middle classes, while at the same time preventing the latter from cornering the gains of the revolution. Bhattacharyya's essay "New Democracy : Its Role and Limits", focuses on Mao's extension of Marxism by making the peasantry the 'main contingent' of Chinese revolutionary forces. He shows the differences in approach to the two-stage revolution and the part of Lenin and Mao. Unlike Lenin, Mao considered the democratic revolution and the socialist one as two distinct and different revolutionary processes and he widened the base of revolutionary section by bringing in classes other than the proletariat and the peasantry. Stressing the effectiveness of the political superstructure in socialist transformation, Bhattacharjee says that "unlike Lenin, Mao did not want to have a stateform different from the multi-class new democratic one carry to out the

socialist revolution." But at the same time he points out that at every stage of the Chinese revolution, Mao stressed that whatever be the composition of the Chinese people's Democratic dictatorship, the leadership would always have to be provided by the alliance of the workers and the peasants and led by the working class. Ashish K. Ray's essay begins with a discussion of the Eurocentric vision of Marxism and what he sees as the limitations of Marx and Engels in visualizing the pivotal role of the peasantry in bringing about revolution in Asiatic countries. He refers at length to the Lenin-Roy debate and concludes that it was in fact Lenin who recognized the potential of the peasantry and prepared the ground for Mao's peasant communism. But Ray's contention that "the Maoist tactics of revolution is an extension of the Leninist theory" is highly debatable. To suggest this would be to deny the uniqueness of the Chinese Revolution which succeeded because of the application of Marxism "to the concrete struggle in the concrete conditions prevailing in China". It becomes evident from Ray's essay that while on the one hand the Chinese experience of peasant revolution was held up as a model for the Asian countries, yet the stress was always on the "sinification of Marxism" or Marxism with a distinctly national form in the context of China. Ray traces how Mao moves away from the orthodox Comintern position of relying on the industrial proletariat to a poor peasant-led revolution and then supplanting it with an independent army under party control. S. N. Ray throws light on that aspect of Mao's thinking which draws on the rich heritage of ancient Chinese culture and which is free from absolutist positions. According to him the distinctness of Mao as a Marxist thinker and revolutionary lay in his openness of mind and his refusal to be confined within the walls of closed dogma. This is what makes Mao so different from his contemporaries. Ray deals with the agrarian reform measures initiated by Mao and traces the rise of the communes and the reasons why these ultimately failed. The Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution are discussed, so is the shift from distributive justice to rapid economic growth, particularly after Mao's death. But to suggest in the lines of Hinton and Nolan that within the last decades the entire edifice of Maoist political economy has been demolished would be to oversimplify matters. For, foreign analysts of China, all their sympathy for the revolution notwithstanding, have often been unable to understand the complex workings of Chinese society. This is perhaps one of the

reasons why, after the Chinese people have re-assessed and rejected the Cultural Revolution, a section of China-watchers still romanticize it.

The next group of essays deals with China's relationship with the outside world and with Mao's military thought. While Mira Bhattacharjea tries to see Mao's foreign policy as part of a holistic approach of making revolution, A. N. S. Ahmed discusses Mao's success in taking on the USA and, at a later stage, also the Soviet Union. He credits Mao with giving China a distinct international personality and preparing the ground for its emergence as a leading world power. In this well-worked out essay, Ahmed traces the stages of the Sino-Soviet rift and discusses how it eventually motivated China to make up with the USA. But one would have reservations about Ahmed's contention that Mao's theory of three worlds still retains its relevance for third world countries and is still the guiding principle of Chinese foreign policy. Rather, one would tend to agree with Mira Bhattacharjea when she says that some five years after Mao's death, the three worlds thesis has been given a "unceremonious burial together with the approach and the method of analysis for making revolution unique to Mao". However, not many would agree with Bhattacharjea when she says that the Sino-Indian border war 1962 was motivated more by Chinese strategic than territorial considerations and that eight years after that conflict, Mao had "cast India as an important though no longer pivotal player in a putative united front, directed more against Soviet imperialism". She tries to see China's use of force against India as part of Mao's strategy of 'making revolution'. Whatever the nature of the boundary dispute and however "reasonable" Chinese territorial demands were, yet to conclude that the Chinese action was not motivated by rather narrow nationalistic considerations but by revolutionary compulsions would be to try to justify the Chinese position beyond its context. Surely, China did not need such a border war to establish its "capability of national defence" and to "establish China as an important independent power centre". China's capability to defend itself was amply shown during the Korean War when it took on as strong an adversary as the United States. It did not need to "humiliate" a third world country in order to show the "assertion of its national will". Giri Deshinkar throws light on Mao's military theory and while commenting upon its brilliant

effectiveness, points out the many "inconsistencies" in theory and practice. He shows how Mao backed out in the face of a American nuclear threat in 1958. He also highlights the fact that Mao's military thought has been emulated with success only in Vietnam and partly by the communists in North-Burma. In this short but sharp essay, Deshingkar tries to break the myth that Mao's military strategy was invincible and makes a realistic assessment of the same.

