role of 'organizing and rallying the masses' had made Gandhi a revolutionary leader earlier, but when this role was no longer performed Gandhian leadership could be said to have reached the point of political bankruptcy.

Equally important is Lenin's and Comintern's attitude towards Sun Yat-sen-led Kuomintang in China. Because the Kuomintang at this time not only satisfied fully the two main criteria of Lenin but also enabled the communists to get organized and to work among the masses, Lenin and the Comintern encouraged the Communist Party to go beyond uniting with Sun Yat-sen and the Kuomintang to joining the latter as individuals, retaining at the same time their separate party identity.

VII

In the end, we may note in passing that the later controversies on this question among the Marxists were derailed mainly because many of them neglected making a concrete examination of the role of actual, existing bourgeois nationalist movements in the light of the two criteria discussed above. Instead they concentrated on an abstract and theoretical discussion of the position and role of the colonial bourgeoisie and its different sections and tried to derive tactics towards the nationalist movements on the basis of such one-dimensional, divorced-from-life, shallow 'Marxist' knowledge or interpretation. This was an important aspect of the tendency to guide movements through academic postulates and reasoning, which often bordered on phrase-mongering and casuistry—rather than on the basis of a concrete study of economics and politics and of real revolutionary experience. On the question under study, this of course led to constant 'over-estimation' and 'under-estimation' of the role of the bourgeoisie in the colonial countries. Such analysis, and constant evaluation and re-evaluation, could, and were, then used to justify both compromises with, and surrender before, the bourgeoisie as well as rank adventurousness and totally nihilistic approach towards the actual national liberation movements. In Lenin's entire approach, on the other hand, the emphasis was not just on the objective role of the bourgeoisie
derived from economic analysis but also on the study and evaluation of the concrete political practice of the different sections of the colonial bourgeoisie. Similarly, Lenin's formulation regarding the vacillating, two-faced character of the colonial bourgeoisie was used not to study concrete bourgeois class roles and behaviour and on this basis to evolve concrete political attitudes towards it, but opportunistically to justify this or that policy.

The differences in grasping the essential features of Lenin's approach on the colonial question were particularly glaring in the theory and practice of the Indian and Chinese Communists. The latter, for example, had in theory described Chiang Kai-shek as a representative of the feudal and comprador capitalist forces with which the communists could not unite. Yet, after 1936, when Chiang showed, under pressure of nationalist opinion, some inclination to fight Japanese imperialism, they had no hesitation in joining a united front with him without even demanding or claiming hegemony in the anti-Japanese struggle. Obviously, the crucial factor in the alliance was Lenin's criterion of struggle against imperialism.

Similarly, in many instances, emphasis on seeing the positive and negative aspects of the bourgeoisie led to far more than necessary attention being focussed on the role of the bourgeoisie in the historical process. This happened even when the role of the bourgeoisie was held to be negative. In practice it led to the neglect of the Marxist-Leninist emphasis on the role of the masses. In trying to assess the degree of revolutionary or reactionary role of the bourgeoisie the communists tended to neglect their own revolutionary role of awakening and organizing the workers and peasants in the context of the bourgeois democratic national liberation struggle.

NOTES

For a recent general statement of the Marxist view in this respect, see Franz Marek, *Philosophy of World Revolution*, New York, 1969.


Ibid., p.65. His complaint against Rosa Luxemburg was that she did not do so when discussing the national programme for the Russian socialist movement. He wrote: “We are discussing the national programme of the Marxists of a definite country—Russia—and in a definite period—the beginning of the twentieth century. But does Rosa Luxemburg examine what historical period Russia is passing through, what are the concrete features of the national question and the national movements of this particular country in this particular period?” Ibid., p. 71.

Ibid., p. 235.

Ibid., p. 250.

Ibid., p. 264.

Ibid., pp. 283-85.

See, for example, *M N. Roy’s Memoirs*, Bombay, 1964, pp. 346-47, 380. An extract from Lenin’s comment in 1912 on Sun Yat-sens’s ideas also illustrates this aspect of Lenin’s approach. While subjecting Sun’s ideas to searching criticism, he described them as follows: “Before us is a really great ideology of a really great people . . . .” Lenin, NLME, p. 42.

M.N. Roy, pp. 380-81. The injury was partially mitigated by the fact that the supplementary theses were virtually ignored by the Comintern in its later work.


Especially when contrasted with the approach of a section of the contemporary socialists who had abandoned the earlier tradition of Marx and Engels. For the role of these socialists, see Boersner, pp. 29-32; d’Encausse and Schram, pp. 15-16, 125-33; A.M. McBurnier, *Fabian Socialism and English Politics*, London, 1962, Chapter V.

CW, Vol. 22, p.346. Also see NLME, p.92.

See Boersner, pp. 29, 32, 42-43, 57. A good example of this thinking is the following passage from Rosa Luxemburg’s famous ‘Junius’ Pamphlet of 1916: ‘Only from Europe, only from the oldest capitalist nations, can the signal come, when the hour is ripe, for the social revolution that will free humanity. Only the English, French, Belgian, German, Russian and Italian workers, together, can lead the army of the exploited and enslaved of the five continents. They alone, when the time comes, can call capitalism to account for centuries of crimes committed against all the primitive peoples, and for its work of destruction around the globe; they alone can exact revenge.” Quoted in d’Encausse and Schram, pp. 143 44.
For example, in his letter to Kautsky, dated 12 Sept. 1882, Engels had envisaged the possibility of a successful revolution in India as also in other countries such as Algiers and Egypt. To quote his exact words: "India will perhaps, indeed very probably, produce a revolution." Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence, 1846-1895*, New York, 1942, p. 399.


*NLME*, p. 297.


*CW*, Vol. 23, p. 59. Regarding the revolution in Russia, Lenin had written in 1905, that "it will be unable (without a series of intermediary stages of revolutionary development) to affect the foundations of capitalism. . . . the democratic revolution will not immediately overstep the bounds of bourgeois social and economic relationships . . .\" *CW*, Vol. 9, 1965, pp. 56-57. He wrote in 1921: "The bourgeois-democratic content of the revolution means that the social relations (system, institutions) of the country are purged of medievalism, serfdom, feudalism." *CW*, Vol. 33, p. 52.

Later, in 1919, Lenin had admonished those who objected to the recognition of "the right to self-determination of the despised bourgeoisie" by pointing out that such recognition was "compatible with what actually exists; eliminate this and the results will be sheer fantasy" and that "we cannot refuse to recognize what actually exists: it will itself compel us to recognize it." *NLME*, pp. 211-16.

Lenin wrote in the *Two Tactics of Social Democracy*: "As representatives of the advanced and only revolutionary class, revolutionary without any reservations, doubts, or looking back, we must confront the whole of the people with the tasks of the democratic revolution as extensively and boldly as possible and with the utmost initiative. To disparage these tasks means making a travesty of theoretical Marxism. . . ." *CW*, Vol. 9, p. 112.


*Boersner*, pp. 47,50.

*CW*, Vol. 22, p. 144. On the other hand, he had written in 1913 that "the path to collectivism is through democracy." *NLME*, p.62. Earlier still, in 1905, he had said: "But we Marxists should know that there is
not, nor can there be, any other path to real freedom for the proletariat
and the peasantry, than the path of bourgeois freedom and bourgeois
progress. . . .’” CW, Vol. 9, p. 112.


40NLME, p. 97.


43A concrete analysis of the possibility of the bourgeois democratic
revolution growing into the socialist revolution was made by Lenin in

turn their attention chiefly to Germany because that country is on the
ev of a bourgeois revolution that is bound to be carried out under
more advanced conditions in European civilization and with a more
developed proletariat than that of England in the seventeenth and of
France in the eighteenth century, and consequently the bourgeois revolution
in Germany can be but the immediate prelude to a proletarian
revolution.” Section IV.

45CW, Vol. 33, p. 54.

46CW, Vol. 9, p. 114.

47“Struggle, and struggle alone, decided how far the second suc-
ceeds in outgrowing the first,” he wrote in 1921. CW, Vol. 33, p. 54.

48The tasks of the democratic revolution must be completed, he wrote
in 1905, “as extensively and boldly as possible and with the utmost initia-
tive.” CW, Vol. 9, p. 112. Also see Vol. 33, p. 53. In 1916 he had laid the
broad guidelines for the uninterrupted growth of the first stage of the
revolution into the second: The democratic demands “must be formulat-
ed and put through in a revolutionary and not a reformist manner, going
beyond the bounds of bourgeois legality, breaking them down, going
beyond speeches in parliament and verbal protests, and drawing the
masses into decisive action, extending and intensifying the struggle for
every fundamental democratic demand up to a direct proletarian on-
slaught on the bourgeoisie, i.e., up to the socialist revolution that expro-


50NLME, p. 290.

51NLME, pp. 70-71.

52Clearly this applies only to colonies and semi-colonies. Where a
country is neither, the conflict becomes one between two capitalisms, one
of which may be larger than the other as well as more imperialistic.

53See above. Also NLME, pp. 62, 65, 69, 76, 92, 274; CW, Vol. 22,
pp. 151-52.

54NLME, pp. 43, 47, 52, 266; CW, Vol. 22, p. 148.

55It should be stressed that this formulation was made by Lenin
always in concrete cases and was not put as a general tendency rising
out of the general features of all colonial bourgeoisie. For example,
in 1913, while praising Sun Yat-sen as a representative of the revolu-
tionary tendency among the Chinese bourgeoisie, he referred to Yuan
Shih-Kai as one of the leaders of the liberal bourgeoisie who "are above all capable of treachery". *NLME*, p. 43. Also see ibid., pp. 47, 52. This concretisation of the formulation was also evident in the *Preliminary Theses*.

"He wrote in 1913: "The principal representative or the principal social support of this Asian bourgeoisie, which is still capable of fighting in a historically progressive cause, is the peasant." Ibid., p. 43.

"In 1920, Lenin said that Communist Parties could not function in the colonial and semi-colonial world "without establishing definite relations with the peasant movement and without giving it effective support." Ibid., p. 266.

"Ibid., p 290.

"Ibid., p. 255. Also see the Comintern Executive's "Appeal on the Forthcoming Congress of Eastern Peoples at Baku" in Degas, pp. 106ff.

"NLME*, pp. 255, 262, 267-68.


"See Franz Marek, pp. 67-68; d'Encausse and Schram, pp. 121-23.

"In fact, the peasantry began to be assigned a greater role in his own life time. See the theses of the 4th Session of the Comintern (Nov. 1922) in Degas, pp. 386-87, 394-98.


"For Roy's and Serrati's views see d'Encausse and Schram, pp. 150-51, 159-63, 165-67. For the "Theses on the National and Colonial Question", adopted by the Congress, see Degas, pp. 139-44.

"For the changes, contrast the Preliminary Draft (NLME*, pp. 250-56) with the final Theses adopted by the Congress (in Degas, pp. 139-44). d'Encausse and Schram have given the final Theses along with the changes made in it from the earlier, Lenin's draft. See pp. 152-56.

