

OCCASIONAL PAPER No.118

RHIFICATION OF INTELLECT

October 1989

Arun Patnaik



Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta
10, Lake Terrace
Calcutta-700029.

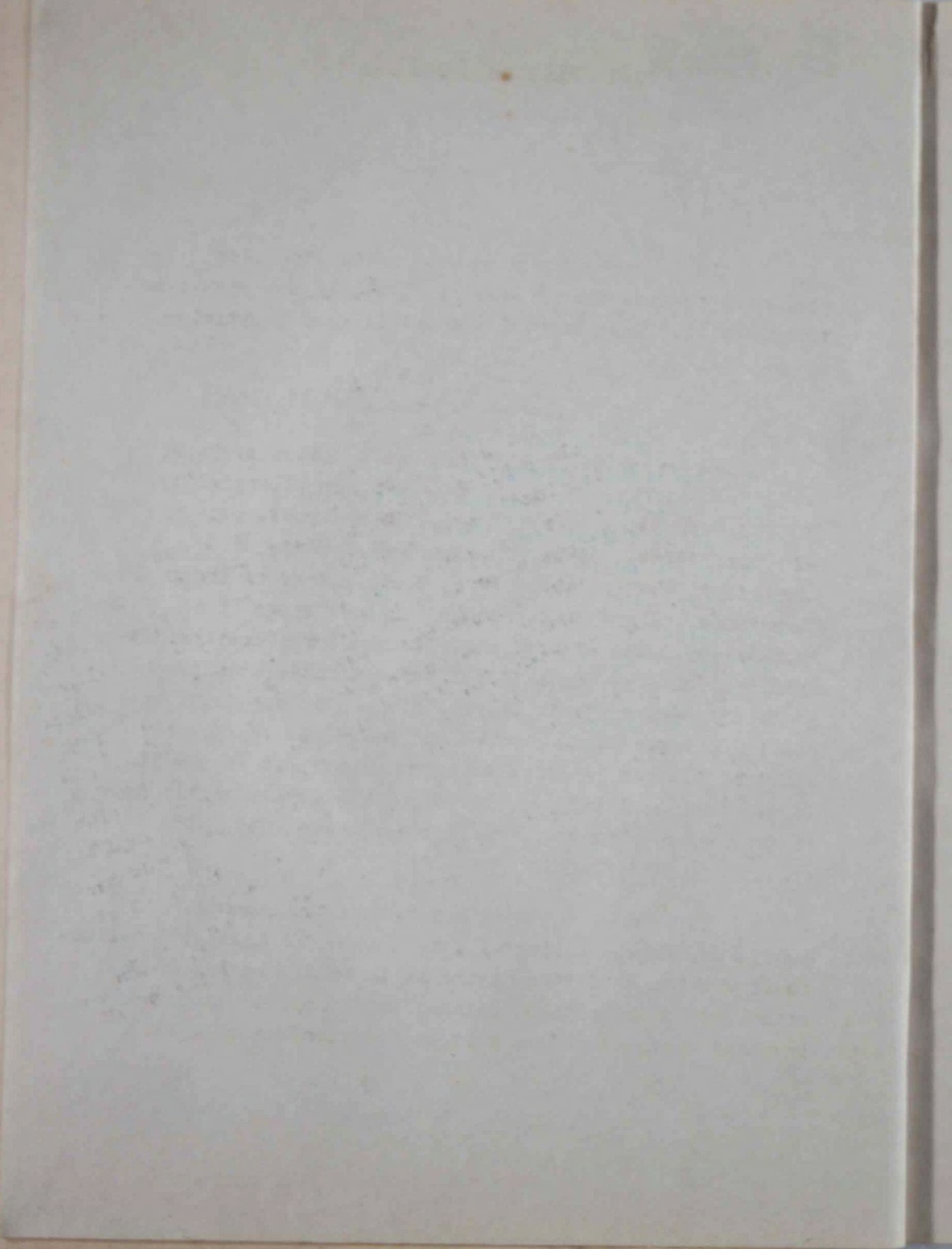
Faint, illegible text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.



Reification of Intellect

A B S T R A C T

The paper attempts an inquiry into some works recently published, though separately, by a group of Marxist intellectuals working on different themes in India. It is argued that there is a critical silence ubiquitously present in all their works. This silence essentially constitutes a kind of theorisation which has insidiously erased from its corpus the criteria of class/mass struggle, 'communism' and the distinction between potentiality and actuality. The paper argues that this omnipresent silence which on other words may be characterised as 'reification' -- i.e., the process of losing sight of vital criteria of knowledge -- engenders a significant crisis in Marxist theory which can be overcome only by breaking the silence inherent in their theorisation proper.



Reification of Intellect

"It is necessary to direct one's attention violently towards the present as it is, if one wishes to transform it. Pessimism of the intelligence, optimism of the will".

-- Antonio Gramsci (1932)

Simply said, reification means losing sight of reality. One may lose sight of one's own potentiality. One may lose sight of vital concepts of knowledge. One may for various reasons lose sight of moments of progress or a vital movement from one moment of progress to another. There could be thus various forms of reification. The present paper is about reification of intellect of some professional Marxist intellectuals who in the process of their theorisation have lost sight of crucial categories of knowledge. The paper talks more about the manner in which reification has set in and its ideological implications. It has however very little to offer any explanation of reification process it talks about.

When one reads together some works recently published, though separately, by a group of Marxist intellectuals working on different themes in India, one is deeply struck by an ubiquitous silence noticeable in their works, in their abstractions as well as empirical storylines.

This silence, as elaborated below, essentially constitutes a kind of theorisation which has insidiously erased from its corpus the criteria of class/mass struggle, the specificity of communism (theory/practice) and the distinction between potentiality and actuality in any social formation. The present paper argues that this omnipresent silence engenders a significant crisis in Marxism which can be overcome only by breaking the silence inherent in theorisation proper.

The paper first proposes to examine a recent work by Asok Sen (1989) and subsequently take off from there to works by Sudipta Kaviraj (1988), Partha Chatterjee (1986), Bipan Chandra et al (1988). It is argued that the moments of critical silence in Sen's essay are commonly noticeable in works by these Marxist intellectuals and, seen in conjunction with the others, they at once constitute and reproduce a historical impasse of Marxism : reification of its unique aspects. Let us examine its nature. However, let me apologise in advance for an uneven treatment of the authors.

I

Asok Sen's paper, "The Limits of 'Economic Man'" (1989) offers a double critique : (a) a critique of the concept of economic man, and (b) a critique of the programme of economic man envisaged in Indian planning.

THE CONCEPT OF ECONOMIC MAN

Sen's critique of the theory of economic man runs as follows. The classical/neoclassical/vulgar conceptions of economic man commonly emphasise the universal character of the individualistic man whose existence and expansion is conceived as the natural (not, the historical) trajectory of capital. Adam Smith's conception of economic man which refers to the bourgeois man, the man who is a self-seeker of money, fortunes, and values of possessive individualism, the man who believes in 'private' vices and 'public' virtues is posited as the natural social category against the pre-capitalist societies. In the opposition between pre-capitalism and capitalism, the birth of economic man is presented as a natural progress of a contract society over the pre-capitalist societies. Sen argues, "..... in Smith's ethos of political economy, universal selfishness could sustain society on the basis of 'utility, or justice, a mercenary exchange of good offices according to an agreed valuation, etc'" (Sen 1989 : 11). Smithian conception of economic man, thus, is a man working without any moral or politico-legal inhibition for profits and accumulation through the competitive market. Later on, the Keynesian emphasis retains the Smithian notion of economic man only in an altered form where, unlike Smith's construct, state participation is emphasised to revitalise capital and economic man. Smithian conception rather upholds laissez faire for existence and expansion of economic man and capital. So, the difference between Smithian conception and Keynesian notion is only in terms of their emphasis on aggregates, i.e., the method of composition of economic man. Both the notions, however, posit a stubborn faith in the universalising tendency of economic man and capital : the process of its inevitable natural progress.