The last three essays are by Tilottoma Misra, Neera Chandhoke and Nagen Saikia. Tillotoma Misra discusses the influence of Mao's thought on the Indian students during the last sixties and the early seventies and tries to link this with the New Left movement in the European and American universities during 1964-70. She draws her conclusions on the basis of concrete instances of students activism in some Indian university campuses. The electrifying effect of the Naxalbari uprising on the student community of Bengal, the spread of the Mao cult and the coining of the slogan, "China's Chairman is our Chairman, China's Path is our Path", the spread of the "Naxalite" movement in Calcutta and nearby areas, the contradictions which ensued, the annihilation of class enemies and Charu Mazumdar's adventurist line, the debates which took place and the eventual dissipation of the movement in the urban areas, ... all this and much more are taken up for discussion in the essay. Interestingly, the author draws out the difference in composition and approach of the Naxalite student groups of Calcutta and Delhi Universities, with the latter having an elitist character. When she says that compared to the violent propensities of the Maoist student groups of Calcutta, those of Delhi university were "more contained and disciplined", she rightly points out to the difference in the political situations in Bengal and Delhi. Calcutta was long the seat of revolutionary politics and socio-economic and political scenario of Bengal at that time was much more conducive to political violence than other parts of the country. Misra concludes her essay by stressing that this period of student activism would leave a deep mark in the country's history because of the idealism it generated and the sacrifices that were made. Expressing doubt as to whether the majority of the intellectuals, including students, were truly Maoists in practice, Misra says that the "rejection of the mass line, the policy of individual killings, the failure to make creative adaptation of Mao's theories to the Indian situation and

above all, the tendency to turn Mao into a demi-god" led to the eventual break-up of the movement. One feels that this inability on the part of Indian communists to give an Indian face to communism has been a bane right from the beginning. Neera Chandhoke's essay deals with the influence of Mao's thought on Amilcar Cabral and the liberation movement of Guineau Bissau. In this interesting piece, Chandhoke shows how Cabral incorporated Maoist ideas in developing the base of his peasant revolution and how he succeeded in keeping politics in command. Since the existence of the peasantry was not enough to forge revolutionary class, Cabral turned his attention to the petit-bourgeoisie and this Chandhoke considers to be Cabral's contribution to the theory of armed struggle. Cabral's emphasis on the political control over militarization of the struggle should hold a lesson for all those who are leading armed struggles in the third world countries. Even in India, several of the armed struggles that are still going on in the northeastern part are increasingly falling a prey to the dangers of militarism. The last essay of the collection deals with Mao's literary views, with a special focus on his poetry. Saikia tries to put Mao's literary works within the unremitting mould of ideology and says that "Mao's literary views are very much rigid and strictly associated with the political ideology". Had this been the case, Mao would not have been able to write such sensitive poetry. He was very much a part of the Chinese literary and intellectual tradition. There is a wide difference between Mao's poetry and his statements on art and literature. Mao's political writings show that he had adequate training in the Chinese classics.

To sum up, this is an exciting and ~~rich~~ collection of essays of the leading Marxist scholars of the country. The book has been ably edited by Girin Phukon and Dhiren Bhagawati and the lucid, scholarly Introduction has added to its weight.



DELIBERATION OF A SYMPOSIUM ON "ECOLOGY AND POLITICS"

The second C. K. Memorial Symposium on the subject "Ecology and Politics" was held on 19th August 1999 in the Department of Political Science, Dibrugarh University. It was once more an academic exercise participated by experts and students from physical sciences, life sciences and social sciences. The symposium was coordinated by K.M.Deka of Political Science Department. At the very beginning Dhiren Bhagawati briefly set the out-line of the symposium.

The symposium was addressed by the following scholars with their respective themes of papers.

P.K.Gogoi : Environmental pollution and sustainable development.

One of the major problems associated with development is environmental pollution. A pollutant has been defined as a substance, entity or a process or effect present in nature, in greater than natural abundance due to human activity which ultimately has a detrimental effect on the environment and therefore on living organism. Hundred years ago mankind did not experience pollution to the same level as we face today. This is due to rapid growth of population, new technological development, industrialization, unplanned growth, urbanization and the use of natural resources in a much faster rate for short term gain. We now experience water pollution, air pollution, sound pollution, pollution due to domestic and industrial waste, dust and particulate pollution, long term effect of nuclear waste pollution, pesticide residue effect, automobile exhausts and so on. The results of such pollution has been experienced as increased Green House effect, ozone layer depletion, irregular rainfall and extinction of various plants and other living species.

Our environment consists of four segments : atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere and biosphere. The atmosphere is the

protective cover of gases surrounding the earth which sustains life. It absorbs the harmful cosmic radiations, maintains heat balance by absorbing infrared radiations. The major components being nitrogen, oxygen and carbondioxide together with some inert gases. The hydrosphere includes all types of water resources. About 96 % of hydrosphere are the oceans, 3% of hydrosphere are the polar ice caps and glaciers and only 1% of hydrosphere is fresh water avaiable either as surface or ground water which is fit for human consumption. The lithosphere consists of the outer mantle of the earth while the biosphere is the realm of living organisms and their interactions with the environment.