"NLME*, p. 266.

"d' Encausse and Schram, p. 151.

"A distinction which was not arrived at on 'general' and theoretical considerations but which had been revealed in reality—which was a real life, concrete historical phenomenon in some of the colonial countries. See *NLME*, p. 266.

"Ibid.


"*NLME*, pp. 43, 51-52, 62.

"Ibid., p. 266.

"d 'Encausse and Schram, pp. 150-51.

"Ibid., p. 163.

"Ibid., p. 162.

"Ibid., pp. 165-67.

"*NLME*, p. 266.

"We might refer here to the principled, though wrong, position of Roy on this question. Roy accepted the logic of this argument but he maintained that in the relatively developed countries like India contradiction between indigenous capitalism and imperialism had been muted and
a compromise arrived at between the two since both felt threatened by the revolutionary upsurge of the masses and because imperialism was interested in developing capitalist enterprise in these countries. See d' Encausse and Schram, pp. 190-92.

This anti-imperialist aspect of the struggle of the colonial people was emphasized again and again by Lenin. See, for example, NLME, p. 234. It was also repeatedly emphasized by the Comintern during Lenin's life time. See Degras, pp. 385, 394-96.

NLME, p. 47. Also see pp. 22, 42, 44, 235; and CW, Vol. 23, p. 31.

CW, Vol. 20, p. 441, Also see Vol. 22, p. 145.

NLME, p. 266.


NLME, p. 255. Also see p. 235 and d' Encausse and Schram, p. 151 (Lenin's speech in the Commission).

NLME, pp. 12-13. Also see p. 18. In 1919 Lenin once again reverted to this period of Indian history and said that after 1905 a "revolutionary movement" had developed in India. Ibid, p. 233.

Ibid., pp. 39-40.

Ibid., p. 42.

Ibid. p. 59.

Ibid., p. 101.

Ibid., p. 244.

Ibid., p. 288.

Roy, p. 379.

Degras, p. 383.

Ibid., pp. 386-87.


This was also how Marx had analysed current history in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.

Peasantry and National Integration in Contemporary India

I

Agricultural Class Structure in the Colonial Period

Colonialism brought about momentous social and economic transformation during which centuries-old social and economic relationships and institutions were dissolved and replaced by new relationships and institutions. In the realm of agriculture too, new agrarian relations and class structure came into being. New classes, absentee landlords and money lenders at the top and tenants-at-will, sharecroppers, and agricultural labourers at the bottom, came into existence. A new agrarian structure was born that was neither traditional or feudal nor capitalist. There occurred the growth of tenancy and a hierarchy of intermediaries between the state and the actual cultivators on a scale unprecedented in Indian history. By 1931, one-third of the rural population was landless and most of the remaining two-thirds were tenants-at-will, sharecroppers and petty peasant-proprietors.¹ Not that exploitative elements were introduced afresh into an egalitarian and classless society. Economic

¹ Presented in August 1976 at the 30th International Congress of Human Sciences in Asia and North Africa, Mexico.
inequality, political and economic oppression by zamindars, maliks, etc., status differences, and caste domination had prevailed in ample measure earlier. But the pattern of such domination and exploitation was now transformed. Moreover, old institutions and relationships were not consciously overthrown but were sought to be superimposed upon. Consequently, they disintegrated and along with them disappeared some of the social protection to the lower castes and classes provided by mutual help and enforcement of custom though within the limits of the old structure.

New relationships were evolved by the interaction of the old with the new; but what occurred was change without social revolution. Consequently, the new social basis of agriculture was not more conducive either to economic development or to economic welfare. The point here is not whether the new structure was better or worse, nor that the old society disintegrated; but that what came in its place was, if not more, regressive and as much of a strait-jacket on the development of agriculture. The new structure or relationships or forms of surplus extraction and utilization (a) did not provide incentives or opportunities to any class or stratum engaged in agriculture in any position to make modern improvements and (b) led to the siphoning off of resources from agriculture and the agriculturist.

Broadly speaking these changes came as a result of the introduction of new land systems, the heavy land revenue demand, legal and political changes, the destruction of indigenous industries, the disintegration of the age-old union between agriculture and industry, the integration with the world capitalist economy in a subordinate position, and above all the fact that the Indian economy and agriculture underwent a commercial revolution which was unaccompanied by an industrial revolution. More specifically, Indian agriculture was commercialized without any change occurring in its technical base or organization of production.

One major consequence of the colonialization of Indian economy and agriculture was stagnation in agricultural output, decline in productivity, fall in the per capita availability of food, and in general the increasing impoverishment of the cultivator. However, here we are not in the main interested in
the poverty and misery of the peasant but changes in the agrarian class structure in the recent colonial and then the post-colonial period.

We have discussed these changes in very broad outlines, often ignoring regional differences. It is rather awkward to generalize about the entire country when wide differences in pattern came into being because of the varied and prolonged colonial historical process. But we have done so because the general elements of colonial agriculture and class structure came to be similar all over the country. At the same time, often statistical data and other evidence from particular parts of the country have been given because of the paucity of such data and evidence for all parts or at least of their ready and easy availability for reference purposes.

(A) At the top of the agrarian class structure came the zamindars and landlords who owned and controlled most of the land. By the 1920s, landlordism had become the main feature in both the zamindari and ryotwari tenure areas. Moreover, through sub-infeudation, the number of intermediaries had increased. Large number of zamindars and landlords were new both in functions and personnel. High land revenue demand, its rigidity, and the new legal and administrative system led to the expropriation of the older upper classes as well as the peasant proprietors. Merchants, money-lenders, speculators, officials, professionals, and other urban groups bought up zamindaris or the peasant-owners' lands to become landlords. Most of the new zamindars and landlords were absentee and had little link with land. Not only were they, along with the older zamindars, not interested in becoming capitalist landlords, often they were not interested even in organizing the machinery for rent collection. They, therefore, readily took to sub-infeudation, thus increasing the number of rent receivers and hence the rent-demand. The middlemen invariably took recourse to every conceivable legal or illegal mechanism to collect more from the actual tiller of the soil. In ryotwari areas too land was gradually passing under the control of landlords and money-lenders. It is to be noted that the alienation of land by an owner-cultivator did not mean transfer of cultivation but interposition of a middleman between the previous owner and the new tenant and the state. By 1947, nearly 70 per cent of the total cultivated land in British India
was owned by zamindars and landlords. In ryotwari areas about 30 to 50 per cent of the land was in the hands of landlords and the rest was heavily under debt.\(^8\)

The zamindars and landlords were not only recruited from money-lenders but many of them increasingly took to money-lending. The U.P. Banking Enquiry Committee reported in 1931 that landlords were the largest source of rural loans in U.P., contributing nearly 40 per cent of all loans.\(^4\)

The stagnant colonial economy with its lack of economic opportunities in a period of increase in the number of proprietor landlords produced a sharp differentiation within the class of zamindars and landlords. Thus, in U.P., in 1945, 0.04 per cent or 804 zamindars owned 27 per cent of the land while 1.49 per cent held 57.77 per cent of the land.\(^5\) In the Agra province, 85.5 per cent of the proprietors paid less than Rs. 25 per year as revenue, while another 13.2 per cent paid between Rs. 25 and Rs. 250 per year.\(^6\) In Bengal, in 1893, 85.4 per cent of the estates controlled 9.8 per cent of the area, with an average per estate of 49 acres of land, net rental of Rs. 29, number of 4 shares, and net rental income of Rs. 7 per share. The next 13.8 per cent of the estates controlling 39.3 per cent of the area had an average per estate of 1,228 acres of land, net rental of Rs. 1,711, number of 6 shares, and net rental income of Rs. 285 per share.\(^7\) This extreme differentiation among the landlords was to have a very significant impact on the Indian national movement. The majority of rent receivers were in their incomes and even life styles not distinguishable from the rich or even middle peasants. They were impoverished and were getting further impoverished. They were becoming quite hostile to colonialism and as born to education and status and used to political and administrative leadership they could and did begin to play an active role in the anti-imperialist struggle and to provide the latter with elements of mass support, especially in elections under a restricted franchise after 1919. They played an important role in the ‘massization’ of the national movement. Yet, with all their impoverishment, they were rent receivers. This could not but leave an impress on the social programme of the National Congress and its pattern of national integration.

Similarly, they also began to play a certain role in the-
emerging peasant movement, especially in the 1920s. Apart from direct impact, the pull they exercised on the rich and middle peasants and through them on the peasant movement and its programmes was significant.

Commercial bourgeoisie in India was first destroyed but later developed as the linkage of Indian economy with the world economy gave a lift to internal trade. Growth of export of agricultural raw materials and food-stuffs and growth of internal trade in agricultural products as the result of the growing unification of Indian economy and the pressure on the peasant to compulsorily sell his products in order to meet his payments to the state, landlord, and money-lender provided ample opportunity for commercial bourgeoisie to grow. The village market structure and the compulsive need of the peasant to sell immediately after the harvest and later to buy for consumption made the merchant a major appropriator of agricultural surplus. Commercialization of agriculture which often led to crops being grown with merchant’s advances and marketed through his monopolistic channel further strengthened his position, as did the fact that he often combined the usurer’s function with that of the trader’s. He also increasingly began to control the land as an absentee landlord.

Colonialization of the economy, administrative and legal structure, the land revenue system, and increasing commercialization of rural life created a favourable economic and political climate for the village money-lender who began to occupy a dominating position in the rural economy and to expropriate both the peasant proprietors and the occupancy tenants and the zamindars. This led to major tension situations in the countryside and produced two interesting consequences. In many parts of the country, the cultivators could be rallied around by the small and even big landlords against the common enemy, the money-lender. Secondly, the rural tensions generated by the intrusion of the non-cultivating usurer often threatened social and political peace and led the colonial administrators to rail against him. Yet the usurer was a crucial cog in the mechanism of colonial surplus extraction. He kept the revenue machinery working and other agricultural processes going. He enabled both the production of export crops and their eventual export. He was responsible for the maintenance of the minimum
agricultural functions including the reproduction of the peasant. He was the ultimate and the only safety valve in the countryside. In fact, he was as much an intermediary between the colonial state and the peasant as the zamindar or the earlier revenue farmer. So the colonial administrator abused and cursed him as an evil—but also declared him to be a necessary evil.8

If moneylenders became landlords, many landlords and superior ryots—rich and middle peasants—became moneylenders. In particular, they lent to petty tenants, sharecroppers, and agricultural labourers who had no security to offer and who could therefore not become clients of the regular moneylenders. The landlords and superior ryots on the other hand could use their social and caste position and kinship connections to collect. In 1951-52, nearly 25 per cent of all rural debt was held by agricultural money-lenders in contrast to the 44.8 per cent held by professional money-lenders.9 Their competitive position as money-lenders was another point of friction between landlords and rich peasants and the traditional money-lenders. This enabled the former to give birth to a spurious radicalism that opposed usurers without opposing usury in any meaningful sense.