As history has vindicated, Sen argues, the limits of 'economic man' were exposed from the very moment of its birth. The classical conception of economic man at once posited a historiographical "bias" against pre-capitalist societies, for it construed the pre-capitalist societies in terms of its contemporary faith in the inevitable march of economic man. The classical conception was an integral part of the general Enlightenment rationalism and its faith in the progress of Reason/Science/Capital. The pre-capitalist societies were thus distorted by the very birth of economic man. So also, the Keynesian conception in spite of its emphasis on new aggregates for expansion of economic man falls in the line of Enlightenment rationalism and lacks aggregates to transform the pre-capitalist societies and ensure the triumphalist march of economic man. Rather, it cohabits with the pre-capitalist societies of the third world. Thus, the limits of 'economic man' are once again exposed - its co-existence with the 'vast demographic spaces of pre-capitalist societies' does expose its own limits.

On this theoretical presentation of economic man, Sen examines the programme of economic man envisaged in Indian planning.

THE PROGRAMME OF ECONOMIC MAN

In Sen's assessment of Indian planning, all the time the arguments against the logic of planning process border on the "illogical" encounter with the vast demographic spaces of the pre-capitalist sectors. The dominant paradigm of planning for economic man is asked to confront the external limits imposed on it by the prolonged existence of the

pre-capitalist social forms. Sen correctly argues that the planners trained in the mould of Keynesian theory have opted for the scheme of economic man in India. However, the author argues, planners do not have aggregates to ensure the expansion of economic man in view of the vastness of the demographic spaces of pre-capitalist sectors in India. And the very idea of planning is "illogical" in view of the absence of the aggregates to confront the vast demographic spaces lying outside the logic of capital. Planners are thus forced to commit several errors of which the vital ones are : (a) the gap between plan making and its implementation; (b) its silence about human agencies to work out the production plan; (c) the misplaced emphasis on administration to carry out the plan (ibid : 20-21).

The planners, from the very inception of Indian planning, have left out the question of implementation and are merely satisfied with 'the correct appreciation of social needs' in their policy package. The tendency to maintain the gap between plan making and plan implementation soon created immense problems in resource mobilisation. As Sen argues, 'with 50 percent of the planned outlay left to completely uncertain sources the plan (second plan) had few clues about the ways and means of resource mobilisation. The plan had no command of itself' (ibid). Thus, a major intellectual error in the planning process has cropped up and persisted. On the one hand, Indian planning is totally silent about human agencies to work out the production plan. On the other hand, it puts 'misplaced emphasis on administration' to carry out the plan and ignores 'popular initiatives'.

Let us now examine the nature of Sen's assessment, his overwhelming emphasis on 'intellectual errors' in the planning process and his silence on vital categories of knowledge which have been lost sight of in his assessment of the ideological constructs of 'economic man' : its theory and practice.

After forty years of planning and experiences of all the intellectual "errors", "misplaced emphasis", "illogical" composition of planning, "the gaps" between plan making and implementation, it would have been proper for the author to seek an explanation of the meaning, action and consequences of the logic of Indian planning in relation to the various levels of class/mass struggle in India since Independence. Instead, he has confined his critique within the discourse of planners. One wonders why this constant hesitation or shuffling of arguments in logic whenever there occurs in the text a possibility of relating the discourse of planners to the contextual moments of hegemonic process, of the moments of class/mass struggle. One may ask: **why** is the gap between plan making and plan implementation consistently maintained over forty years of planning ? Sen has very little to offer as an answer. I would suggest that the logic of planning reflecting on the economic man in a society characterised by the co-existence of capital and pre-capital institutional complexes must leave a gap between the policy making of economic man and its implementation so that the state power, as the author himself has hinted, could manoeuvre the implementation process to serve the existing privileges of power and exploitation (ibid : 21).

Exactly, here, when one is delighted by the author's observation, he slips instinctively, as it were, into the realm of logic, fallacy, intellectual errors in the planning process. So the possibility of an intensive examination of the proposition on the gap between plan making and implementation is once for all lost sight of in the text. This evasion is possible because the planning discourse on economic man is not evaluated contextually in relation to the state power engaged in effecting the coalition of capital and pre-capital social forms as against the various moments of class/mass struggle directed against economic man or against pre-capitalist man.

While planners expound the dominant paradigm of economic man and capital the state power is concerned with the reproduction of the coalition of capital and pre-capital social forms (Kaviraj, 1988). If that is so, I would suggest that there is in fact no objective gap between planners and implementers of the state power. We must see the Planning Commission as a complementing agency of the ideological state apparatus and planners complementing the political actors. Planners delivering addresses in the seminars and the Ministers addressing mass rallies or lean melas often argue the same thing : the local state is responsible for all those omissions and commissions in the planning process whereas "we" at the top (at the central state) are the real benefactors of masses (a sign of Bonapartism) (Patnaik 1988). What I wish to suggest is that the principle of Bonapartism could very well be common in the discourses of planners as well as political representatives of the state power. The gap in a sense ceases to exist. On the other hand, the organisational gap between formulation and implementation arises possibly

because planners are supposed to leave open the issue of implementation for the political actors to mediate in controlling consequences of class conflict emanating from the very course of implementation of the programme of economic man -- i.e., those consequences which are likely to emerge independently of the plan design.

I would further argue that the dominant paradigm of economic man is being reproduced on an expanded scale by the state power in India. More importantly, a substantial section of the newly formed economic man does emerge from within the pre-capitalist sectors which co-exist with the capitalist sector. How else does one interpret all those high investments in the higher education and the subsequent absorption of about 90 per cent of the highly educated manpower within the educational or economic institutions. The record is quite consistent all through the plan period, even though in recent years the state absorption of the same has been witnessed more in educational institutions than in economic sectors (Navlakha 1984). All these trends of state absorption of highly educated manpower do indicate a trend of the formation of the 'new' petty bourgeoisie under the aegis of planning and state power in contemporary India.

The newness of the 'new' petty bourgeoisie possibly converges with the trends of breaking up of joint families and formation of nuclear families, a protracted process of breaking up of community ties and the emergence of self-seekers of money, fortunes and possessive individualism. That is how the terrain of civil society, the terrain of economic man, is reproduced on an expanded scale.

It is thus important to examine some crucial issues as follows.

(a) How does the expanded reproduction of economic man take place in India ^{under} the aegis of state power ?

(b) Under what conditions and to what extent does the expansion of economic man affect the pre-capitalist social sectors ?

(c) How is it that from within the reality of economic man an ideal type has been reproduced to 'seduce' all those communities of pre-capitalist sectors co-existing with capitalism ? Illusions such as, "sometime we might find a place in the capitalist structures" etc., are often entertained by communities thriving on the border of bourgeois relations. The media dissemination of an ideal typical economic man considerably recreates such illusions.