The effect of atmospheric pollution is global in nature. The main atmospheric pollutants are NO_x , SO_2 , halogens, CFC, dust and particulates from various industries, smoke from domestic, industrial and automobile sources. One of the most alarming effects of these pollutants is the depletion of ozone layer. CFC decomposes ozone and thereby it exposes the lilving beings to harmful UV radiations. Optimum ozone concentration at an altitude of 25 Km should be 10 ppm. It has been predicted that a 3 ppm. decrease in ozone level will increase the skin cancer in human by five fold. Similarly increased CO_2 level will increase the Green House effect, as CO_2 and water vapour absorbs infrared radiation resulting a net increase in surface temperature of the earth. SO_2 and NO_x are responsible for acid rain. Incomplete combustion of sossil fuels by IC engines release soot particles, NO_x as well as poisonous carbon monoxide. Cement, coal based thermal power stations, construction and mining industries produce large amount of dust particles which also pollute our atmosphere.

Our hydrosphere contains only about 1% of potable water, which is also polluted by chemical industries, oil and mining installations, domestic sewage, garbage and other human activities. Biosphere has been destroyed by wanton deforestation, human habitation, poaching, growth of heavy industries and has tilted the delicate natural ecological balance. Unless we act now to prevent this menace of environmental degradation, this planet may not be able to sustain life within next few hundred years. To combat this hazard of pollution we

propose the following measures :

1. Educating the people to be vigilant against pollution and containing population growth.
2. Strict state policies against pollution.
3. Re-cycling of wastes and use of renewable and ecofriendly sources of energy.
4. Choice of clean technology.

Awareness regarding environmental pollution would start from secondary level of education. Newspapers, the electronic media and other NGOs should take active part to educate the people about the hazards of pollution and its control by both scientific and legal means.

There should be stringent and exemplary action against those who violate the pollution legislation. Recently the Supreme Court of India has given a landmark judgement to close down several factories (which emits polluting smoke) in Agra to save the Taj Mahal. On the recommendation of Justice K.N.Saikia Commission on Air pollution, the Ministry of Environment has framed procedures to phase out old vehicles from metropolies and all other vehicles should have Euro-2 emission standards from 2000 A.D. onwards. It is a right step. We should also take preventive measures against diesel engines which emit large amount of CO and particulates. They must fit catalytic converters. In the agricultural sector, the use of pesticides should be monitored in such a way that the harmful pesticide residue does not increase to a certain level. There should be a general awareness to use more effective bio-pesticide or biological control with less harmful effect.

As far as northeastern region is concerned we have seen that there is a sharp increase of population during last five decades, specially in the urban areas. With the increase of population the pollution also increases in the form of more domestic sewage, garbage and other human activities. The garbage is being dumped in open space which ultimately pollutes soil and water. One of the major componet of urban garbage is the plastic waste and most of them are non-biodegradable. Therefore, the useful alternative is to recycle them to make plastic furniture and containers. It is reported tht an estimated 6000 tonnes of plastic furniture can save 14,000 cubic meter of wood that is available from 3200 hectares of forests. If 2% of the wooden boxes use in India for packaging are replaced by plastic boxes, we would save almost one lakh trees per annum. Therefore, recycling will be a bonus for our environment.

Recently, the Central Tuber Crops Research Institute, Trivandrum, has developed a cheap process to make bio-degradable plastics by adding tapioca starch to the plastics - which degrades within six months. Moreover, these bio-degradable plastics leaves no poisonous residues in the soil. Therefore, although it will be initially little more expensive, we should switch over to such degradable plastics to save our environment from further degradation.

Until recently we did not have any government policy regarding plastic waste management in our country. Himachal Pradesh is the first state to enact "HP Non-biodegradable Garbage Control Act 1995" which prohibits throwing of plastic articles in public places, facilitates collection and recycling of such articles. Provisions of this Act also includes deterrent penalties. Similarly, the local authorities in Jammu & Kashmir, Mumbai and Noida in U.P. have already banned the use and public disposal of coloured polythene bags and other articles. The Ministry of Environment and Forests has framed Recycled Plastic Usage Rules 1998 which specifies that containers made of recycled plastics should conform to Prevention of Food and Adulteration Act, 1954. Such containers should not be pigmented and the thickness of recycled plastics should not be less than 25 microns.

In big sized towns of North East regions, like Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Shillong etc., a substantial amount of garbage and effluents are generated every day. To maintain a standard hygienic environment and safe disposal of these degradable waste becomes a problem for the civic authorities. Now cheap and useful technology is available to use these waste for generation of bio-gas, electricity and environmental friendly bio-fertilizers. By suitably managing the waste disposal we can create a hygienic environment, enhance beautification of the towns and as a bonus we can get a renewable source of energy and biofertilizers. The economy of the above process is self sustained as garbage is obtained free cost. The energy generation from garbage can also be supplemented by wind and solar generators which are also cost effective. Unlike petroleum, these energy sources are pollution free. Another major waste and dangerous pollutant in big towns is waste lubricating oils from automobile garages and electrical transformers. These oils can be recycled to preserve wood and bamboo materials.

For initial funding of such a clean environment project, we can approach big corporate houses, NGOs as well as the government agencies associated with environment and non-conventional energy sources. The newspapers and other media can also play a significant role to create public awareness and support.



Rajib Handique : Depletion of Forests in Assam and the Colonial Legacy

Large scale degradation of forest wealth in Assam as well as the North-East has posed a serious threat to the environment. According to the latest Annual Report of the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India, Assam has topped the list of states in respect of degradation of forest cover during the period from 1993 to 1995. However, this depletion of forest cover is not a new phenomenon; and the British Forest Policy also had contributed to such a development. The advent of the British rule marks an ecological watershed in the history of Assam.