In conclusion to this sub-section, it may be said that the most important change in agrarian relations during the colonial period was the growth in the relative strength of the landlord, the trader, and the money-lender. Moreover, whatever increase of income occurred in agriculture due to a certain commercialization of agriculture also mostly went to them.

(B) The actual cultivator increasingly became a rack-rented tenant-at-will or sharecropper, whose terms of tenancy were constantly deteriorating. In 1951, 27.8 per cent of rural agricultural families consisted of peasant proprietors while tenants and labourers made up the remaining families.10 By the end of the colonial period, the rent and interest burden on the peasants amounted to 14,000 million rupees or nearly 5,000 million dollars per year.11

A major feature of the agrarian class structure in the recent colonial period was the high degree of internal differentiation and stratification within the peasantry.

At the top emerged a distinct stratum of rich peasants, both
owners as well as protected tenants, who succeeded in benefiting from commercialization of agriculture because of their control over land, the protection provided by tenancy legislation to occupancy ryots and legislation against transfer of land to non-agriculturists, the opportunity to buy the land of the expropriated peasants, and the scope for money-lending and trade. In some regions, many of these rich peasants—owners or occupancy ryots—became, because of the opportunity to get high rents, landlords in effect while retaining their status as peasants. In others, they strove towards capitalist or semi-capitalist farming.

An important aspect of the rural differentiation was the emergence of the rich peasant money-lenders. Not only was nearly 25 per cent of the rural debt held by agricultural money-lenders in 1951-52 but in addition 14.4 per cent of the debt was held by the relatives of the debtors.\textsuperscript{12}

The rich peasant as a rent and revenue payer was opposed to imperialism as well as to the zamindar. But, as an actual intermediary, whose legal position was still that of a peasant-proprietor or occupancy ryot, or as a potential intermediary his agrarian and political outlook was deeply conservative, and this apart from the fact that in any case as a man of property and employer of labour he was not a radical on the socio-economic plane. This conservative character of the rich peasant was a major factor responsible for the conservative agrarian programme of the National Congress and the failure of the radical and left nationalists to go, except in a few cases, beyond the programmatic stage in defence of the interests of the tenants-at-will, sharecroppers, and agricultural labourers.

Below the rich peasants came a stratum of middle peasants who were very close in social and economic position as also political and agrarian outlook to the rich peasants, having survived the colonial process of disintegration and expropriation.

The vast mass of peasantery was gradually getting reduced to the status of landless agricultural labourers and petty landholders, described by Surendra J. Patel as dwarf-holding labourers, some of whom were petty proprietors and others tenants-at-will and sharecroppers, who had either no rights in land or were in the grip of indebtedness.\textsuperscript{13} Now the important
point regarding these dwarf holders is that they were a transitional class; they were peasants who were on the way to becoming the proletariat. They could be seen as small peasants, for their outlook and hopes and fears were those of peasants; or as semi-proletarians whose social interests already converged towards the landless. But we will have more to say on this aspect in the section on the agrarian class structure in post-colonial India.

The ranks of landless agricultural labourers were swelled by dispossessed peasants, ruined artisans, and the growth in population which was not absorbed by modern industrial or service sectors. It is to be noted that the agricultural labourers constituted a new social class of rural proletarians which was increasingly becoming distinct from the land-holding peasantry. The dwarf holder and the landless labourer constituted more than half of the rural population. They were not only the poorest and the most exploited, but objectively their problems could not be solved by any reform of the agrarian system. In fact, their problems could not be solved at all within the agrarian system.

The numerical distribution of the agricultural population into different rural classes is a difficult task and has not been fully attempted. Ultimately, with all the economic and sociological arguments against it, the pattern of landholdings or operational holdings is the only one statistically available and serviceable. But even here one has to impose rather arbitrary dividing lines. Surendra J. Patel believes that those holding or cultivating (as opposed to owning. The extremes of ownership may not be reflected in cultivation since landlords rented out their land to many tenants. Consequently landholdings, whether in ownership or tenancy, give a better idea of rural class structure and stratification within the peasantry) less than 5 acres should be classified as dwarf holders and landless agricultural labourers. These, according to him, constituted 71.1 per cent of the total agricultural working population in 1931, with 37.8 per cent constituting the category of landless agricultural labourers.¹⁴ I believe that in general those holding less than 2.5 acres can certainly be classified as proletarians and semi-proletarians or dwarf holders. In any case this shows that differentiation within the peasantry had reached a very advanced stage in the late colonial period. According to the Agricultural Labour Enquiry of 1951,
19 per cent of the rural families had no land. Of the landholding families, 38.1 per cent had less than 2.5 acres of land controlling in all 5.6 per cent of the land (16.8 per cent below 1 acre and 21.3 per cent between 1 and 2.5 acres). These may be seen as semi-proletarians or as dwarf holders. 21 per cent of the rural families held 2.5 to 5 acres of land constituting 9.9 per cent of the area. These may be seen as the small peasants. 19.1 per cent of the families held 5 to 10 acres of land constituting 17.6 per cent of the area. These may be regarded as the small and middle peasants. 16.2 per cent of the families held 10 to 25 acres of land constituting 32.5 per cent of the area. These may be seen as middle and rich peasants. 4.2 per cent of the families held 25 to 50 acres of land constituting 19 per cent of the area. These were clearly the rich peasants. 1.4 per cent of the families held 50 or more acres of land and controlled 15.4 per cent of the area. These were the big landowners who merged with the zamindars.

The differentiation within the peasantry was moreover occurring all over the country. For example, in the Punjab, in 1939, 48.8 per cent of the total holdings were in the size up to 3 acres and constituted 6 per cent of the entire agricultural area, while 6.3 per cent of the holdings above 25 acres constituted 52.8 per cent of the area. In U.P., in 1946, 55.8 per cent of the total holdings were in the size below 2 acres and constituted 14.1 per cent of the land, while 0.9 per cent of the holdings in the size over 25 acres controlled 12.9 per cent of the area. In the ryotwari area of Madras, 22.8 per cent of the landowners owned less than 1 acre of land and 3.4 per cent of the total land while 0.8 per cent of the landowners owned more than 18 acres and 13.1 per cent of the total land.

II

Agrarian Class Structure in the Post-Colonial Period

The nationalist leadership was committed at the moment of freedom to changes in the agrarian structure. At the same time it had to evolve a new institutional structure that would serve
the needs of economic development in the long run. From the beginning it recognized a few constraints: (i) Industrialization, however rapid, would not absorb the vast rural unemployed and under-employed who must therefore remain in the villages and live off the land. Capitalist farming could also not absorb this labour force; rather the opposite. (ii) Agricultural production must grow and agricultural surpluses must flow into the cities. The petty peasant producers could not perform this task. Only capitalist farmers could do so. (iii) In a relatively overpopulated country like India, capitalist farmers could not be permitted to dispossess peasant proprietors since a large and undisguisedly unemployed proletariat would pose immense social and political dangers. Hence the need for a new institutional structure which would be neither feudal or semi-feudal nor wholly capitalist; and which would on the one hand produce marketable agricultural surpluses and on the other keep the vast rural population engaged in agriculture by preserving the small and dwarf holder till, after decades of industrialization, it begins to be sucked into the non-agricultural sector. This structure had to have at its base small and dwarf peasant property and at its top rich peasant-cum-capitalist farming. This policy had in fact been suggested during the last quarter of the nineteenth century by Justice Ranade much of whose thinking percolated down to the Indian planners through the political as well as the intellectual traditions.

Arguing against the zamindari system, which he described as semi-feudalism, Ranade pleaded for a policy of land to the tiller accompanied by the transformation of the old zamindars into capitalist-farmers. And, then, he wrote: "A complete divorce from land of those who cultivate it is a national evil, and no less an evil is it to find one dead level of small farmers all over the land. High and petty farming...this mixed constitution of rural society is necessary to secure the stability and progress of the country." This policy of replacing landlordism by rich and middle peasants while keeping the small, subsistence farmer-cum-commodity producer intact so that there was no proletarianization and disintegration of the peasantry was accepted by the Congress Party and the Government of India after 1947. This policy has sometimes been attacked from the right by those
who want greater leeway for the capitalist farmer, and sometimes from the left by those who want more equitable distribution of land. The attack from the right has been easily met, since there has existed scope for the growth of capitalism, and the dangers of untrammelled concentration of land are there for all to see. The technocratic critique that the vast mass of small holders are economically non-viable has been met with two types of answers. In the 1950s the promotion of agricultural cooperatives was stressed. This policy foundered on the twin reality that no pooling of the resourceless and the landless would be viable and cooperativization of the rich and middle peasants' land was beyond the limits set by the existing class and political structure of the country. The other answer has been to use state-supported credit and marketing structures and modern technology and inputs to make the small peasant viable.

The left critique of the ruling agrarian strategy has also been ineffective, for if was to a large extent based on illusory economic and political assumptions. Firstly, it accused the ruling classes of preserving semi-feudalism while what they were doing was to change the agrarian structure but not by giving land to the landless tiller but by gradually transforming the landlords into rich peasants and capitalist farmers and by making middle and large tenants landowners. Then the left argued for land ceiling which was easily evaded by the big landowners by dividing land among relatives and children. Land ceiling thus did not generate land for distribution but it did generate a large number of rich peasant holdings. The left now demanded lower land ceilings. But this step could be productive of significant amount of distributable land only if the rich peasant was divested of land. This was politically not feasible for a regime which depends upon the rich and middle peasants politically as well as economically. In fact, even the left dared not attack the rich peasant but either tilted at the windmills of feudalism or wanted to attack the rich peasant by calling him a semi-feudal landlord. The fact is that the agrarian class structure of India has been now so sharply stratified that the rich peasant confronts the proletarian and semi-proletarian elements and he does so with the support of the middle and even small peasants.