(d) How could the state power in India smash or contain the significant communist challenges to economic man and also pre-capitalist man and, thereby, ensure the relative success of the expanded reproduction of economic man as well as survival of pre-capitalist sectors ?

The fact that the Indian state is politically concerned with the unity of different fractions of the ruling classes implicitly indicates that the threats to the state power/'economic man'/pre-capitalist chieftains come from certain kinds of political alliances, not from the existence of the vast demographic spaces of the pre-capitalist sectors. Only workers, peasants and communist mediation, their complex alliances have potentiality to offer significant limits to the expanded reproduction of economic man. That is

why the state reaction to their challenges is all the more coercive and violent. By conceiving the co-existence of pre-capitalist sectors in India as constitutive of the limits of economic man, Sen has erased the moment of struggle and the specificity of communism as the basis for his critique of 'economic man' as well as 'moral man' in India today. A critique whose foundation is isolated from the moment of struggle is nothing but a voluntaristic attack.

Asok Sen's evaluation of Indian planning is closely linked up with his reflections on Marx's critique of economic man. So, it is necessary to examine this issue.

II

MARX'S CRITIQUE OF ECONOMIC MAN

By an ingenious borrowing of Marx's ideas through Theodore Shanin et al, it is argued that Marx indicated in 1881 that the pre-capitalist societies posed a problem for the march of economic man. That is to imply that Marx during the last decade of his life realised the problem of the limits of economic man imposed on it by the pre-capitalist societies resiliently existing outside the logic of capital's expansion (Sen 1989 : 16).

If economic man is the man (rarely, woman) who is an ideologue and practitioner of possessive individualism, the man who is a self-seeker of virtues, fortunes and money, the one who is an atomistic man, then Marx understood

the limits of economic man much earlier in his life, not just when he wrote the letter to Vera Zasulich in 1881. More importantly, in his critique of economic man, he was not alone -- his effort was not solitary nor voluntaristic; the history of working class struggles and the spectre of communist mediation stood by his critique.

If we approach Marx this way, we may in fact arrive at a different notion of the limits of capital and the limits of economic man. We may also arrive at new sources of knowledge relevant to the critique of economic man -- an exercise the author has completely misconstrued.

I wish to argue that Marx realised that the march of economic man hitherto conducted in a specific mode notionally and objectively arrived at its point of rupture at the moment the working class struggle in Europe challenged it and offered the alternatives outside the system of capitalism. His critique of political economy evolved in a process since 1850s not merely heralded the significance of these struggles but also proposed how the working class must scientifically approach the process of overcoming the limits of economic man. And exactly in those moments during 1850s and thenceforth, not before nor in 1881 as the author argues, the limits of economic man were scientifically exposed before the world. Marx could perceive that such limits were being created from within the capitalist societies where the formation of economic man was better clarified, not just when capital was confronted with the vast demographic spaces of pre-capitalist third world societies (Marx 1857 1973 : 408-10, 539-40).

To ignore this objective process of history at work in the evolution of Marx's critique of economic man is to imply that Marx launched a romantic voluntaristic protest against economic man. In the absence of such formulations, I believe, Asok Sen's construct implicitly suggests that the limits of economic man are exposed from the moment of its conception in Adam Smith, Ricardo and others, i.e., at the very moment of the formation of capital from within the womb of the pre-capitalist societies. Thus reads a passage :

"The nature and movement of the earlier stages of society (read : pre-capitalist societies) were increasingly conceived in terms of economic categories (read: economic man) appropriate to capitalism. There developed a bias of historiography of projecting back the crucial categories of capital and commodity exchange (read: economic man) into the earlier stages" (Sen : op.cit. 13) (bracket insertion mine).

One wonders which historiography has actually erased the influence of the contemporaneity of the past or the present from its reading of the past or present societies. If that were so, then every historiography would have been biased and by that definition of "bias", any history writings would be counter-productive. For all history writings are indeed moulded by their contemporary space and time. Any history writing necessarily involves an exercise of projecting back the crucial categories of the contemporary context into the earlier stages. It is so typical of post-structuralist theory that all the historiographies are condemned for being influenced by the 'contemporary' context in their readings of the past, thus for

being 'biased' against history. The post-structuralist endeavour to erase the influence of the contemporaneity of the past and present in remoulding various histories has paradoxically betrayed their conscience for the contemporary course of capital, especially its cultural aspects (Timpanaro 1975: 176, 196; Jameson 1984). The result is disastrous: all temporal distinctions among historiographies have been obliterated and collapsed into one frozen bloc of power language.

By exhibiting certain kinds of stubbornness in establishing one common power language between classical political economic and Keynesian conceptions of economic man, Sen has ignored the vital issue of contextualising their conceptions and the establishment of their contemporaneity. Their differences are conceived only in terms of the aggregates posited within their discourse on economic man (Sen 1989: 9-13). Like a post-structuralist critical thinker, he too has confined his arguments to a reading of discourse in isolation from its contemporary context of class or mass struggle and its possibilities. Earlier, I have tried to show how the question of working class struggles and their role in the evolution of Marx's critique of economic man has been bypassed by the author. So also, in this post-structuralist sweep, the distinctive influences of their contemporary class struggle in the formation of Smithian notion on the one hand and Keynesian notion on the other have been bypassed. There is throughout Sen's text a surprising consistency in the omission of the role of class struggle in overdetermining discourses for or against the conception of economic man.

While there is a post-structuralist vacillation throughout the text, Sen has on one occasion stated explicitly that the limits of economic man are exposed in the third world societies where classical or neo-classical or Keynesian economic theories, he argues, have no "aggregates" to expand economic man in the vast demographic spaces of pre-capitalist social existence (ibid : 18). Also, he says :

"For them (read: third world societies) no role of economic man is tenable nor does capital dynamics hold out any potential for their clarified absorption in the bourgeois order of things" (ibid : 3).

Does it imply that the role of economic man is at present tenable in European societies where it is now more fully developed than Marx's time ? The author does not even address the question in any part of the text. On the contrary, there is, in the passage cited above, a tendency to imply that since pre-capitalist social forms do not exist in the West, the march of economic man is complete, all encompassing and by implication, the working class no more survives as a category distinct from economic man, though, the author has nowhere explicitly committed to any such proposition which incidentally is gaining ground in the neo-Marxist camp. Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau are two recent members of this Post-Marxist camp (Wood 1986). All these tilts, glosses and suppressed possibilities are there in the text, because the author's framework is based on a one-sided attack on the Enlightenment notions of 'man', (never, woman) 'progress', 'science', 'reason', 'power', etc., and all these are believed to be harnessed by Marx's epistemology. The truth,

however, is that Marx's knowledge is constantly built not on a one-sided attack on Enlightenment but on the basis of a resolution of dichotomies between Enlightenment rationalism and Post-Enlightenment romanticism, between materialism and idealism, between positivism and critical theory, between science and ideology, between synchrony and telos, etc (Timpanaro 1975). On the contrary, Sen has attacked the rationalist conceptions of Man/Reason/Science/Capital and is completely silent on a critique of Post-Enlightenment romanticism/post-structuralist/critical theories of man/woman. Thus, the author has ignored Marx's sensitivity to dichotomies and also consequently ignored a possible attack on dichotomies of our own time.