When the Britishers took over Assam, the province had throughout six-eighths or seven-eighths of its extent covered with forests. Ever since Assam passed into the sphere of British colonial rule, this province like the other parts of India was subjected to fulfilling the imperial needs of the British Empire. Construction of Railways, maritime-expansion, and military requirements necessitated the exploitation of India's forest wealth by the British who also introduced the Forest Department and passed laws to augment and preserve their own interests.

Prior to the arrival of the British, there was limited use of forest resources in Assam. There was practically no proper forest laws and the state's role was limited to the collection of revenue of some forest products such as ivory, aloes wood etc. That situation changed to a large extent after the forests of Assam came to be subjected to imperial use. The extensive forest areas of the province also made the earlier British administrators feel, with a large degree of certitude that, there would be an unending supply of forest produce. Naturally, the policy adopted under those circumstances was formulated with an idea of plenty.

The British forest policy was primarily formulated to earn as much revenue as possible even at the cost of wanton destruction of the forest wealth. Taxes came to be levied on a number of forest products which consisted of both major forest produce like timber and minor forest produce like lac, rubber, elephants, etc. Taxes came to be imposed even on axes

Another insidious effect of the British forest policy was the importance it attached to agriculture over preservation of the forest resources. The forests were considered as an obstruction to agriculture rather than otherwise and consequently a bar to the prosperity of the Empire. British authorities were conscious from the very beginning of the fact that unless the vast tracts of wastelands were brought under tillage, neither the resources of the Government, nor the condition of the people could be improved.

After tea cultivation (plantations) started in Assam, the grant of wastelands, which obviously contained lot of forested areas, was done on very liberal terms. The effect of those favourable conditions was that applications were made for large blocks of land. There were no inducements for applicants to limit their applications to the area actually required by them, and hence large areas of forest lands were alienated by the government for tea plantations.

However, the most important aspect of the British forest policy was that, it led to the introduction of the element of exclusion even to the erstwhile communally owned land of the province. In other words, as forests were understood in terms of commercially exploitable timber, it was considered necessary for the government to establish *proprietary rights* on behalf of those (contractors, et. al.) who could exploit them.

Thus, land which was once used free by the peasants was taken over by the British and subjected to total imperial control. British rule in India, like other western empires elsewhere in the developing world, might be seen as an elaborate system of resource extraction and allocation, determining who was to have access to nature's wealth. However, it should be remembered that the system of natural resource management was by no means monolithic or unchanging, nor did the British totally control it. Yet, the Britishers failed to be vigilant and farsighted proprietors.

The proprietary rights established by the British over the forests was later on taken over by the Government in independent India. The nexus which had developed during the colonial period between the Forest Department Contractors and the Government survived and exploitation of the forest of Assam went on in full swing.

That the policy of exclusion was erroneous for the forests in the long run was ultimately realized by the Government of India and it is proved by the latest Forest Policy promulgated by the Government 1988. Therein it has been stated that

The holders of customary rights and concessions in forest areas should be motivated to identify themselves with the protection and development of forest from which they derive benefit. The rights and concessions from forests should primarily be for the bonafide use of the communities living within and around forest areas, especially the tribals.

Therefore, we find that the government today has to talk of Joint Forest Management.

Thus, in the ultimate analysis we find that the British Forest Policy, which of course was till recently very sincerely and faithfully followed by the Government of independent India, was accountable more than anything else for large scale depletion of Assam's forest cover. In the process, we have lost wealth of invaluable species and recent researches have revealed that reckless exploitation and destruction of forest cover have even led to the extinction of many medicinal plants, some of them being ingredients of life-saving drugs.

It would be better, if for management and preservation of forest resources in Assam, the Forest Department does away with the insidious British colonial legacies. The Forest Policy of India, 1988 have made some welcome change by incorporating concept like Joint Forest Management. In any case, we have to remember that,

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.



S. P. Biswas : Impact of Mahaldari System in Capture Fisheries in Assam

Background :

Geographically, Assam is a part of Trans-Himalayan region, characterised by moderate to heavy rainfall. Obviously, the region is gifted with myriads of waterbodies in the form of rivers, lakes, beels and other waterlogging sheets. The Brahmaputra, the seventh largest river in the world flows through the state of Assam. Another river, the Barak forms the major drainage system in the southern Assam. Apart from these two rivers, a large number (about 1400) of flood plain lakes, locally called beels are scattered in the two valleys of Assam. These waterbodies form the major source of fisheries in this part of the country. Naturally, fish forms an important food item of the local population. In fact, 90% of the population here is fish eater. Therefore, fishing is an important activity for a significant number of people. The state also earns a significant revenue from fisheries sector.

Although, fishery department is supposed to look after the development of fisheries, but this department has no control over the natural waterbodies of the state. It is the revenue department which virtually controls the capture fisheries in Assam. The revenue department leases out stretches of rivers and beels to the lease-holders (locally called as mahaldars) through auction for a certain period. Since, fishery is a lucrative business in the state, it is natural that hectic lobbying is always in the cards for getting lease of the highly commercial fishing grounds. The present communication deals with the impact of the mahaldari system on the capture fisheries in Assam.