What has been the impact of land reforms and other policies
on the agrarian class structure? (i) The zamindars and the semi-feudal agrarian structure have disappeared or are disappearing. But the abolition of the major intermediaries released little land for distribution to the landless: in fact initially some of the landholding tenants were ejected by the landlords from the land which they were permitted to resume for self-cultivation as rich peasants and capitalist farmers. But many of the previous tenants now became owner-cultivators. (ii) The land reform was pro-landlord in the sense that the landlords were permitted to remain at the top of the agrarian class structure, though they were forced gradually to change their class status. (iii) With the growth of owner-cultivation, the rural political and social domination passed or is passing to the rich peasant. Many of the agrarian policies, for example regarding ceilings, which are described as reactionary by the left and are ascribed to feudalism and landlords, are in fact the product of the deference paid to rich peasant interests or ideology. (iv) Land ceiling succeeded in reducing big landed property but released no land for distribution to the landless. Its main impact has been to discourage the purchase of land by the rich peasants who therefore now use their economic surplus to improve the land and not to buy it (at the most, they lease it, often from the small owners). Thus capitalism in agriculture has been strengthened without dispossession of the small cultivator and without further concentration of land. If anything it is the rich, middle and small peasants who have gained at the cost of the very big landowners. Instead, the deepening of capitalism has created wider employment opportunities. (v) The form that growth of capitalism takes is the promotion of rich peasant farming. (vi) Tenancy is very much reduced though its extent is less known than before since it is driven underground. Tenancy is also for that reason more difficult to fight. Moreover, the areas of advancing agriculture, which hold up the mirror of the future to the backward areas, are virtually free of semi-feudal tenancy. (vii) At the same time, there has been a constant increase in the number and proportion of the agricultural labourers so that they constitute the largest social group in the countryside today. But this increase has not come from the dispossession of the small peasantry, as is sometimes believed. In fact, after the
initial process of evictions in the 1950s, no significant dispossession of the small peasant seems to be occurring.23

Let us take a look at the agrarian class structure as it has evolved as a result of the land reforms and other agrarian changes. Table I24 gives the percentage of population in different sizes of operational holdings and the area commanded by each size of holdings. Table II25 is derived from the survey undertaken by the Reserve Bank of India in 1971-72. It, however, provides only the percentage of households in each size holding and is given here only for comparative purposes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holding size (in acres)</th>
<th>Percentage of population</th>
<th>Percentage of area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 — 2.5</td>
<td>48.23</td>
<td>6.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 — 5.0</td>
<td>17.43</td>
<td>12.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0 — 10.0</td>
<td>16.59</td>
<td>19.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.0 — 20.0</td>
<td>7.29</td>
<td>13.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.0 — 20.0</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>9.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.0 — 25.0</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>7.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.0 — 30.0</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>5.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.0 — 50.0</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>12.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.0 and above</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>12.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land operated (in acres)</th>
<th>Percentage of households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>27.750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.01 — 0.50</td>
<td>7.553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.50 — 1.00</td>
<td>6.889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00 — 1.25</td>
<td>4.342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.25 — 2.50</td>
<td>14.320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.50 — 5.00</td>
<td>16.330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.00 — 7.50</td>
<td>8.614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.50 — 10.00</td>
<td>4.239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00 — 15.00</td>
<td>4.626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.00 — 20.00</td>
<td>2.062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.00 — 25.00</td>
<td>1.239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.00 — 30.00</td>
<td>.688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.00 — 50.00</td>
<td>1.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.00 and above</td>
<td>.384</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tables I and II are not strictly comparable since the population in a household goes up with the size of operated holding. We have, therefore, based our discussion on Table I only.

Land control is thus highly unequal if the entire rural population is taken to constitute the peasantry. But if we take out the 48 per cent who really constitute not small peasants but in Lenin’s phraseology proletarians and semi-proletarians (similarly, the rich peasants are best described as the rural bourgeoisie and the middle peasant as the rural petty bourgeoisie. The differentiation on the basis of rich, medium and small peasants still implies that they are part of the same class), we get, as Table III shows, a picture of viable landowning classes which resembles in terms of inequality and differentiation, though not in the extent of land owned, the European peasantry including that of Italy, France and Germany of the modern times.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holding size (in acres)</th>
<th>Percentage of landowning population (which is 51.77 per cent of total rural population)</th>
<th>Percentage of area controlled by the landowning population (which controls 93.29 per cent of total operated area)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.5—5.0</td>
<td>33.67</td>
<td>13.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0—10.0</td>
<td>32.04</td>
<td>21.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.0—15.0</td>
<td>14.08</td>
<td>14.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.0—20.0</td>
<td>6.68</td>
<td>10.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.0—25.0</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>7.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.0—30.0</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>5.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.0—50.0</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>13.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.0 and above</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>13.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the landowners the inequality is not very skewed; and this is particularly so for the landholders above 5 acres. The ruling groups have been and are making every attempt to keep these groups stable and viable both through legislation and economic policies. Moreover, these groups play an important part in local and regional politics and have, therefore, the capacity to protect their interests. Any policy of land ceilings to be effective must propose the extreme egalitarian step of family
holding being limited to a single family size holding. Politically, this step would be no less radical than the proposal to collectivize land. This is especially so because of the relative equality and therefore solidarity between the ‘effective’ peasants.

The real problem for the ruling classes is posed by the 48 per cent who have no or virtually no land, who cannot be provided adequate employment or standard of living, and who can never again be reintegrated into the ‘peasantry’. Yet, if they become conscious of their changed social position, their politics will turn against the capitalist system itself. To prevent this class awareness from emerging, to keep them satisfied when the existing social structure is incapable of satisfying them, this is the task of politics and ideology. Part of this burden is taken up by the notion of their being a part of the peasantry and to keep this illusion going the El Dorado of land distribution is held up before them. The dwarf holders are given just enough land to keep their notions and hopes of being owner-peasants alive. Moreover, this also prevents unity among all those who are really and historically permanently landless. The rest of the burden is assumed by the notions of social uplift and national integration which do have a great deal of basis in real life. The question here is: are these 48 per cent proletarians and semi-proletarians along with the 34 per cent small and medium peasants or rural petty bourgeoisie to constitute the nation or are they, in the name of national integration, to wait for decades outside the pale of society till capitalism develops sufficiently to reintegrate them into the ‘nation’?

III

Peasantry and National Integration before 1947

The leadership of the Indian national movement desired the peasantry’s integration with the nation and the national movement in order to strengthen the striking capacity of the anti-imperialist forces. Stung by the taunt of representing merely the ‘microscopic minority’ of the educated few—the babus—and more or less ignored by colonial authorities, it embarked on the
course of wider social mobilisation, including that of the peasantry, to be able to put greater pressure on the colonial rulers to meet its constantly rising demands. This change in nationalist policy coincided with the period when the full consequences of colonialism for the Indian peasant were coming to the surface, moving him into an era of spreading discontent and economic and political struggle.

(A) To integrate the peasantry into the national movement, the nationalist leadership promoted two integrative principles. Firstly, the notion of the peasantry or kisan as a single cohesive social group or one happy family. One purpose was to overcome the peasantry’s division on caste, communal, or local bases. The notion of the kisan or peasantry had within it certain elements of class cohesion and even consciousness. These elements were later asserted and utilised by radical peasant leadership. But the notion was not promoted by the nationalist leadership with a view to promote or accentuate the class struggle against the zamindars and landlords. Rather, it was seen as an instrument for overcoming the internally divisive tendencies which weakened the united national struggle against imperialism. Consequently, despite the large scale propagation of the ‘ideology’ of a single peasantry or of the kisan, peasant ‘class’ consciousness remained on the whole at a very low level and did not, in fact, exist at all in several parts of the country. Peasant consciousness spread very slowly and only when zamindars and landlords were gradually politically isolated.

The notion of the peasantry as a social group was also used to paper over the rapidly emerging differentiation within it. In fact, it was even used to integrate the small and ruined landlords with the peasantry.

The second integrative principle was aimed at making the peasants feel part of the nation. This was achieved not only by stressing that peasant interests must predominate in the national movement, but that, further, the peasantry was the nation, or at least its basic constituent. It is on this ground that the dominant National Congress leadership frowned upon the separate organization of kisans. As a resolution passed at the Haripura Session of the Congress in 1938 asserted: “The Congress has already fully recognized the right of kisans to organize
themselves in peasant unions. Nevertheless it must be remembered that the Congress itself is in the main a kisan organization.” 28 (Emphasis added).

(B) The objective justification for the Indian nationalist leadership’s efforts to integrate the peasantry within itself and with the rest of the nation lay, firstly, in the fact, so well brought out in the works of R. Palme Dutt and A. R. Desai, that the peasantry’s primary contradiction during this period lay with imperialism. Hence, the anti-imperialist movement did not merely ‘exploit’ the peasants’ mass strength or place its interests at the command of the bourgeoisie or middle classes, as a certain spurious pro-colonial ‘radicalism’ would have it. It represented to a certain extent the anti-colonial interests of the peasantry. Starting with Dadabhai Naoroji and Justice Ranade and ending with Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, the national leadership’s effort to grasp and explain rural poverty with reference to colonialism and in the context of the anti-imperialist struggle was certainly more advanced than the efforts of the colonial authorities and imperialist writers to explain it outside the colonial framework or than even the understanding of the leaders of the spontaneous militant peasant movements of the nineteenth century.

Secondly, with the unification and integration of India, including its agriculture, economically and politically during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it became essential that the peasants should learn to think and act to protect their interests on an all-India plane. For that they must feel and know that they were part of larger national entities—the peasantry and the nation. Both these aspects came to be fully recognized by the peasant movement when it developed autonomously during the 1930s and 1940s. The peasant movement stressed the importance of the anti-imperialist struggle for the social development of the peasantry and its own role in this struggle. In fact, it constantly struggled after 1936 to acquire greater weight in the nationalist leadership and the national struggle.

Moreover, it was not as if the peasantry or its movements were ‘utilized’ by the national leadership or were ‘sacrificed’ at the altar of nationalism—ironically this charge was to be made with a vengeance later by certain conservative peasants’ against the entire left, socialist and communist leadership the
world over.29 Nationalism helped arouse the peasant and awaken him to his own needs, demands and above all the possibility of an active role in social and political development. Nationalism helped the peasant movement to ‘stand on its feet’, to spread and take roots in the 1920s and 1930s. It gave cohesion to the peasants, created a sense of solidarity among them, and taught them elements of modern organization, overcoming the utterly disjointed and local character of the peasant movements of the nineteenth century when the more widespread movements had been held together by religion or by the top zamindar leadership. Even later, in the 1930s and 1940s, the Kisan Sabha leadership, getting distanced from the national leadership by its sectarianism, failed to build a genuine all-India peasant movement or to organize large India-wide agitations. In fact, the peasant movement as also the national movement could have overcome and transcended the weaknesses of the nationalist leadership and its pattern of national integration not by counterposing peasant interests to bourgeois nationalism but by better integration of peasantry with the national movement, by more vigorous anti-imperialism, and by trying to establish a different pattern of class leadership over the movement.

The linkage between the national and the peasant movements has been brought out with great clarity by two recent scholars, Majid Siddiqi and K.N. Panikkar. At the end of his study of the peasant movements in U.P. from 1920 to 1922, Siddiqi concludes: “The association of the kisans with national politics helped both the peasant movements as well as the political movements for they drew sustenance from and gave support to each other at different stages. . . . The movement from below was thus given an initial boost by the cohesion that politics lent to it.”30 Similarly, K.N. Panikkar concludes his paper on the peasant revolts in Malabar during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries by referring to the merger of the peasant and national movements in 1921: “This coalition created a sense of cohesion and solidarity among the peasantry. It also provided them an effective organization.”31

(C) The negative aspects of the Indian nationalist pattern of peasantry’s integration into the national movement lay in three of its important features:
(i) Ignoring the basic features of colonial agrarian structure, the national leadership on the whole curbed the anti-landlord struggle. Its dominant sections were opposed to anti-landlord ideologies, policies, and agitations. They opposed all anti-landlord activities of the peasantry in the name of non-violence and the unity of the anti-imperialist struggle. Separate class organizations of the peasantry, it was said, divided and weakened the national movement. Opposing the independent mobilisation of the peasantry, they favoured peasant mobilisation only when it was a part of the broader national mobilisation against imperialism. Thus Gandhi advised the agitating peasants of U.P. in February 1921: "You should bear a little if the zamindar torments you. We do not want to fight with the zamindars. . . . Zamindars are also slaves and we do not want to trouble them." In May 1921, he again wrote:  

. . . it is not contemplated that at any stage of non-cooperation we would seek to deprive the zamindars of their rent. The kisan movement must be confined to the improvement of the status of the kisans and the betterment of the relations between the zamindars and them. The kisans must be advised scrupulously to abide by the terms of their agreement with the zamindars, whether such agreement is written or inferred from custom.