By misconstruing the nature of Marx's knowledge, the moment of Marx's critique of economic man and the nature of the limits of economic man as externally imposed on capital by the existence of pre-capitalist societies, Sen has unwittingly trodden the post-structuralist path. Certain consequences of the arguments could very well emerge independently of the will of the author. That is what Marx's theory of mode of production has taught us and that is what has happened to Sen's arguments on 'economic man'. It is but logical that he could so easily miss the temporal distinctions in human history such as follows :

(1) He has largely bypassed the question of progress associated with the formation of economic man borne from within the womb of pre-capitalist societies. He has faintly hinted at the moment of historical progress, when he states that the conception of economic man "was significant

because it abandoned the medieval faith in the ideal of absolute unselfishness of self-denial" (Sen 1989 : 10). As soon as the moment of historical progress in the classical conception of economic man is highlighted, the moment is glossed over by strange twists and turns when the author argues that the very classical conception of economic man and its historiography has an inbuilt "bias" against pre-capitalist societies. Thus, the post-structuralist waverings have made him less certain in his judgements on notion of progress in history. More deeply, I suggest, the concept of progress is almost at the brink of collapse into oblivion by the sleight of hand of a Marxist scholar who is seemingly apprehensive as if the notion of progress is invariably tied up with teleological conception of history ! Here, the dichotomy between synchrony and telos is glossed over.

(2) He has bypassed any conceptualisation of the theories of economic man associated with the successive stages of bourgeois revolutions up till the history of passive revolution is created and re-created in Europe and elsewhere.

(3) He has also bypassed any conceptualisation of the communist critique of economic man associated with successive stages of passive revolutions in Europe, marked by several historic defeats of communist challenges to the expansion of economic man underlined since Marx's time and taken through the different routes of Paris Commune, communist movements in Italy and Germany, Spanish civil war and, the working class struggles in Portugal in the mid-seventies of this century.

(4) Sen has ignored how the march of economic man in India since Independence has been ensured by smashing two different kinds of communist challenges to the expansion of economic man as manifested in Telengana movement and later, in CPI(ML) movement and also by containing communism within the parliamentary framework.

In all these histories of challenges to "the limits of economic man" one wonders how many times the scientific critique of economic man has been defeated, the limits of economic man are never overcome and the march of economic man is effectively ensured. In the face of the series of defeats, all those 'triumphalist' declarations on the limits of economic man turn out to be a mere wish fulfilment of an happy ending and an escape from unpleasant facts of historic defeats. On all such occasions, let us face the problems squarely, not bypass them, and inquire where lie the strength of economic man and the limits of its Marxist critique in India and elsewhere. It is necessary today to confess that the march of economic man has been relatively more successful in spite of all those glorious moments of its scientific critique which enjoy at best bases in insular pockets. Also, the march of economic man is ensured by reconstructing economic man from within the processes of its co-existence with the pre-capitalist social forms. By implication, one wishes to argue that the strength or limits of economic man since the era of passive revolutions in Europe or in India today are overdetermined by class struggle, not by the existence of the vast demographic spaces of pre-capitalist sectors.

Sen has precisely missed this criterion in his assessment of the constructs of economic man. Sen has thus faltered on a very decisive criterion of Marxism -- the criterion of class struggle which must be adopted in all the assessments of the ideological constructs of capital or pre-capital complexes. Once again, this is a post-structuralist vacillation or perhaps, a deliberate omission.

By bypassing the internal limits of economic man posed to it from within the logic of capital by the working class initiatives and their communist mediation, and by locating the limits of economic man only in relation to the external processes or pre-capitalist social existence, Sen has inescapably placed himself within the latest problematic of post-Enlightenment notion of agency which excludes the working class from the purview of the socialist strategy. Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau, for example, are the two recent exponents of a 'new' socialist strategy which is marked by a retreat from class struggle (Wood 1986).

Sen's line of reasoning amounts to a denial of the historical fact that only certain kinds of class struggle developed at a particular conjuncture in nineteenth century scientifically expose the limits of economic man. Such a thinking is also a denial of a historical 'progress' inherent in the formation of economic man up to a certain period of capital's history, that is, up to the emergence of scientific socialism and class struggles against economic man and for communist society. It is also a conjointed denial of concepts such as 'progress', 'science', 'class struggle'. In fact, nowhere, in the text, he has used these concepts favourably and examined how far these concepts could be useful in his critique of economic man.

As stated above, the concept of class struggle must be used in any scientific exposition of the conditions of the expanded reproduction, or the conditions of the destruction of economic man for a new society. If this is ignored, Marxism will lose a core sector of its own theory.

Sen's exposition of the limits of economic man is thus registered after bypassing the question of communist mediation within the history of capital and its scientific exposition of the limits of economic man of which Marx and Engels were the leading spokesmen. In the process, Sen has unwittingly launched a voluntaristic attack on economic man and has also presented Marx's critique as a voluntaristic effort especially when he conceives Marx's critique in isolation from the working class struggles against economic man. This general problem which is implicitly inherent in his post-Enlightenment/post-structuralist vacillations has in turn affected, as seen above, his observations on the logic of capital in colonial or post-colonial societies such as India.

History today is replete with examples that those who have offered one-sided attacks on Enlightenment notions of man/woman are the ones who have also assessed the logic of capital in isolation from class struggle, the working class initiatives and communist mediation. They are also the ones who in their search for post-Enlightenment post-structuralist agencies for socialist transformation have ultimately bidden farewell to the working class and communism. These are some ominous signs of the problematic of post-Enlightenment/post-structuralist/critical theory about which the author is oppressively silent.

The time, however, has come to ask why in spite of several Marxist critiques of economic man, in spite of all those triumphalist declarations of the limits of economic man and capital, the 'scientific' critique has been hegemonised by the very paradigm it seeks to challenge.

III

'THE CUNNING OF REASON' AND ITS FATAL TOUCH OR, APPROPRIATION OF GRAMSCI'S MARXISM

We now indicate that the moments of critical silence in Sen's essay are also noticeable in essays/books by other Marxist intellectuals concerned with themes quite different from Sen's paper. When we examine them together, we arrive at the moments of an ubiquitous silence or if you like, the process of reification of intellect, i.e., the process of losing sight of crucial categories of knowledge.

In a recent paper, entitled 'A Critique of the Passive Revolution' by Sudipta Kaviraj (Kaviraj 1988) who elsewhere has exhibited a rare sensitivity to dichotomies confronting Marxism (Kaviraj 1984), there is however no attempt made to inquire into the question of containment of communist mediation which in fact is a crucial task in the agenda of the passive revolution by India's ruling bloc. It is here necessary to remember that Gramsci's critique of the passive revolution emphasises that European bourgeoisie, faced with the spectre of communism since the early nineteenth century adopted a double strategy. On the one hand, it was concerned with an expanded reproduction of capital through a

protracted course of transformation (or, 'molecular transformation) of the vast pre-capitalist sectors as in Italy, Germany and elsewhere. On the other hand, it was concerned with the strategy of containment of popular initiatives or communist alternatives. Kaviraj's critique does not refer to the issues of containment of class struggle. His critique, thus, located outside the terrain of class struggle and communism turns out to be a voluntaristic attack on the state power in India.