Capture fisheries scenario in Assam :

Fisheries sector may be broadly grouped into (a) Culture and (b) Capture Fisheries. While culture fisheries involve rearing of aquatic organisms in controlled or semicontrolled environments, the capture fisheries deal with fishing in natural water bodies. It is the capture fisheries which contribute the major chunk of fish landings in the world. And in our state also, there is no exception. However, unlike other countries, there is no development or management of riverine fisheries. The Fish Farmers Development Agencies (FFDA) has taken up developmental schemes for the improvement of certain selected beels, but there is absolutely no management in the vast riverine and other natural water bodies.

The mahaldars are supposed to look after the development of fisheries of their respective fishing areas. However, most of the mahaldars are only interested to make the highest possible profit during the lease period. They adopt all possible means to exploit the fish resources from their leased areas, without caring the fundamental laws related to environment and fisheries. Therefore, wanton killings of gravid and juvenile fish are very common throughout the state. Consequently, a good number of fish species is either depleted alarmingly or almost wiped out from our water.

A case study of Saikhowa area :

Saikhowa is in the extreme north-east corner of the Brahmaputra Valley. It is about 30 km from the District Head Quarters, Tinsukia. There are vast 'char' or 'chaporis' (island) areas. Char or chaporis are formed in the middle or sedimentation zone of a large river, which meanders over a sandy bed resulting in deposition of silt at the river bottom. The deposition of silt after every flood in a particular spot or area raises the river bed gradually; thus paving the way for the formation of char. The newly formed chars are temporary as they get submerged by the subsequent floods. However, there are a good number of permanent chars that are high enough to withstand the floodwater. These chars are the major points of fishing and other economic activities. The permanent settlers of the chars are mostly fishermen by profession. Some of the chars become the dwelling place for immigrants including migratory fishermen. The migratory fishermen are usually invited by the mahaldars and they are engaged in fishing between October and April. The migrants from Bihar are boat dwellers. The fisherman with his grown up son or other close relatives (but no female member) stay in the boat which is used for both dwelling and fishing purposes. At Saikhowa, over 120 fishermen from Bihar are engaged in fishing every year during postmonsoon and winter months. Individual fisherman is provided loan by the mahaldar for purchasing or repairing fishing nets, boats. In return, apart from refunding the original amount taken as loan, the fishermen are compelled to sell their catch to the mahaldar. Alternatively, the fisherman have to pay 30% of their daily earning to the mahaldar. To sustain their livelihood the migrant fishermen use very fine meshed net like 'Kapedjal' (mosquito net) and other non-selective gear like 'current jal' both the nets are banned as

the former can destroy even the eggs and spown of commercial varieties and the latter entangles the migratory spawners and other gravid as well as juvenile fishes. Fishes are also killed by using explosives and pesticides. It is difficult to assess the exact income of the residential (local) or migratory fishermen, because the quantum of fishes they catch is highly variable. However, it has been estimated that the monthly average income per head is about Rs. 700/- during lean season and about Rs. 2000/- during winter months. Although, the fishermen particularly the migrants engage themselves for 12 to 16 hours in fishing activities, but their earning is very meagre as bulk of their earnings goes to the mahaldar in the form of paying loan, interest etc. It is the mahaldar who is benefited from this high rate of exploitation of natural resources.

Conclusion :

It is difficult to abolish the mahaldari system overnight. However, strict vigil against over exploitation and use of prohibited gears and chemicals by the local residents, NGO's is the need of the hour. There should be fisheries co-operative societies, and other financial institutes for providing loans to the fishermen. It is also high time to set up cold-storage and marketing centres at remote areas. Above all killing of juvenile and adult fishes should be stopped forthwith.



Archana Upadhyay : Ecology Movements and Conflicts over Natural Resources

The recent period in human history contrasts with all the earlier ones in its strikingly high rate of resource utilisation. Ever expanding and intensifying industrial and agricultural production has generated increasing demands on the world's total stock and flow of resources. Conflicts generated as a result of this pattern of resource utilisation are generally shrouded and overlooked. These conflicts become visible when resource and energy intensive industrial technologies are challenged by communities whose survival depends on the conservation of resources threatened by destruction and overexploitation, or when the devastatingly destructive potential of some industrial technologies is demonstrated as in the Bhopal disaster.

For centuries, vital natural resources like land, water and forests had been controlled and used collectively by village communities thus ensuring a sustainable use of these renewable resources. The first radical change in resource control and the emergence of major conflicts over natural resources induced by non-local factors was associated with colonial domination of our part of the world. Colonial domination systematically transformed the common vital resources into commodities for generating profits and growth of revenues. The first industrial revolution was to a large extent supported by this transformation of common into commodities which permitted European industries access to the resources of South Asia.

With the collapse of the international colonial structure and the establishment of sovereign countries in the region, this international conflict over natural resources was expected to be reduced and replaced by resource policies guided by comprehensive national interests. However, resource use policies continued along the colonial pattern and, in the recent past, a second drastic change in resource use has been initiated to meet the international requirements and the demands of the elites in the Third World, leading to yet another acute conflict among the diverse interests. The most seriously threatened interest, in this conflict, appears to be that of the politically weak and socially disorganised group whose resource requirements are minimal and whose survival is primarily dependent directly on the products of nature outside the market system.