Similarly, in the Congress Working Committee resolution suspending the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1922, two out of the ten clauses concentrated on the ‘legal’ rights of the zamindars. In the early 1930s, the Congress Working Committee twice assured the zamindars that it was not opposed to them and that it opposed “the confiscation of property” and “class war”. Even the leadership of the U.P. Congress, which was much more to the left on the agrarian question and was supporting and organizing peasant agitation against high rent, felt it necessary in order to assure the all-India leadership to state publicly that it worked for “harmony between zamindars and tenants” and did not preach class war.

The Congress leadership concentrated, almost exclusively with the exception of U.P. in 1920-22 and 1930-32, on mobilising the peasants around the anti-imperialist demand of lowering the
crushing burden of land revenue and other taxes such as salt tax. Gandhi's peasant campaigns dealt almost exclusively with issues of opposition to the British administration or, in one case, British planters. The famous Eleven Points of Gandhi in 1930 included two peasant demands: 50 per cent reduction of land tax and abolition of salt tax; and at the height of the world depression, when the Indian peasantry was sinking under the burden of rent, usury, and land revenue, he sought to mobilise the peasants on the question of salt tax because this alone could unite the peasants from ryotwari as well as zamindari areas without simultaneously affecting the zamindars.

It may be suggested that the basic critique here should not be that the national leadership did not promote the anti-feudal revolution with the slogan of land to the tiller. That would have thrown the landlords, big as well as small, into the 'lap' of imperialism. Not only was it not possible for an all-class nationalist front to do so, but in view of the strength of British imperialism before 1939 would perhaps have been bad short-term tactics and therefore politically short sighted, for the aim of any effective anti-imperialist movement had to be the complete isolation of the enemy. The large number of small and medium landlords in the country need not have been handed over to imperialism as allies. The need to unite and mobilise varied interests and diverse classes and social strata into a wide national front and to neutralise those who could not be so united might indicate a policy of compromise between internally antagonistic classes. the underplaying of their mutual contradictions and the balancing of their conflicting interests.

But the balancing of conflicting interests precisely means both sides making sacrifices and providing accommodation. If there was to be a class compromise, on what terms was it to occur? Whose interests would the compromise serve? Was the compromise genuine or did it mask a surrender on the part of some classes and groups? Granted that abolition of landlordism was not to be demanded, how far were the other demands of the peasants against rack rent, evictions, forced labour, illegal exactions, and the debt burden and for security of tenure and fair wages for labour fought for and secured? Even the peasant organizations showed enough political realism to distinguish between their long term and short term demands. If it was not
possible to go as far as the Communists, why not at least go as far as Jawaharlal Nehru? Even in 1930-32, Nehru and other left Congressmen fought not for no-rent but fair and just rent.\textsuperscript{39} Certainly, it should have been possible for any genuine social compromise to accommodate most of the immediate demands of the peasants.

Yet, precisely this was not done. In the name of national unity against imperialism, the peasants' class interests were more or less completely sacrificed. \textit{National integration was promoted at the peasants' unilateral cost.}

For years the National Congress failed to evolve a broad-based agrarian programme. All the three major movements launched by Gandhi, namely, those of 1920, 1930 and 1942, started without any such programme. Gandhi and the national leadership offered to the peasant at the most a few "mildly ameliorative, 'self-help' measures" in the name of the constructive programme. They placed almost their entire emphasis on Swaraj and the vague talk of agrarian change. \textit{The landlords were to be kept in the national movement by guaranteeing protection of their basic class interests, the peasants were to be mobilized through the ideology of nationalism.}

In the 1930s, some of the anti-landlord peasant demands were taken up and in one case, that of U.P. in 1930-32, a genuine compromise between the landlords and tenants was put forward when the U.P. Congress and Gandhi demanded in 1930 that occupancy tenants should be given a relief of 50 per cent and the non-occupancy ryots a relief of 60 per cent in their rent payments. Later in 1931, Gandhi reduced the demand to a relief of 25 to 50 per cent respectively. But despite peasants' militancy these demands were not pressed by Gandhi and the all-India national leadership.\textsuperscript{40} As S. Gopal has noted, Gandhi in the end "roundly condemned pressure being brought on landlords, direct appeals not to pay, the proposal of a general 50 per cent reduction of rent and any refusal to pay less than what was within the individual's capacity."\textsuperscript{41} It is also to be noted that in Bihar, where conservative Gandhians held stricter control over the Congress leadership, the nationalists did not take up any of the major peasant demands against the landlords. Not only kisans were to be restrained, the leadership was also to restrain itself.\textsuperscript{42}
Preparing for the elections of 1937 and trying to appease the left within the Congress ranks as well as to contain its challenge, the dominant Congress leadership took up with varying degrees of clarity some of the immediate demands for reduction of land revenue, rent, irrigation rates, and debt burden, abolition of all feudal dues and levies, moratorium on debt payments, exemption of uneconomic holdings from revenue and rent, cancellation of rent arrears, ban on evictions, fixity of tenure with heritable rights, provision of cheap credit, abolition of *begar* (forced labour) and illegal exactions, living wage for agricultural labourers, imposition of progressive income-tax on agricultural incomes, promotion of cooperative farming, and recognition of peasant unions. But the Congress organized hardly any agitations, struggles, or even educational campaigns around these demands. The record of the Congress ministries from 1937 to 1939 was in this respect quite dismal. Their agrarian legislation was weak and meagre, the only significant relief being given vis-a-vis the money-lenders. Above all their attitude towards the peasant movements was not favourable. While the landlords were consulted and accommodated at every stage, the efforts of the peasant unions to put pressure through mass mobilization were condemned and suppressed both at the party and administrative levels. In anger, Nehru wrote to G.B. Pant, the Chief Minister of U.P.: "...the Congress Ministries are tending to become counter-revolutionary. This is of course not a conscious development, but when a choice has to be made the inclination is in this direction. Apart from this the general attitude is static".

There are some indications that Gandhi’s attitude towards the agrarian question was beginning to change in the last phase of his life. On 9 June 1942, he told Louis Fischer in answer to his question: “What is your programme for the improvement of the lot of the peasantry?” that “the peasants would take the land. We would not have to tell them to take it. They would take it.” And when Fischer asked, “Would the landlords be compensated?”, he replied: “No, that would be fiscally impossible.” In another interview two days later, Fischer asked: “Well, how do you actually see your impending civil disobedience movement?” Gandhi replied: “In the villages, the peasants will stop paying taxes. They will make salt despite
official prohibition... Their next step will be to seize the land." "With violence?" asked Fischer. Gandhi replied: "There may be violence, but then again the landlords may cooperate... They might cooperate by fleeing." Fischer said that the landlords "might organize violent resistance." Gandhi's reply was: "There may be fifteen days of chaos but I think we could soon bring that under control." Did this mean, asked Fischer, that there must be "confiscation without compensation?" Gandhi replied: "Of course. It would be financially impossible for anybody to compensate the landlords." Similarly, he told Mirabein in jail that after independence zamindars' land would be taken by the state either through their voluntary surrender or through legislation and then distributed to the cultivators. By 1946, he even acknowledged that there had always been class struggle in history and that it could be ended if the capitalists voluntarily renounced their social role and became workers. After all, he said, capital is really created by labour and not by the capitalists. But this intellectual and ideological development came too late to affect the national leadership and the Indian bourgeoisie which were by now ready to 'ditch' him with all his 'idiosyncracies'. For Gandhi himself, the understanding was too hazy, too much outside the framework of his overall thought to lead to meaningful political activity. It was more an expression of his integrity and constant search to grasp the reality and, in the end, of the profound personal and political tragedy that was beginning to surround him in his last years. For what could be more tragic than that this great and moral man had created a framework of bourgeois politics and set a pattern of leadership which had no place for his own honest doubts.

To resume our analysis, it is to be noted that in 1945-46 the Congress did accept the objective of abolition of all intermediaries, an objective which was actually accomplished in the post-war years but in an anti-peasant way so that semi-feudalism or landlordism was attacked and gradually and largely abolished but without benefiting the mass of lower peasantry. It is to be noted that neither the pre-independence nor the post-independence National Congress pressed for even simple ameliorative measures for the ordinary tenant-at-will or sharecropper or the agricultural labourer. Moreover in its various
agitations, the demands and interests of these classes and strata were more or less completely by-passed.

Why was all this so? It may be suggested that this extremely weak and compromising policy towards the landlords was not adopted in the main because of deference to the interests and wishes of big landlords (i.e., jagirdars, talukdars, and big zamindars), against whom the post-independence land reforms were to be aimed. This policy was much more the result of deference to the interests and outlook of the following five strata:

(a) The property-owning conservative instincts of the emerging stratum of rich peasants who were increasingly taking to landlordism and moneylending and who tended to dominate both the mass national movement in the countryside and the emerging peasant organizations and movements. In the zamindari areas their main interest lay in the security of tenure and transfer of land ownership to the occupancy tenant and in the ryotwari areas in lower land revenue and in curbing the all-pervading money-lender-merchant who was both their oppressor and their competitor.

(b) The small and ruined landlords whose deteriorating economic condition led them to participate in a big way in the national movement and even in the peasant movements in the 1920s and 1930s and whose established social position in the village and relatively higher standard of education enabled them to acquire leadership positions in these movements. It is interesting that when in 1935-36 the Bihar peasant leader Swami Sahajanand Saraswati did accept the programme of zamindari abolition, he simultaneously declared that only big zamindars were zamindars while petty zamindars were peasants. Earlier, he had resigned in protest against a socialist majority resolution of the Bihar Kisan Sabha executive demanding zamindari abolition on the ground that this would alienate those Kisan Sabha supporters who were small zamindars and large tenants.

(c) The professional and other members of the middle classes and intelligentsia, who lived and worked in small towns around the villages, who often took to petty landlordism and had money-lending connections, and who also formed the backbone of the national movement in these semi-rural areas.

(d) Merchants and money-lenders with their direct links
with the commercial, usurious and rental exploitation of the peasantry.

(e) The class instincts of the bourgeoisie as a propertied group. These instincts are never radical not to speak of being revolutionary.

The fact that the Indian national movement relied so heavily on electoral politics and that too on the narrow electoral franchise base of the top 10 to 15 per cent of the population made it heavily dependent on these classes and strata. In the rural areas, in particular, the rich peasants and small landlords constituted the bulk of voters. On the other hand, the mass of poor peasants and agricultural labourers had no votes.