Incidentally, DN's paper on 'Political Economy of the Nehru Era' published in the same issue of Economic and Political Weekly highlights the crucial aspect neglected by Kaviraj (DN 1988). As DN argues, the story of political economy of the Nehru Era begins with the suppression of the CPI-led Telengana movement and in a sense ends up with the suppression of the CPI(ML) led Naxalbari uprisings and the subsequent reorganisation of the Indian state. This story, though placed on the margins of DN's paper, not within its core, does at least open an inquiry. Kaviraj's critique, on the other hand, is silent on this storyline. It is indeed surprising that Kaviraj apparently following Antonio Gramsci could so easily miss Gramsci's line of inquiry on the question of the transition from feudalism to capitalism in nineteenth century Europe since the spectre of communism began to haunt it.

Kaviraj's paper is basically concerned with the political functions of the Indian state in obtaining the coalition of different fractions of the ruling classes located within capitalist and pre-capitalist sectors. The question, however, is why is the state power concerned with their coalition or unity? The answer lies in the strategy

of containment of communist mediation which in spite of its actual major weaknesses such as parliamentary cretinism, extra-parliamentary adventurism, party bureaucracy/gerontocracy, sectarianism, a critical absence of mass line, class determinism, partial strategic challenges, etc., still remains a "spectre" that haunts the different fractions of the ruling classes and their mediator, viz., the state power. DN's paper on the Nehru era at least touches upon the issue which is altogether missed out in Kaviraj's critique.

Also, we must here keep alive the distinction between the actuality and potentiality of communism. Actual weaknesses of communist movement cannot be conflated with its potentiality. Marx, Lenin, Mao and Gramsci experienced a series of defeats of the communist movement. They however pointed out its actual weakness but did not abandon its potentiality for negation of the class societies. To the extent 'communism' remains a potential challenge for transformation, it will have its determining influence on the evolution of programmes of ruling bloc. So any Marxist critique of ruling bloc must address this aspect. If we ignore this vital aspect we will falter on the question of potentiality and miss the very foundation on which a Marxist critique must be carried out.

Marxist criticism in India is increasingly becoming one-sided today. In his book 'Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World' (1986), Partha Chatterjee quite eloquently launches a one-sided attack on Rationalism/Science/positivism/Nehru/INDIA. He quietly ignores a double critique of Romanticism/critical theory/Gandhi/BHARAT. The tenor of arguments in the book however is a little more

complex. Chatterjee correctly argues that Gandhi's critique of civil society is a moral critique, not a political theory of mediation (Chatterjee 1986 : 122-3). Chatterjee argues that the Gandhian moral critique of civil society possessed the ability to mobilise the peasantry on a national scale. This mobilisation, however, was only in partial correspondence with the social order of the peasantry (ibid : 124). But once the mobilisation process gave way to 'nation' - building process, then the forces of Enlightenment rationalism could hegemonise the process because the Gandhian moral critique, in the end, saved its Truth by escaping from politics (ibid : 110)³. This aspect of his arguments on Gandhi does not seem to be duly appreciated by Marxist readers of Chatterjee's book. The problem, however, is partly Chatterjee's own making : the epistemic implications of his critique of Gandhian thought have been suppressed by the author due to his stifling interest in a critique of Post-Enlightenment and Post-Marx Romanticism/critical theory in general and also in the specificity of communist mediation in the colonial world.

The possibility of communism combining anti-colonial struggles (the thematic of nationalism) with anti-feudal struggles (the problematic of communism) is nowhere posited in his discussion of the message of nationalist thought in colonial India. Interestingly, Chatterjee has used the distinction between thematic and problematic of nationalist thought to indicate how Gandhi was different from Nehru, not how communism was different from Gandhian as well as Nehruvian thought (Chatterjee op.cit. : 38).

It is here interesting to remember that Bipan Chandra and others in recent years have vehemently denied the very existence of communism as a distinct ideological force in colonial India. The question of unique aspects of communist mediation, the question of combining anti-colonial with anti-feudal struggle is openly dismissed as a political possibility in the colonial world. Without attacking openly theoretical tenets of Marxism, they wish communism to lose its identity and liquidate itself in the realm of nationalist thought (Chandra et al 1988:300, 309).

It is one thing to characterise communist movement as a voluntaristic attack on the colonial state and compradore classes, for communists during the crucial periods in 1922-24, 1928-34 and 1945-47 in fact adopted the Royist line (not, Leninist Line) in simultaneously attacking the Gandhian nationalist bloc as well as the colonial masters and their lackeys.⁴ It is altogether another thing to 'liquidate the very existence of communist agenda in combining anti-colonial struggle with anti-feudal/anti-capital struggle which hardly interested the Congress leadership. In fact, Chandra et al (1988:300-9) implicitly argue that the communist movement failed because it did not merge with the Congress. Chandra and others in their exposition of the notion of contradiction in colonial India have deliberately liquidated any inquiry into the notion of contradiction implicitly working in Lenin's comintern thesis that the Indian communists must maintain their independent ideological existence even when they would enter in any political alliance with Gandhian nationalist leadership (Kaviraj 1976).

By bypassing Lenin's suggestion in its entirety by derecognising the specific historical agenda of combining anti-colonial with anti-feudal/anti-capital struggle, Chandra et al have challenged the very birth of communism on the Indian soil. They have thus thrown away the baby with its bath water because the baby was found to be a voluntaristic naughty child ! No wonder that their work which is full of moral appreciations of the communist movement for its dedication, sacrifice and honesty in radicalising the "all-class movement" led by the Indian National Congress, simultaneously registers a total political depreciation of communism in India. At best, they recognise only its anti-colonial ideology and its historic roles during 1936-42. There is absolutely no mention of its anti-feudal ideology. This is no less a political depreciation of the communist movement in India.

The interesting omissions in the magnum opus churned out by Marxism of Chandra et al can be enumerated as follows :

First, in their gala performance of a historiography of 'anti-colonial' ideology, the issue of 'anti-feudal' struggle placed by CPI all through India's struggle for Independence is totally erased. So also, the concept of 'anti-feudal' ideology is not used as a criterion to assess the character of nationalist thought.

Secondly, in their discussions of "the strategy of Indian national movement", deliberately no reference is made to the strategy of containment of communist theory and practice which, as Guha recently argues, was essentially envisaged in Gandhi's theory of Dharmarajya (Guha 1989 : 246-9)⁵.

Thirdly, in their discussions of Gramscian perspective, our leftist historians have deliberately left out Gramsci's concept of passive revolution. It is deliberately set aside because any use of the concept will surely upset their apologia for the Congress-led national movement. We must notice that the third omission is closely connected with the first two. For Gramsci's concept can be used only by breaking the first two moments of silence in their master narrative.

Last but not the least, in their 'Marxist' discussion of contradictions in the colonial world, there is no mention of Lenin's or Mao's notion of contradiction in India, China or the colonial world in general. They have also deleted the notion of contradiction in colonial India implicit in Lenin's arguments when he proposed that Indian communists must exist as an independent 'ideological' force even when they must support the nationalist forces. Even if the "primary contradiction" in colonial India, as Chandra et al claim, was adequately expressed in the anti-colonial ideology of Indian National Congress, Lenin's insistence that communists in India must not "merge" with Indian National Congress indicates that there was another set of contradictions latent in colonial India which communism must articulate -- a task which never interested nationalist forces. What was that? Chandra and Co's Marxism has liquidated all such questions which threaten their notion of contradiction in colonial India on which their apologia for Indian National Congress is constructed.