This paper attempts to analyse environmental conflicts in contemporary human society. In general it relates to societies all over the world, but in particular it addresses the most intense and emerging social contradictions in India related to conflicts over natural resources. It will also highlight the role of the ecology movements in redesigning the pattern and extent of natural resource utilisation to ensure social equality and ecological sustainability by questioning the validity of the dominant concepts and indicators of economic development.

With the collapse of the colonial rule internationally, and the emergence of sovereign independent countries in the Third World like India, resolution of these conflicts at the local level became a possibility. While political independence vested the

control over natural resources with the Indian State, the colonial institutional framework for natural resource management did not change in essence. Where colonialism collapsed, the slogan of economic development stepped in. There was unfortunately no alternative institutional mechanism other than that of the classical model of development left by the British, with which the newly formed Indian state could respond to the accentuated aspirations of the Indian people for a better life. As the scale of economic development activities escalated from one Five-Year Plan to another, the disruption of ecological processes that maintain the productivity of the natural resource base started becoming increasingly apparent. The classical model of economic development in the case of the newly independent nations resulted in the growth of urban-industrial enclaves where commodity production was concentrated, as well as rapid exhaustion of the internal colonies whose resources supported the enhanced demands of these enclaves. For example, commercial forestry earned more revenue by making increasing amount of timber and pulpwood available in the market but in the process reduced the multipurpose biomass productivity or damaged the hydrology of the forests. People dependent on non-timber biomass outputs of forests like leaves, twigs, fruits, nuts, medicines and oils were unable to sustain themselves, in the face of the commercial exploitation of forests. The changed hydrological character of the forests affected both the micro-climate and the stream flows, disturbing the hydrological stability and affecting agricultural production. There are similar examples from all parts of the country, related, to almost all massive developmental interventions in India's natural resource system.

In the light of this background, ecology movements emerged as the people's response to this new threat to their survival and as a demand for the ecological conservation of vital life-support systems. The most significant life-support systems in addition to clean air are the common property resources of water, forests and land on which the majority of the poor people of India depend for survival. It is the threat to these resources that has been the focus of ecology movements in the last few decades.

Among the various ecology movements in India, the Chipko movement is the most well known. It began as a movement of the hill people in the State of Uttar Pradesh to save

the forest resources from exploitation by contractors. It later evolved into an ecological movement that was aimed at the maintenance of the ecological stability of the major upland watersheds in India. Spontaneous people's response to save vital forest resources was seen in Jharkhand area in Bihar-Orissa border region as well as in Bastar area of Madhya Pradesh. In the southern part of India the *Appiko* movement, is actively involved in stopping illegal over-felling of forests and in replanting forest lands with multipurpose broad leaved trees. In the Aravalli Hills of Rajasthan there has been a massive programme of tree planting to give employment to the hands which were so long engaged in the felling of trees. The exploitation of mineral resources, in particular the opencast mining in the sensitive watersheds of the Himalayas, the Western Ghats and Central India have also resulted in a great deal of environmental damage. As a consequence, environmental movements have come up in these regions to oppose the reckless mining operations. Most successful among them is the movement against limestone quarrying in the Doon Valley.

Though these ecology movements relate to issues that are geographically localised, like forests or water pollution, their reverberations are national and even global in impact. This macro-micro dialectic is rooted in the cognitive gaps associated with development planning and this dichotomy has been analysed politically as the result of the existence of two India's. The significance of ecology movements does not merely lie in the fact that they are voices of the dispossessed who are victims of the highly unequal sharing of the costs of the development process. The positive feature of these movements lies in the manner in which they make visible the hidden externalities of development based on a particular economic ideology and reveal its inherent injustice and non-sustainability. The recognition of these inadequacies and the imperatives arising from the right to survival creates another ground and another direction for development which ensures justice and sustainability, equity with ecological stability.

Ecology movements as a trend can no longer be viewed as merely specific and particular happenings. Their impact, in the final analysis, is on the very fundamental categories of politics, economics, science and technology which together have created the classical paradigm of development and resource use. These ecology movements reveal how the resource-intensive demands

of current development have ecological destruction and economic deprivation build into them. They also stress that the issue is not merely one of a trade-off of costs and benefits because the cost of destruction of the conditions of life and well-being is not only a matter of money, it is a matter of life itself. The most important and universal feature of ecology movements is that they are redefining the concepts of development and economic values, of technological efficiency, of scientific rationality - they are creating a new economics for a new civilisation.