(ii) A second major weakness of the national movement was that even at the level of purely anti-government demands the peasant movement was not permitted to acquire a broad sweep. The agitations were sought to be limited to the specific demands of very specific groups, and were often designed to secure immediate relief. No wide mobilisation of the peasantry occurred even around Congress-led peasant movements outside U.P., where too the movement was designed to get relief to sections of the peasantry really hard hit by the depression. The Champaran and Kaira movements were rather narrow in scope though quite significant in their political impact. The Guntur no-tax campaign of 1921 was quickly curbed. The Bardoli Satyagraha of 1928 was declared by its leader, Sardar Patel, to be non-political. After 1937, the Congress ministries frowned upon any effort to organize peasant demonstrations even in support of the Congress agrarian programme. It is, moreover, not accidental that Gandhi and the Congress did not organize a single general no-tax campaign.

(iii) Thirdly, the politics and the political and class consciousness of the agricultural labourers and poor peasants were completely dominated by the politics and the political and class consciousness of the rich peasants and landlords.

Thus from the point of view of the rural poor both aspects of national integration were flawed. The national leadership's conception of the nation subordinated their interests and politics to those of the urban bourgeoisie and its conception of the peasantry to those of the landlords and the emerging rural bourgeoisie.
(D) The Indian nationalist pattern of national integration showed major weaknesses even at the level of nationalism or the anti-imperialist struggle.

(i) Because the class demands of the mass of peasants were not taken up and reliance was placed almost entirely on the anti-imperialist appeal, the level of peasant participation in the struggle remained rather low, except in a few areas for a short time and in a few areas of Communist-led peasant movements. The propertied peasants had too much to lose to be willing or able to sustain a movement for long in the face of severe governmental repression. The result was that the largely urban based nationalist movement could not be sustained beyond a short period of one to two years.

Consequently, without large scale, effective mass peasant participation, the nationalist movement could at no stage go beyond the strategy of Pressure-Compromise-Pressure or P-C-P\textsuperscript{56} and often found it difficult to implement even this strategy by bringing enough pressure to bear upon the Government.

(ii) In several areas, the peasant-landlord and the peasant-merchant-money-lender contradictions coincided with religious or caste divisions. This enabled the communal and casteist forces to augment their appeal with class and economic appeal, just as the class appeal tended to take on religious or casteist colouring. Thus, in the Punjab, the landlords and rich peasants and the colonial authorities first used for years the casteist politics around the concept of agriculturist castes and later, after 1937, turned to Muslim communalism. The merchant-money-lenders too tried to protect their interest by appealing to Hindu communalism. In Bengal, the Muslim peasantry struggled hard to generate a secular peasant movement against primarily Hindu landlords and money-lenders, but succumbed in the end to Muslim communalism when faced with the pro-landlord or very weak anti-landlord nationalism of the Bengal Congress and the Hindu tinge of much of the national leadership. In Kerala, the militant tenant movement of 1920-21 had ended up with elements of communal passion. In Maharashtra, Andhra, and Tamilnadu the cultivators and landlords had ranged on the opposite scales of the caste hierarchy.

In all such situations, the nationalist pattern of peasant and
national integration could not succeed without incorporating some elements of class struggle. The refusal of the dominant national leadership to do so resulted in the failure of national integration in the Punjab and Bengal where the communal forces prevailed ultimately. The reverse was the case in Kerala, Andhra, North-Western Frontier Province and to a certain extent in U.P. where nationalism based on agrarian radicalism overcame by and large communal and caste identities. The failure in the Punjab and Bengal was a major factor in the eventual partition of the country.

In all these cases, it becomes clear that national integration could have come only through class consciousness and that, contrary to the dominant nationalist view, not only did the peasant ‘class’ consciousness not divide Indian society in the face of imperialism, it was the only effective means of opposing disintegrative communal and caste ideologies and movements which objectively aided imperialism. National unity and integration had to be based on a conscious political programme of uniting different classes and not of ignoring class differences or of subordinating the interests of the rural poor to the interests of the rural rich. In India, a programme of amorphous, non-class integration failed to check the growth of social integration based on varieties of modern false consciousness using elements of traditional culture, values, and institutions.

(E) It is of course to be noted that the peasantry and the peasant movement also failed to throw up better principles of integration for itself and for the nation. The peasantry did not produce its own ideologues or organic intellectuals or its own thought or even its own organisers. It is interesting that a peasant party did not emerge in any part of the country. The politics of the politically aroused peasants tended to be guided by the left nationalists who used the glamour surrounding the notion of peasantry to integrate the radical urban youth and small town intelligentsia into the national movement and around a vague pro-peasant programme that did not go beyond ameliorative measures or the bounds of a purely anti-imperialist programme.

(F) The Communist and other left groups showed a better awareness of the anti-feudal demands of the peasantry but they too on the whole failed in the two directions in which the nationalist leadership had failed.
To a certain extent the left did not place sufficient emphasis on political work among the peasants. They failed to raise anti-feudal consciousness and create and promote the awareness of their own class position among the peasants. Though they showed a certain awareness of the emerging class differentiation and divisions within the peasantry, they failed to make a serious study of the phenomenon or to create its awareness among the peasants, especially among the dwarf holders and agricultural labourers. Though they succeeded in creating a certain peasant 'class' cohesion against the landlords wherever the peasant movement was under their guidance, they failed to guard the peasant movement against the rich peasant or even small landlord domination. As Swami Sahajanand Saraswati recognized in 1944 in his most radical phase, it was "really the middle and big cultivators (who were) ... for the most part with the Kisan Sabha" and "they are using the Kisan Sabha for their benefit and gain...." The Swami now pleaded for basing the Kisan Sabha exclusively on the agricultural labourers and poor peasants.\(^5\)

Moreover, with some exceptions, as in Bengal during the Tebhaga agitation, even when the class position of the tenants-at-will, sharecroppers and agricultural labourers was recognized in theory and in the programmes, in practice few agitations and little struggle was organized around their demands and interests. Quite often just as the Congress leadership sacrificed the interests of the peasants to those of the landlords in the name of national unity, the left tended to sacrifice the interests of the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians to those of the rural bourgeoisie in the name of peasant unity.

A very important failure of the left lay in the fact that, while emphasizing the independent class mobilization of the peasants as peasants outside the framework of the national movement, it failed to establish a strong link between the anti-feudal and 'economic' consciousness of the peasants and anti-imperialism. Its tendency to place much greater emphasis on purely economic demands resulted in the lesser political role of the peasantry as well as in the lower level development of the peasant movement in extent and depth. The historical task was to simultaneously take up the peasants' class demands and to make them more militant anti-imperialists. Merely to make the criticism, which
is made by many contemporary and later left-wing writers; that the national movement subordinated peasant demands to nationalism is inadequate and does not explain why the left, which followed the advice of being more thoroughly and militantly anti-feudal, made little headway among the peasants, except in Kerala and to a certain extent in Andhra where it combined both. Any effort to keep the peasant movement away from the anti-imperialist stream weakened the peasant movement itself. For example, in U.P. in 1921, the liberal-dominated U.P. Kisan Sabha’s effort to keep peasant agitation separate from the nationalist Non-cooperation Movement failed and resulted in its own disintegration even though its demands were more militant than the pro-Congress Kisan Sabha’s. Similarly, when the Bihar Kisan Sabha and its popular leader Sahajanand Saraswati took a stand opposed to the national movement in 1942, their influence declined sharply among the Bihar peasants. The Communists also went into virtual wilderness during 1930-34 because of the failure to establish a correct relationship with the contemporary national movement. The fact was that while the nationalist leadership failed to mobilise the peasantry because of their neglect of peasants’ class demands, the left too failed because of the failure to establish a correct linkage with the peasantry’s anti-imperialist feelings. Here, obviously, the correct policy would have been to ‘walk on two legs’.

IV

Peasantry and National Integration after 1947

The post-1947 period marked a major change in so far as the country won political independence and state power was no longer exercised by alien rulers who were interested in accentuating the forces of national disintegration. But the process of peasantry’s integration into the nation had not been completed and therefore continued. The forces of national disintegration have made repeated appearance sometimes involving sections of the peasantry. Objectively too agriculture has been
becoming more and more national. The dominant political leadership has been making efforts to mobilise the peasantry for national capitalist development which now performs the unifying role played earlier by anti-imperialism. The all-India parties, the electoral process, spread of education, the modern mass media, and to a lesser extent the all-India peasant organizations and the national army have been major instruments of national integration.

(A) The task of national integration still had a few positive and unfinished aspects and has been, therefore, supported by most of the political parties and politically conscious Indians:

(i) India had to struggle constantly for economic independence and against the constant threat of neo-colonialism: National unity is a basic aspect of the defence and growth of political and economic independence.

(ii) National and economic reconstruction could occur only on a national plane. The notion of the development of Indian society still exercised, and exercises, a great pull over the minds of the people.

(iii) In view of the political, economic, administrative, and constitutional unification of India, political power could be used, as well as captured, in the end only on a national plane.

(iv) More specifically, the interests of the rural masses in land reforms, higher wages, agricultural prices vis-a-vis industrial prices, allocation of state funds, and even social and cultural development—law of inheritance, social position of women, education, radio, films, etc.—could be best and successfully fought for only on a national scale.

(v) Socially divisive forces such as caste, communalism and linguism which affected national integration also impinged upon and disrupted the economic and political struggles, that is, the class struggles, of the different sections of the rural masses. These forces have retained a strong hold over the Indian people, including the rural masses. They still had to be overcome. For example, caste was and is still used by the dominant rural strata, earlier headed by the landlords and now mostly by the rich peasants, to keep the lower classes down and to unite around themselves the middle and small peasants of the same caste. These divisive forces have remained quite strong partially because of the fact that little was done before 1947 or after to
spread modern ideas among the peasantry and to actively uproot the old obscurantist ideas and culture.

(B) While the goal of national unity and national development was certainly positive in the historical situation, it could not be achieved in the old way. Gradually, after 1947, the negative aspects of the traditional pattern of peasantry’s integration into the nation have been acquiring greater weight. The further unification of the nation could be carried out not under the slogans of a nation and a peasantry without classes, for there no longer existed a common alien enemy, but only by identifying the new national but internal enemy or enemies within both the nation and the village. National integration had now to proceed through democracy, class struggle, far-reaching socio-economic transformation, and socialism.

(i) It is now widely recognized that benefits of agricultural development since 1951 have in the main gone to the rich and middle peasants. Apart from the class configuration, a major factor in this has been the notion of the peasantry forming a homogenous class, “an integrated rural society”, and a single village or rural community. Thus the Indian planning process was initiated under the slogan of “community development” for the “rural sector”. Rural cooperatives and the Panchayati Raj have also been built on the same assumption of “class fusion.” Moreover, the concept of village community was consciously put forward and advanced as an alternative to the notions of class cleavage and class struggle in the countryside. The Community Development Programme, Panchayati Raj, and rural cooperatives were to become instruments of aggrandizement in the hands of the rich peasant and landlord-turned-farmer who emerged politically extremely powerful partly as a result of the adult franchise.