Now returning back to Chatterjee's Marxism, we find that his use of the concept of passive revolution purges the moment of communism from Gramsci's critique of the passive revolution -- the mistake, as we have argued above, Kaviraj has recently repeated. Both of them simply miss out the agenda of the passive revolution'set to contain certain moments of struggle or communist challenge during India's nationalist struggle or in post-colonial India. No wonder, Chatterjee's one-sided reading of the passive revolution which puts overwhelming emphasis on the moment of appropriation has completely lost sight of the storyline of expropriation of "the spectre" of class struggle or communism which haunted the passage of nationalist thought and determined its course of development -- an exercise which Ranajit Guha has recently tackled, though very briefly (Guha op.cit. : 246-9).

Chatterjee thus argues, "... in situations where an emergent bourgeoisie lacks the social conditions for establishing complete hegemony over the new nation, it resorts to a 'passive revolution', by attempting a 'molecular transformation' of the old dominant classes into partners in a new historical bloc and only a partial appropriation of the popular masses, in order first to create a state as the necessary precondition for the establishment of capitalism as the dominant mode of production" (Chatterjee op.cit. : 30). Why does "an emergent bourgeoisie" adopt a strategy of molecular transformation? Chatterjee's explanation that "bourgeoisie lacks the social condition for establishing complete hegemony" no less suffers from sociologism/reductionism of class struggle he elsewhere seeks to challenge.

Chatterjee's explanation of the passive revolution in India nowhere mentions the determining effects of communism which already haunted 'an emergent bourgeoisie' he is seeking to examine (Chatterjee op.cit. : 29-30, 45-46, 131-61). In the entire chapter on Nehru's passive revolution programme, -- the only section in the book where the author examines a programme of the passive revolution -- there are only four sentences on Indian communists where Chatterjee who is otherwise very critical of Nehru's rationalism simply presents Nehru's views on Indian communism (ibid : 150,157). How does one interpret this particular kind of silence except to regard it as a tacit concurrence with Nehru's assessment of communism in colonial India ! Though Chatterjee and Chandra start off with different assumptions in their respective evaluations of Nehruvian thought, -- Chatterjee with an anti-rationalist line and Chandra with a pro-rationalist line, -- it is interesting to notice that they end up allying with Nehru's assessment of communist mediation in colonial India (Chandra et al 1988 : 300, 308).

Chandra et al (1988:300) argue, "Nehru, therefore, did not favour the creation of an organisation independent of or separate from the Congress or making a break with Gandhiji and the right-wing of the Congress. The task was to influence and transform the Congress as a whole in a socialist direction". The authors, here, accept Nehru's criticism of communist or socialist endeavour in forming independent organisations. The authors also submit, "The Left also failed to make a deep study of Indian reality. With the exception of Jawaharlal Nehru, the left saw the dominant Congress leadership as bourgeois, its policy of negotiations as working towards a 'compromise' with imperialism.

.... Above all, the Left failed to grasp the Gandhian strategy of struggle". (ibid : 308).

Such criticisms of the Left-wing seem to be primarily directed at the CPI because, as the authors themselves argue, the other variants of the Left wing, especially socialists, did not pick up any basic quarell with the 'Gandhian mass mobilisation' programme (ibid : 306). Thus the historians argue a la Nehru that primarily the communists failed to understand the specificity of Indian social reality and the Gandhian strategy of struggle. While that could be factually true, the most interesting point here is that the Nehruvian assessment of the failure of the CPI completely liquidates its ideological specificity in late colonial India and thus rarefies it. Such a rarefied presentation of the communist movement could only help sustain the apologia for the Congress-led freedom struggle, upheld by Nehru and his latest successors in contemporary India.

Let us now compare this rarefied presentation with what Chatterjee uncritically says about Nehru's assessment of the communist movement (Chatterjee op.cit. : 150, 157). Chatterjee, here, is talking about Nehru's concern with the process of turning "the springs of localised and spontaneous resistance by the peasantry into the broad stream of the national struggle" which, as Chatterjee further argues, "could never be accomplished by acting according to the rational principles of political organisation" (ibid : 150). According to Nehru, the author argues, the adoption of the rational organising principles was "the principal reason for the failure of the Communist Party in India to mobilise the peasantry. They were in the habit of judging, the Indian situation from 'European Labour Standards'. They did not

realise that socialism in a country in which the peasants formed the overwhelming part of the population was 'more than mere logic' (ibid). The author later argues, "'Socialism is more than mere logic', Nehru had said when criticising Communists for being overly dogmatic and theoretical and not paying enough attention to the cultural peculiarities of India". (ibid : 157).

The very fact that Chatterjee singles out to attack Nehru's rationalist assessment of Gandhi or rather, Nehru's 'incomprehension' of Gandhi and does not have a word to say against Nehru's assessment of the communists indicates his silent approval of Nehru's views on CPI. As we have already seen in case of Chandra and others, Chatterjee's presentation too turns out to be a rarefied assessment of the communist movement in India or in the colonial world in general. Any rarefied interpretation of communism necessarily politically depreciates the positive ideological and organisational specificity of its theory and practice.

The liquidationist, leftist historiography of Chandra et al does as much damage to communist mediation in the colonial world as does Chatterjee's quietism which silently bypasses the specificity of communist mediation on all those aspects of working class/peasant struggles which were never fully integrated with the nationalist movement.

However, the differences between Chandra et al on the one hand and Chatterjee on the other hand must be recognised. Unlike the former, the latter appreciates the fact that there were peasant struggles in colonial India

which in many forms were somewhat autonomous in relation to the nationalist thought. In contrast, the Leftist historiography of Chandra and the others strikes out two aspects at the same time. On the one hand it derecognises the ideological specificity of communism in the colonial world. On the other hand it suppresses the fact that there were many worker/peasant struggles which had relative autonomy in relation to the Congress-led freedom struggle (cf. Guha (ed.) Subaltern Studies, and also Ray et al. eds. Challenge, 1984).

It is however no healthy Marxism to reduce in one volume after another historiography to a simple narrative of popular initiatives carried out somewhat autonomous of nationalist thought or suppressed by it or in partial correspondence with its anti-colonial ideology. When the historical point is already made, when a moment of progress is once achieved in history writing, it would be necessary for historians to look forward for a higher moment of progress. If Marxist historians lose sight of this process, and simply repeat their construct against nationalist thought in volume after volume of monographs, though on each occasion with new data they would be actually practising what may be characterised as trade unionism in historiography. Such a school of thought, beyond certain moments, ceases to register progress in history writing. I have in mind the trade unionism, for example, of Subaltern Studies volumes and their Marxist think-tanks.

If one wishes to fully apply Gramsci's line of inquiry on popular initiatives one must at once examine the grades of potentiality of popular initiatives for an anti-feudal/anti-capital/anti-colonial struggle.⁶ We have to

remind ourselves that Gramsci was interested in the storyline of popular initiatives as a communist thinker, all the time trying to explore its potential for 'anti-feudal' struggle during the Risorgimento period (1820-1871) and subsequently for an effective communist mediation in the post-Risorgimento Italy. Nowhere in Guha's Subaltern Studies or in Chatterjee's work are we informed that the authors are in minimum interested in this line of inquiry.