A new and holistic relationship between economics and ecology has to depend on a holistic understanding with human societies and the natural ecosystems. The dominant ideology of development, which guides development activities almost exclusively, has been classically concerned only with the use of natural resources for commodity production and capital accumulation i. e. from the point of view of the market. It ignores the resource process that have been regenerating natural resources outside the realm of human existence i. e. *the economy of natural ecological processes*. It also ignores the vast resource requirements of the large number of people whose needs are not being satisfied through the market mechanisms i. e. *the survival economy*. The ignorance or neglect of these two vital economies of natural resources - the economy of natural processes and the survival economy, explains why ecological destruction and threat to human survival have remained hidden negative externalities of the development process. Production is an integral part of this economy of natural ecological processes but the concept of production in the context of development economics have been exclusively identified with the industrial production system for the market economy. This has resulted in vast areas of resource productivity, like the production of humus by forests, or regeneration of water resources, natural evolution of genetic products, erosional production of soil fertility from parent rocks, remaining beyond the scope of economics. At present the ecology movements are the sole voice to stress the economic value of these natural processes. The market-oriented development process can destroy the economy of natural processes by over-exploitation of resources or by the destruction of ecological process that are not comprehended by economic development. Similarly, the survival economy has given human societies the material basis of survival by deriving livelihoods directly from

nature through self-provisioning mechanisms. In most Third World countries large numbers of people are deriving their sustenance in the survival economy in ways that remain invisible to market-oriented development. While the diversion of resources like diversion of land from multipurpose community forests to monoculture plantations of industrial trees, or the diversion of water from staple food crops and drinking water needs to cash crops are frequently proposed as programmes for economic development in the context of the market economy, they create economic underdevelopment in the economies of nature and survival. Thus in the Third World, ecology movements are not the luxury of the rich; they are the survival imperative for the majority of people whose survival is not taken care of by the market economy but is threatened by its expansion.

The political foundation of ecology movements lies in their capacity to enlarge the spatial, temporal and social bases for the evaluation of economic development projects - in their capacity to bring into the picture all the three economies mentioned so far. A new economics of development will emerge only when these three economies can be conceptualised within a single framework. However, this will have to include people's involvement in the evolution of ecological science. This is imperative on two counts. First, the marginalised majority have a right to determine their path of development. Second, it is the marginalised communities who retain ecological perceptions of nature at a time when the more privileged groups have lost them. Forestry science needed women of Garhwal and tribal people to remind it that catchment forests were not mines of timber but a source of water. Scientists, technologists and decision-makers need to develop a new respect for these other scientists. In the recognition of their insights, visions and day to day experiences lies the only hope for the growth of alternate ecological sciences and hence, the survival of people.



Siddhartha Kr. Lahiri :

How much erosion can we stand ? - A case study of valiant struggle by the people of Rahmeria, Assam

In Assam, the problem of flood, and erosion caused by the river Brahmaputra and its tributary rivers is a very old one. But the valiant struggle put forward by the victims and those

who are supposed to be in the very near future, is taking a new turn both in terms of form and content and getting consolidated day by day which demands attention of the social scientists. As a typical case history, the experience in Rahmeria is an eye opener.

About 25 km from the Dibrugarh township towards the north-east, Rahmeria, by the side of the river Brahmaputra, is a considerably big area constituted of 25 villages and 4 tea gardens. This, principally agriculture based area, was about 4-5 km away from the Brahmaputra before 1950. After the massive earthquake of 1950, rate of erosion increased drastically. It is for the scientists to conclude whether the cause of erosion was principally due to the sub-surface geological changes or surfacial causes related to massive siltation as a result of indiscriminate felling of trees in the upstream side. So far, in the study area, total number of villages and tea gardens lost is 24, partly eroded 8 and under the fold of erosion, 10-12. Previously, a PWD constructed Dibrugarh-Rongagarh-Tinsukia metalled road kept the area well connected with two important business centres, that is Dibrugarh and Tinsukia. But gradually, the Dibrugarh-Rongagarh portion was completely eaten up. As a result the entire area reverted back to the category of 'interior areas'. It is the trade and commerce which suffered most. Nowadays, bus service from Dibrugarh is available only twice a day- one at six o'clock in the morning and another at two o'clock in the afternoon. During rainy season, even this service becomes irregular.

In the face of this natural disaster, the suffering masses were not sitting idle. Many petitions and memoranda were given to the concerned authorities en masse or through the representative bodies. Government representatives paid visits, gave assurances, that the files would be put up to the higher ups etc. Leaders belonging to different political parties, specially during election times, kept on giving similar sermons for the last four decades. But besides delivering inadequate relief materials during flood, occasional repairing of dilapidated roads, rehabilitating a few families here and there in the most unimaginative and impractical manner, the administrative body of the state hardly tried to understand the problem in depth. Most of the things were done on ad-hoc basis. When the distressed people raised lots of hue and cry, local newspapers made some stories, largess was given to the 'badly affected people'. The human approach was missing, citizens' dignity, basic democratic rights mattered very little.

Decades of neglect, false promises, tit-bits of relief measures on ad-hoc basis convinced the people of Rahmeria about the total bankruptcy of the state machinery. The question was of existence- Resist or perish ! They decided to resist. In 1997, in the month of September, in a big public meeting, a strong voluntary body named 'Rahmeria-Khahaniya-O-Baan Protirodh-Samity' was formed. This voluntary body took the task of constructing some wooden spurs to divert the course of river Brahmaputra and check erosion depending completely on the local resources and voluntary labour of the public. Welcoming the move, people from 15 villages and 3 tea gardens came forward. Besides this some other local voluntary organisations and Farm Co-ordination Committee, a peoples' body encouraging, promoting and coordinating agriculture based entrepreneurship among the unemployed youths, extended their whole-hearted cooperation. The technical know-how was given by the E&D department of the government. The work progressed on war footing for more than four months and five long wooden spurs were raised. But alas ! the very fast wave of flood swept away all the spurs. There was mass frustration. During that period, many types of suggestions, mostly of submissive kind, started pouring into amidst the darkness of helplessness - 'Let us approach the Central Government', 'Send a delegation to Delhi' etc. So, a team under the leadership of the local member of parliament, Pawan Singh Ghatowar moved to Delhi. But except better assurances, nothing positive came out.