(ii) Above all the ideology of a single peasantry or kisans has prevented the fuller emergence of class struggle in the countryside.

This ideology increasingly became after 1947—as even before 1947—an instrument of the rich peasant-small landlord domination over the by now distinctly emerging social strata or even classes of the small, impoverished peasants—the dwarf holders—and the landless agricultural labourers. The notion of the peasantry has hidden the fact, brought out in section II above,
that the emerging and even dominating tendency in the Indian countryside is the division of the peasantry into the rural bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, semi-proletarians, and proletarians. Of course, often and simultaneously the rural upper strata use the divisive ideologies of caste and communalism for the same purpose.

An important point of difference with the pre-independence period needs to be noted in this respect. During that period, the entire peasantry was objectively anti-imperialist, even though different peasant strata had different interests. But after 1947 the different agrarian classes and strata have hardly anything in common.

The powerful position of the rich peasant in the countryside, in the state legislatures and governments and even at the Centre, aided by the notion of peasantry, explains both the slow pace of agrarian reform and the failure of the left-wing parties to organize the agricultural labourers and dwarf holders except in Kerala and a few other small pockets.

This ideology of their being a peasantry—even if formally divided into rich, middle, and poor peasantry—formed the basis of much of left-wing peasant activity, including that of the CPI, CPM, and CP(ML) groups. This was the basis of their view, held in common, whatever their other differences, that the chief political task in rural India (or even in India as a whole) was the making and completion of the anti-feudal revolution. Consequently, in an effort to organize peasants on an all-class basis (barring the semi-mythical feudal lord) the organization of the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians was neglected if not completely ignored.

One political and social consequence was the continuing hold of conservative political forces on the agricultural labourers.

In contrast to the left, the peasant radicals have instinctively responded to the changes in rural class structure and advanced the slogan of equality in place of class struggle, change of social system, etc. The ruling political leadership has also increasingly adopted this objective of equality thus confining agrarian radicalism within the ambit of peasant outlook. This slogan of course makes a powerful appeal to the small and middle peasant, the low caste agricultural labourer, and even the rich peasant who sees it in the context of the marked difference between his
style of life and that of the urban bourgeoisie or even middle classes.

(iii) The notion of the peasantry as a class has also led the left to ignore the historically specific problems of the lower caste rural poor, whose caste has been and is being used to keep them down. Today this aspect cannot be seen as a ‘feudal’ survival. This is a specific historical form through which the rich peasants and small landlords keep down the agricultural workers and the dwarf-holding sharecroppers and tenants-at-will. This neglect has enabled the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeois elements belonging to these lower castes to mobilise the rural poor behind their own politics and interests. Of course, as pointed out earlier, the higher castes also use caste to keep the small and middle peasants behind them. Struggle against the caste system is needed to break up both these artificial unities.

(iv) The notions of the peasantry as part of a single nation and as a single class have also prevented the unity of the exploited rural poor with the exploited of the urban areas and the radical intelligentsia. Consequently, as before 1947, certain parties such as the Bhartiya Lok Dal (or BLD) in its various incarnations and the Akalis have been trying to raise the false urban-rural dichotomy.

NOTES

2George Blyn, pp. 102, 119, 122.
3Manilal B. Nanavati, p. 374.
4Bhowani Sen, p. 103.
6E. Stokes, p. 114. Also see pp. 129-32.
7Asok Sen, Table III.
8Bipan Chandra, 1972, pp. 96-99.
10Computed from Agricultural Labour Enquiry, Rural Man-Power and Occupational Structure, p. 9.
14Ibid.
15Agricultural Labour Enquiry, Vol. I, Appendix VII, Table I.
18Ibid., Table II.
17G. Kotovsky, p. 12.
15Ibid., p. 179.
20M. G. Ranade, Chapters X, XI, XII. Also see Bipan Chandra, 1966, pp. 486f.
51M. G. Ranade, p. 287.
22See Tarlok Singh, pp. 300ff; Bhowani Sen, Chapter VIII.
23See Talib and Majid, B.N. Ganguli, V.S. Vyas, and Sheila Bhalla.
54Utsa Patnaik, 1975, Table I.
26Derived from the *All India Debt and Investment Survey, 1971-72*, Vol. I, Table 2, p. 17.
25Derived from Table I in the text.
27See, for example, the following tables:

1. *Landholdings in Italy in 1945*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of holdings in acres</th>
<th>Percentage of total units</th>
<th>Percentage of total acreage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 5</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 25</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 125</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125 to 250</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250 to 1,250</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 1,250</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. *Landholdings in France in 1908*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of holdings in hectares</th>
<th>No. of holdings</th>
<th>Percentage of total holdings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small 1 to 10</td>
<td>2,523,713</td>
<td>73.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium 10 to 40</td>
<td>745,862</td>
<td>21.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large 40 to 100</td>
<td>118,497</td>
<td>3.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very large over 100</td>
<td>29,541</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. *Landholdings in England in 1873*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of holdings in acres</th>
<th>Percentage of total units</th>
<th>Percentage of total acreage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small proprietors 1 to 100</td>
<td>85.07</td>
<td>12.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesser Yeomen 101 to 300</td>
<td>9.55</td>
<td>13.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Yeomen 301 to 1,000</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>15.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squires 1,001 to 3,000</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>13.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great landowners 3,001 and above</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>27.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>18.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. *Landholdings in Germany in 1907*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of holdings in hectares</th>
<th>Percentage of total acreage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>East of Elbe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upto 12.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.5 to 50</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 to 250</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 250</td>
<td>40.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on S.B. Clough, pp. 326, 322, 319, 323, respectively.

The resolution went on to add: "While fully recognising the right of the kisans to organize Kisan Sabhas, the Congress cannot associate itself with any activities which are incompatible with the basic principles of the Congress and will not countenance any of the activities of those Congressmen who as members of the Kisan Sabhas help in creating an atmosphere hostile to Congress principles and policy. The Congress, therefore, calls upon Provincial Congress Committees to bear the above in mind and in pursuance of it take suitable action wherever called for." *Indian National Congress 1938-39*, pp. 16-17.

For this criticism by a radical sociologist, see D.N. Dhanagre, 'The Politics of Survival', p. 49.

M.H. Siddiqi, pp. 216-17.

K.N. Panikkar, p. 627.


The resolution said: "Complaints having been brought to the notice of the Working Committee that ryots are not paying rents of the zamindars, the Working Committee advises Congress workers and organizations to inform the ryots that such withholding of rents is contrary to the resolutions of the Congress and that it is injurious to the best interests of the country. The Working Committee assures the zamindars that the Congress movement is in no way intended to attack their legal rights and that even where the ryots have grievances the Committee's desire is that redress should be sought by mutual consultations and by the usual recourse to arbitrations." *The Indian National Congress 1920-23*, p. 178.

Resolutions passed in its meetings on 29 December 1931 to 1 January 1932, and 17 and 18 June 1934. *The Indian National Congress 1930-34*, pp. 138 and 184-85.

R. Crane, p. 59; and S. Gopal, p. 164.

P. Sitaramayya, pp. 619-20.

See R. Crane, pp. 86-88; and W. Hauser, pp. 95-96, 107.


41See S. Gopal, p. 157.
42Ibid., p. 159.
44S. Gopal, p. 229; H.D. Malaviya, pp. 66-9; R. Crane, pp. 102-50; W. Hauser, p. 127.
45R. Crane, pp. 102-08, 149; W. Hauser, pp. 110-11.
47L. Fischer, pp. 42-43.
48Ibid., pp. 72-73.
49Harijan, 29 December 1951, quoted in H.D. Malaviya, pp. 72-73.
50H.D. Malaviya, p 76. Gandhi stipulated two basic conditions for the success of the workers. “Labour had to be made conscious of its strength,” and “it had to have in one hand truth and in the other non-violence.” Quoted in ibid.
51Ibid., p. 75.
52W. Hauser, pp. 100-01.
53Ibid., pp. 99-100.
54Mahadev Desai, pp. 42, 102-03; P. Sitaramayya, p. 549.
55See f.n 45 above. See, in particular, R. Crane, pp. 104-07.
56See Biplan Chandra, 1979.
58M. H. Siddiqi, pp. xiii, 127, 186-87.
59W. Hauser, pp. 35, 151, 156.
60Tarlok Singh, pp. 310 and 306. Also see official sources referred to in P.C. Joshi, 1960.
61Tarlok Singh, p. 309.
62Ibid., pp. 308-09.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Bibliography for Sections I & II
(Agrarian Structure)

   (b) Rural Man-Power and Occupational Structure, New Delhi, 1969.
   (b) ‘Tenancy Reform in India’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Special Number, August 1975, nos. 33-35.
   (b) *Recent Trends in Indian Nationalism*, Bombay.
   (c) *Rural Sociology in India*, Bombay, 1969.
   (b) ‘Agrarian Social Structure and Social Change’,
(c) Land Reforms in India, Delhi, 1975.
24. Nanavati and Anjaria, The Indian Rural Problem, Bombay.

II. Bibliography for Sections III & IV
(PEASANTRY AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION)


(b) ‘British and Indian Ideas on Indian Economic Development, 1858-1905’, in this volume. Also in *Studies in Modern Indian History*, Number one, edited by B R. Nanda and V.C. Joshi, New Delhi, 1972.  


(b) *Agrarian Movements and Gandhian Politics*, Institute of Social Studies, Agra University, Agra, 1975.


44. *Indian National Congress: Resolutions on Economic Policy*,

45. Indian National Congress: Resolutions passed by the Congress, the All India Congress Committee and the Working Committee during 1920-23, 1930-34, 1934-36, 1936-38, 1938-39, Allahabad.


47. H.D. Malaviya, Land Reforms in India, New Delhi, 1954.


   (b) Selected Works, edited by S. Gopal.


52. T. Ramakrishna, ‘Kisan Movement in India’, Nehru Museum and Library, New Delhi, Mimeograph.

53. M.G. Ranade, Essays in Indian Economics, Bombay, 1898.


It is always difficult to write the biography of a popular hero. The tendency to glorify or to debunk suggests itself too easily. And to write objectively about a great patriot like Lokamanya Tilak is indeed an uphill task. The book* under review by two young lecturers in English from Maharashtra is an admirable, though only partially successful, attempt to deal objectively yet enthusiastically with the life of one who can legitimately be called the Father of Indian Nationalism.

In this, perhaps the most adequate biography of Tilak to date, the authors have succeeded in bringing out clearly and vividly Tilak’s greatest and abiding contribution to Indian national movement that only political action by the masses will succeed in making the English loosen their grip over India. They point out that “he believed that the pivotal point of our political struggle was the organized strength of the people expressing itself in fight against every injustice suffered at the hands of bureaucracy in India.” Tilak from the outset of his political career as a leader of men in the early 1890s placed the goal of activating the masses before himself. He wanted to bring the mass of people into the vortex of Indian politics through widespread agitation on popular issues of the day. Day in and day out through editorials in the Kesari and the Mahratta he

---

Published in Enquiry, No. 2, 1959.

advocated taking the Congress message to the people; and after the experience of the agitation against the Partition of Bengal, he wrote: "People must be trained for struggle which will have to be waged to win freedom, and the only way to do it is to make them participate in the struggle."