Ranajit Guha, the editor of Subaltern Studies, has indeed set an extremely fatalistic tone. (We must here remember Gramsci's observation that fatalism of an intellectual is politically and ideologically different from that of a worker, a peasant or a woman). Guha defines his project as a study of failure(s). He conceives failures only in terms of constraints imposed by the "objective conditions of social being" and/or else, in terms of some unfulfilled process of an ideal model of class-for-itself (Guha 1982:6-7). Thus reads a passage :

"However, the initiatives which originated from the domain of subaltern politics were not, on their part, powerful enough to develop the nationalist movement into a full-fledged struggle for national liberation. The working class was not sufficiently mature in the objective conditions of its social being and in its consciousness as a class-for-itself, nor was it firmly allied yet with the peasantry. As a result it could do nothing to take over and complete the mission which the bourgeoisie had failed to realize. The outcome of it all was that the numerous peasant uprisings of the period, some of them massive in scope and rich in anti-colonial consciousness, waited in vain for a leadership to raise them above localism and generalize

them into a nationwide anti-imperialist campaign" (ibid : 6) (emphases mine).

This is a terribly vague and opaque passage. It is difficult to glean its meaning systematically. On the one hand, Guha here argues that the working class or its ally, the peasantry was objectively immature, i.e. "not sufficiently mature in the objective conditions of its social being and in its consciousness for class-for-itself". Now one of the crucial implications of this proposition is that any leadership endeavour in colonial India to organise workers and peasants for "class-for-itself" would be counter-productive in view of their "sufficient" objective immaturity. On the other hand, Guha argues that numerous peasant uprisings waited in vain for "a leadership to raise them above localism and generalize them". If Guha is to be consistent in this entire formulation, then I suppose, he is implying here that peasant uprisings waited "in vain" because a leadership could not have emerged in view of the "sufficient" immaturity of their social being in late colonial India. Thus, on the whole, this process signifies a historic failure which is project seeks to demonstrate (ibid : 7).

The historian of Subaltern Studies constantly relapses into an ideal model of nineteenth century bourgeois democratic revolution or 'new democracy' which, Guha submits, neither the bourgeoisie nor the working class respectively, in view of their objective as well as subjective 'inadequacy', could have realised in late colonial India. This incidentally constitutes Guha's fatalism which has nothing to say on the actual or potential levels of successes in colonial India. It only talks about failure(s) or else, success of an ideal model ! In real history of colonial India,

for Cuba there was no success, actual or potential. The task of the intellectual fatalism is to deny both the potentiality and actuality of any progress in history.

However one interprets Guha's pronouncements, one thing is certain. He has failed to recognise the potentiality of worker-peasant combine through communist mediation to transform late colonial India. On the contrary, his arguments border on a strong denial of the very potentiality of worker-peasant combine to do anything positive in history except perhaps "to wait in vain for a leadership to raise them". This constitutes Guha's failure and in his failure he is not alone. Marxism-Gramscism of Chandra et al has now joined his camp and formed a peculiar unholy alliance which doggedly refuses to recognise : (a) the potentiality of worker-peasant combine along the path of communism to offer a different route of transformation of colonial India, and (b) the specific positive politico-ideological aspects of the actual communist mediation in colonial India. Guha's history surely sides with the project of liquidation of recently placed on the agenda of Indian historiography by Chandra and others. On these two crucial moments of history of colonial India Guha, after 'violently' transgressing into the autonomous domain of 'popular initiatives', returns quietly into the fold of 'radical nationalist' historiography of Chandra and others who, as stated earlier, have altogether liquidated the specific historical reasons of the birth of communism on the Indian soil and also, the potentiality of worker-peasant combine to transform late colonial India.

In the present paper one of our concerns has been to point out that Chatterjee's critique of nationalist thought is neither built on the foundation of those aspects of Marxism

which are distinct from other post-Enlightenment theories such as various genres of romanticism and critical theory, nor does it open up the possibility of communism in the colonial world as distinct from rationalism as well as romanticism that characterises Nehruvian and Gandhian thought respectively. On the one hand, his critique is essentially voluntaristic, for it is carried out from without any foundation of the unique aspects of communist mediation. On the other hand, his silence on the unique aspects of communist mediation in the colonial world has turned out to be a self-imposed fetter on the very cause of 'a new universality' he seeks to defend (Chatterjee op.cit. :170). This may be characterised as a sign of liquidation of communism. Only by breaking his silence on the specificities of communism, only by distinguishing it from other genres of post-Enlightenment practices, only by confronting the tradition of dichotomies facing Marxism, Chatterjee can remove the fetter on Marxism he has imposed himself.

Both Kaviraj and Chatterjee, as stated above, do not ask many questions they ought to have asked, if not answered. Signs of liquidationism emerge in their critiques because both of them have bypassed communist mediation at the moment of their respective formulations. But these signs emerge independent of their will because of their ubiquitous silence on vital concepts. That is how perhaps 'the cunning of reason' has put its fatal touch on 'Marxist' theory !

From the above discussion, I infer that Marxist criticism is undergoing a major crisis. This question of communist mediation is lost sight of in Marxist interpretations of the passive revolution or nationalist thought or economic man. Implicitly, the potentiality of

communist mediation is disinherited altogether simply because actual 'communism' is trapped within rationalist or romantic practices. Ultimately, such critiques turn out to be sheer liquidationist tendencies because no unique positive history of communism, in its theory and practice, is recognised as the basis of arguments. This, therefore, signifies a major crisis : Marxism in some of its theoretical moments is still struggling to free itself as an autonomous philosophical and political movement. As a way out of the current "historical impasse" (to borrow the phrase from Louis Althusser) Marxism must define its own 'Self'. It can define its self only in a scientific conception and resolution of the dichotomies between imperialism and nationalism, between INDIA and BHARAT, between Gandhian and Nehruvian models, between capital and pre-capital complexes, ~~between~~ rationalism and romanticism, between science and ideology, between synchrony and telos, between positivism and critical theory, between idealism and materialism, between liquidationism and voluntarism.

Let us now sum up the current 'historical impasse' (partly) created by Marxist intellectuals themselves. In the discourse churned out by Chandra and others, the questions of communist mediation and popular initiatives, their ideological as well as organisational specificities, somewhat autonomous in relation to Congress-led nationalist bloc are violently liquidated within the narrative of nationalist thought. This is a classic case of liquidationist historiography which openly challenges the very existence of communist bloc as an independent ideological force in colonial India.

If we look at the other spectrum of Marxist intellectuals, their critiques of the passive revolution in colonial/post-colonial India, as for example, set by Chatterjee, Sen and Kaviraj on the respective issues under discussion, one notices two disturbing tendencies. On the one hand, bypassing communist mediation in their critiques of the passive revolution or 'economic man' they silently liquidate it. On the other hand, by emphasising 'popular initiatives' per se against Reason/Science/Economic Man/passive revolution, they simply launch romantic attacks on the rationalist thought. Such a tendency, however, is more imminent in the texts by Sen and Chatterjee, and far less true of works by Kaviraj. This storyline constitutes the current historical impasse of India's contemporary Marxism, especially of its historiography and political theory. The way out of this impasse, I suggest, is to simultaneously register in any theoretical scheme the storyline of partly autonomous popular initiatives existing in unison or opposition with the trichotomies of irrationalist/rationalist/romantic practices as well as its potentiality for an anti-feudal/anti-capital/anti-imperialist struggle. Also, we must adopt categories such as class/mass line/communism in any explanation of the dominant ideologies/structures. Both the lines of inquiry must be kept alive, even though we may not always be in a position to fully operationalise them in any single piece of work.