A place like Rahmeria, surrounded by most profitable tea gardens spinning crores of rupees every year stood helpless before the whims of nature. Very recently, Oil India Ltd discovered a rich oil field in the Rahmeria area. In a public meeting on behalf of the people of Rahmeria, 'Rahmeria Mouja Oilfield Coordination Committee' extended their demand before Oil India Ltd to solve the problem of flood and erosion. When Oil India Ltd declared that they were interested in permanent solution, the people of the place found a new light of hope. In a tripartite meeting among Oil India Ltd, district administration and the coordination committee, chaired by DC, it was decided that, E&D department would provide planning for the permanent solution, Oil India Ltd would give money and the DC would supervise the entire work. But what came out in reality ? For a long time, peoples' delegates were sent from one department to another and when ultimately

rainy season came nearer, inspite of knowing the fate of five wooden spurs, the administration took up a small toy project of Rs 30 lakhs for constructing some bamboo based spurs. But the sanctioned amount did not get full clearance. Even this weaker project was farther curtailed and only Rs 18 lakhs was spent. As expected, within no time the entire play structure was swept away.

The people of Rahmeria became furious. For a long time they maintained patience. When the administration shifted the police station to a safer place in view of safeguarding the Khagorijan oil field of Oil India Ltd, their frustration and anger was fuelled up farther. In a public meeting, an unanimous decision of indefinite oil blockade was taken up so long as concrete measures were not taken to check erosion and solve the problem of flood. Accordingly from 16th August, 1999, oil blockade started. In the meantime, after a lengthy survey work, E&D department has come out with a solution. It has proposed construction of eleven concrete spurs and according to their estimate each one would cost 15-30 crores of rupees. Obviously, Oil India Ltd is not willing to bear such a heavy amount because that is not cost effective. When the oil blockade continued for a few days, Oil India Ltd pressurised the administration to do something. First of all the administration tried to give the struggle the colour of 'law and order problem'. But the problem and the public demand was so obvious that this effort flopped. Lok Sabha election was near. There was instruction from the higher echelon of power not to harass the public. Also, political parties were hesitating to enter into the area in fear of facing the rage of the people. The administration was in a fix. With folded hand it requested the public to withdraw the blockade. The people of Rahmeria knew the character of the administration. That without enlarging the mass support base the struggle could not be extended further was obvious. Those who worked for more than four months of their own to raise spurs on the mighty river Brahmaputra without any government assistance, knew their weakness as well as strength. To make the struggle a protracted one, a combination of stronger homefront and external propaganda work was needed. Accordingly, a peace rally covered the flood affected area. Arranging three to four meetings daily, the entire area was covered in around a week's time. Simultaneously, cycle rallies

were led and public meetings were arranged in nearby small township like Chabua, Dikom, Lahoal, Mohanbari etc and on 28th September, '99, a big rally, according to the newspaper version, attended by more than three thousand people, was held in Dibrugarh town. A public meeting was also organised. The administration tried its best to spoil the spirit of the people by adopting many obstructive measures, but the people maintained peace and discipline of such high order that they had to surrender at last. This struggle launched by the people of Rahmeria has already drawn the attention of some of the keen social observers due to many reasons -

1. In the past, many divisive forces tried to distract peoples' attention from the basic issues. As a result, religious chauvinism, nationality bias etc. came to the forefront in the garb of 'political struggles'. But after a long time, basic political questions are being raised by the people.
2. At a time when the state sponsored or supported terrorism reached its maximum height and most of the political parties are sitting idle, the people belonging to a very small place dared to lead a genuine struggle inspite of all obstructions put forward by the administration.
3. The composition of the participants was diverse and workers from tea gardens joined the villagers. Students and youths of both the sexes participated. Even the housewives of villages perhaps first time in their life, addressed the public.
4. The participants were very confident because they were not demanding something very abstract and absurd but it was a very concrete one to meet for which they were ready to work. They just needed a true, sincere and purposeful leadership.

The burning question is who would come forward to give proper direction to the valiant struggle launched by the people of Rahmeria? Spontaneous outbursts hardly lead to proper solutions.



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DECLARATION

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Name of the Journal | : | Journal of Politics |
| 2. Language | : | English |
| 3. Time of Publication | : | December, 1999 |
| 4. Name of the Publisher | : | Registrar,
Dibrugarh University |
| (a) Nationality | : | Indian |
| (b) Address | : | Dibrugarh University
Dibrugarh - 786 004
Assam. |
| 5. Place of Publication | : | Rajabheta, Dibrugarh |
| 6. Name of the Printer | : | Ananta Kumar Gogoi |
| (a) Nationality | : | Indian |
| (b) Address | : | Rajabheta, Dibrugarh |
| 7. Name of the Press | : | Dataplex Computer Systems |
| 8. Name of the Editor | : | Dhiren Bhagawati |
| (a) Nationality | : | Indian |
| (b) Address | : | Dibrugarh University
Dibrugarh- 786 004
Assam |

The above declaration is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Editor