[For many of their insightful comments, editorial help, and also their generosity in allowing me to rehearse the paper in their company, I am indebted to the following friends and colleagues : Amiya Bagchi, Sibaji Bandyopadhyaya, Nripen Bandyopadhyaya, Debdas Banerjee, Pradip Bose, Keya Dasgupta, Subendhu Dasgupta, Barun De, Anjan Ghosh, Aniruddha Lahiri, Sarajit Majumdar, Indranil Mukherjee, Rila Mukherjee, R.A.P. Sastry, Shailaja. I am also grateful to Asek Sen for his comments on an earlier section of the paper. However, I am solely responsible for the views upheld in the paper.]

NOTES

- (1) Sen refers to Marx's letter to Vera Zasulich in 1881. As early as in 1857 in the Grundrisse, Marx talks about the limits of capital's universalizing tendency which were exposed at a particular conjuncture of capital's internal history. However, the significance about his Zasulich letter is that he could underline the revolutionary potentiality of Russian communes which were not wholly destroyed by capitalism. The point one must remember here is that the limits of capital were scientifically explored by Marx as early as 1857, not in 1881.
- (2) Gramsci (1971:82) argues, "If in Italy a Jacobin Party was not formed, the reasons are to be sought in the economic field, that is to say in the relative weakness of the Italian bourgeoisie and in the different historical climate in Europe after 1815.The bourgeoisie could not (perhaps) extend its hegemony further over the great popular strata -- which did succeed in embracing in France -- (could not for subjective rather than objective reasons); but the action directed at the peasantry was certainly always possible".

Later on in his brief note on the German case, Gramsci argues, "The explanation given by Antonio Labriola of the fact that the Junkers and Kaiserism continued in power in Germany (add: after 1848) despite the great capitalist development, adumbrates the correct explanation; the class relations created by industrial development, with the limits of the bourgeois hegemony reached and the position of the progressive class reversed, have induced the bourgeoisie not to struggle with all its strength against the old regime, but to allow a part of the latter's facade to subsist, behind which it can disguise its real domination".
(ibid : 83)

More important than the weaknesses in the economic field, the European bourgeoisie especially since 1848 were "induced not to struggle against the old regime" because "the position of the progressive classes were already reversed". In spite of the objective fact that the action directed at the peasantry was certainly possible, Italian or German bourgeoisie compromised with the old aristocracy because the "spectre" in 1848 was already threatening Europe (Gramsci 1971:82). The moment of communist challenge is decisive for the formation of the wende of the passive revolution. If we bypass this precise moment we will fail to understand Gramsci's line of inquiry, and also miss out the evertermining role of communism on the course of bourgeois revolutions in nineteenth century Europe and thereafter.

- (3) I am grateful to Anjan Ghosh for bringing this aspect home to me.
- (4) For a viewpoint on the sectarianism of the CPI and also, despite this sectarian stance, the positive ideological contributions of the communists in this period, see Datta Gupta (1980, 1988) and Adhikari (1978). Datta Gupta (1988:50) recently argues, "Interestingly, despite this sectarian stance, Adhikari has highlighted the positive aspects of Roy's and RPD's contributions in this period : (a) they emphasised the importance of criticising the compromising, the vacillating tendencies of national bourgeois leadership; (b) they advanced the slogan of complete independence and a concrete programme of anti-imperialist democratic revolution; (c) they stressed the need for organisation of workers, peasants, and toiling masses and the creation of a militant mass base".
- (5) Recently Guha (1989, 226-228) has also faltered in explaining the tendency of German bourgeoisie to compromise with "elements of the old order" during the Prussian Revolution of 1848. Guha misses out one of the crucial explanations that Gramsci a la Antonio Labriola suggests that the German bourgeoisie in 1848 was already threatened by the emergence of new progressive forces and hence adopted a principle of compromise with the pre-capitalist aristocracy.

However, Guha in the same text recovers the lost grounds in course of his discussion of the compromising tendency within the nationalist movement in India. In his examination of the Gandhian idiom of Dharma, Guha argues :

"Gandhi made no secret of the practical uses he had in mind for his theory (read: theory of Dharmaraj). It was formulated and avowed in opposition to socialist theory and in defence of landlordism. 'I enunciated this theory', he (Gandhi) said, 'when, the socialist theory was placed before the country in respect to the possessions held by zamindars and ruling chief'". (Guha 1989 : 247) Thus as Guha argues, the 'elite nationalist' principle of compromise between Indian bourgeoisie and the feudal lords was evolved due to the emergence of the 'spectre' of class struggle which haunted them commonly.

- (6) For a short but brilliant exposition of three grades of potentiality, see Cohen (1978 : 14-15). Cohen argues, "Under some conditions X would become Y - that is the first grade potentiality. Under some normal conditions X would become Y - that is the second grade potentiality. In third grade potentiality X would become Y under all normal conditions (note that there may be more than one set of normal conditions)". It may be useful to examine the potentiality of popular initiatives in relation to communist mediation along this line of inquiry. Its operational task is beyond my ability at present.

REFERENCES

- Achibor, G. (ed.) (1978) Documents of the History of the CPI, Volume IIIA, 1926, New Delhi, People's Publishing House.
- Chandra, B., Mukherjee, A., Mukherjee, A. and Mahajan, S. (1988) India's Struggle for Independence, Delhi, Viking.
- Chatterjee, P. (1986) Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse, Delhi, Oxford University Press.
- Cohen, G.A. (1979) Karl Marx's Theory of History : A Defence, Oxford, Clarendon Press.
- DN (1988) Political Economy of the Nehru Era, Economic and Political Weekly, Volume XXIII, Nos. 45-47, Special Number, November : 2459-2462.
- Datta Gupta, S. (1980) Comintern, India and the Colonial Question : 1920-1937, CSSSC Monograph No.3, Calcutta, K.P. Bagchi.
- (1988) M.N. Roy, Comintern and India, The Calcutta Journal of Political Studies, Volume 7, No.2, Summer : 46-55.
- Gramsci, A. (1929-35, 1971) Prison Notebooks, London, Lawrence and Wishart.
- Guha, R. (1982) On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India, in author (ed.), Subaltern Studies I, Delhi Oxford University Press.

- Guha, R. (1989) Dominance without Hegemony and Historiography, in author (ed.), Subaltern Studies VI, Delhi, Oxford University Press.
- Jameson, F. (1984) Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, New Left Review 146 : 53-93.
- Kaviraj, S. (1975) Marxism and the Colonial Question : Some Methodological Questions, Marxist Miscellany, December.
- (1984) Some Observations on Marxism and Political Causality (in mimeo)
- (1988) A Critique of the Passive Revolution, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XXIII Nos. 45-47, Special Number, November : 2429-2444.
- Marx, K. (1857, 1973) Grundrisse, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books.
- Navlakha, S. (1984) Self-Legitimacy of Indian Higher Education, Contributions to Indian Sociology, Volume 18, No. 2, July-December : 245-265.
- Patnaik, A.K. (1988) The Local State and Rural Policies, Occasional Paper No. 100, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta March.
- Ray, N.R. et al., (eds.) (1984) Challenge : A Saga of India's Struggle for Freedom, New Delhi, People's Publishing House.
- Sen, A. (1989) The Limits of Economic Man, Occasional Paper No. 112, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, March.

- Timpanaro, S. (1975) On Materialism, London, New Left Books.
- Wood, E.H. (1986) The Retreat from Class : a New 'True' Socialism, London, Verso.