Moreover, Tilak had limitless faith in the people and their political action. While guiding them in political thinking and action, he never sat in judgment over them. In this respect, unlike the mystical nationalism of Aurobindo Ghosh, his was a rational, democratic nationalism based on his love for and faith in the strength of the Indian people; and, that is why, his nationalism did not despair of temporary setbacks every one of which was seen by him as providing political education to the people.

Herein precisely lay the difference between Tilak and the Moderates. The Moderates were opposed precisely to Tilak’s approach to the masses. Tilak and the Moderates were not basically divided over questions of methods and goals of political action. As Tilak himself pointed out again and again, their goals were the same; and Tilak was also a believer, in general, in constitutional methods. In sacrifice and courage, G.K. Gokhale was no whit a lesser man than Tilak. But the former had no faith in the people; he was afraid that any mass movement would incur the wrath of the British Government which would result in the total destruction of the existing political movement. Tilak, on the contrary, had infinite faith in the power of the masses in action. He was sure that any unreasonable suppression of a mass movement would only result in further arousing the Indian people and would lead to a heightened political struggle. So the Moderates agitated to bring pressure on the alien government, Tilak to educate the people and to bring them into motion; or, as the authors point out, "Tilak looked to the masses and the majority, while the moderates were apprehensive of the forces that the awakening of the masses might unleash." This is why the usual discussion in which Pradhan and Bhagwat also indulge in about the ethics of Tilak’s actions or a comparison between Tilak’s and Mahatma Gandhi’s ethics is really irrelevant if not also misleading. To Tilak means were not ethical or unethical in themselves. The real question was whether they were suitable for the ethical
goal in view, i.e., arousing the masses. All means "which were likely to smother the new forces and to extinguish the new spark" were bad in his eyes.

At the same time, Tilak's conception of the masses was inadequate even though it was the most advanced of the times. This is a point which Pradhan and Bhagwat have failed to bring out. Tilak believed in a generalized concept of the masses. For him the people were an undifferentiated mass. And because the only section of the Indian people who were drawn into politics at the time were the petty bourgeois strata of the towns, the upper strata of the peasantry and a section of the petty landlords, to Tilak they constituted the people. Moreover, being very conscious of the need for national unity and unable to see how demands of the oppressed classes could be framed in a manner so as not to divide the Indian people, Tilak readily fell into the error of basing his entire popular appeal on a purely national and cultural basis. He, of course, took up very vigorously most of the economic demands of the entire Indian people against British Imperialism. But he failed to see that the overwhelming majority of the Indian people, the peasantry, felt the burden of the foreign yoke primarily through the agency of the landlords and the money-lenders. Thus, in the initial years, when nationalism as a feeling was underdeveloped and he was unable to see the economic issues clearly, Tilak relied upon religious and cultural feelings to organize a mass national consciousness through his opposition to the Age of Consent Bill and the Ganpati and the Shivaji Festivals.

The authors deal at length with this phase of Tilak's activities as well as with his attitude to the general question of social reforms. The usual explanation offered to justify or explain away Tilak's reactionary stand on the social issues of the day is that he did not want to split the rising political movement and alienate the socially orthodox sections of society. The authors accept that there is some truth in this. They point out that Tilak himself wrote in the Kesari of the 15th September, 1885, that efforts to bring about immediate social reforms were likely to create a rift in society and would consequently weaken the political struggle, and that "there had been such a degeneration owing to our slavery that the social condition of the people could not improve until their political condition was bettered and,
therefore, an exhortation to concentrate on social reform to the exclusion of political reform was suicidal." Moreover, Pradhan and Bhagwat point out, Tilak believed in introducing social reforms through education of the people and not through legislation by an alien government. Any attempt to force reforms upon the masses would only lead to a rupture between the leaders and the masses, he believed. Thus, for example, Tilak wrote in the Kesari of 31st May, 1887: "The Kesari has always blamed and criticised the evil tendencies and bad customs in our society. The Kesari was always of the opinion that these would have to be removed gradually but there is a difference in this point of view and that of Mr. Modak. To him, the only remedy is legislation, to us, it is the education of public opinion." And again in a public meeting on 1st November, 1890, he said: "There has been much talk about social reforms. But we have to bear in mind that we have to reform the masses and if we dissociate ourselves from them, reforms would become impossible."

All this is true and yet this is not a sufficient explanation of Tilak's stand on social questions. This became evident in the case of Tilak's opposition to the Age of Consent Bill when in the course of his speeches and articles he offered a straight, even virulent, defence of the existing practices relating to child marriage among the Hindus. In keeping with his previous position he could have refused to support the bill or opposed it on the ground that it was an attempt of an alien agency to interfere with India's social customs. Instead, he employed all his accurate knowledge of the Hindu scriptures to justify the existing practices as religiously correct and necessary. Thus, in practice, Tilak often upheld only the orthodox point of view. The learned biographers of Tilak take up a very sound position in this respect. They point out that though Tilak intended to strengthen political radicalism, i.e., nationalism, by trying to dissociate himself from social reformers, in practice "he allied himself with the forces of reaction." That this need not have been so is borne out by the fact that, as the authors point out, Agarkar, a friend and co-worker of Tilak in the early years, was both a political radical and a social revolutionary.

Very interesting in this respect are those few pages of the book where Tilak and Agarkar are compared and contrasted. It is quite a revelation to us that Tilak was in his youthful days
an agnostic while Agarkar was an atheist. This perhaps explains Agarkar’s thorough-going philosophical radicalism and Tilak’s later return to orthodoxy. What has been written of Agarkar in the volume under review has whetted our appetite good and proper and we can only wish that a biography of this Maratha writer, teacher, journalist, leader and philosopher, who deserves to be better known outside Maharashtra, will soon appear in English.

At the same time, Pradhan and Bhagwat clearly bring out the fact that Tilak was not a revivalist or a communalist. It is true that he used revivalism in the 1890s “as a potent and powerful force to awaken the different sections of the people”, and to impart to them confidence in themselves. He wrote in 1902: “We have lost our glory, our independence, everything. Religion is the only treasure that we have; if we forsake it, we shall be like the foolish cock in Aesop’s fables that threw away a jewel. In the world of today anything that we have has to be displayed and shown to the best advantage.” But what was supposed to be a servant in the hands of Tilak soon became a master in the hands of less talented people. In 1895, Tilak had written: “If we stick to our religious or social prejudices and do not allow knowledge conducive to welfare enter our minds, we shall never rise. If we leave aside our intransigence, tread warily to grasp knowledge wherever possible, we shall learn to act in concert...” In reality, better methods than social and religious revivalism to arouse the Indian people were available, and it should have been foreseen that revivalism had an obvious tendency to become the master. It is one of the tragedies of our recent history that in the formative years of Indian nationalism—1885 to 1919—political nationalism was accompanied by social reaction and social reform by political conservatism. How far this was due to the fact that the Indian petty-bourgeoisie of the time, which was the politically radical element of society, had its origin primarily in the semi-feudal classes, i.e., the small landlord and the money-lender, only a detailed socio-economic survey of the period can reveal.

In one other respect, the authors have departed with advantage from the practice of the previous biographers of Tilak, i.e., concerning Tilak’s two convictions and imprisonments for sedition. In this book we don’t find an attempt to “exonerate”
Tilak of all such guilt. While criticising Justice Strachey’s extra-legal stretching of the existing law of sedition in 1897, it is admitted, rather proclaimed, that while not guilty of any specific act of sedition, Tilak was certainly guilty of spreading disaffection against British rule. He at no stage believed in the ‘Provisi-
dential Mission’ of the English in India. Convinced from the very beginning of his political career that the British ruled India for selfish and exploitative reasons, he set out towards the goal of arousing the Indian people to the real purpose and nature of British rule in India. He always kept before him the fact that the main contradiction in India was between the foreign rulers and the Indian people. Even when Tilak had not yet formed or expressed the idea of expelling the British from India, his activities led basically in that direction. Consequently the prosecutions against Tilak are not to be condemned because they were unjust to Tilak but because they were a visible manifestation of the real, suppressive nature of the British rule in India.

The major weakness of the book, and one that detracts a great deal from its otherwise real worth, is its basically unhis-torical treatment of Tilak’s life. The historical narrative is there, of course; but there is no linking of this with the historical setting. That Tilak acted out his role on the Indian stage at a time when a rapid transformation was taking place in the economic and class structure of India, in the consciousness of the Indian people and in the nature and character of British imperialism in India is more or less ignored by the two authors. The result is that a great deal of their criticism is ‘ad hoc’, logical and ‘ethical’ and not historical. More often than not Tilak’s actions are judged—praised and criticised—from the ‘moral’ viewpoint. They write, for example, that “Tilak always men-
tioned that India’s political struggle had a moral basis and he was very proud of the Indian tradition wherein ethics was the cornerstone of individual as well as social life.” What is not realized is that this struggle was moral because it was so historically and not because of any abstract moral principles or traditions. At the very moment when Indians as a whole were waging a highly moral struggle against their British rulers, they were in their social life continuing highly immoral practices; for example, untouchability. This unhistorical approach of the authors leads them to adopt a slightly apologetic tone towards the ‘ethics’ of
Tilak's political philosophy and actions, especially when contrasted with the later philosophy and actions of Gandhiji. In reality, Tilak was one of the most consistent revolutionary democrats that India has produced in the course of its struggle for independence. When examined historically, his life and actions can stand any scrutiny, Gandhian or otherwise.
Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy

Dr. Moore's* is an attempt to understand through comparative history the totality of historical conditions, and in particular the roles played by the landed upper class and the peasantry, which have led to the emergence of political democracy, fascism, and communism. Even though his study deals in detail only with the political developments in England, France, the USA, Japan, China, and India, in fact the entire world historical experience, including that of Germany, Russia, and Italy, is made to bear witness. The effort is to synthesise recent historical research around the theme of democracy and dictatorship. This work is thus in the best intellectual tradition of Marx, Weber, Tawney, Dobb, or C. Wright Mills. Unfortunately the resemblance ends at the nature of the attempt for the end product is a mixed bag. Numerous valuable and sometimes brilliant insights are strewn throughout the book, and many meaningful questions are asked.

On the other hand, the broad generalizations are often either commonplace, at least to any sophisticated student of modern history, or patently inadequate in their explanatory or predictive power. To use American boxing terminology, Dr. Moore

---

is nimble at sparring but rather weak in the clinches. Moreover, his strong and weak points are often regionally divided. While his treatment of political evolution in England, France, the USA, and to some extent Japan is rigorous and rewarding one feels rather let down by the chapters and comments on India and China. Part of the explanation perhaps lies in the quality of the extant historical research on these two countries. In any case the task of the reviewer becomes difficult. To point to the numerous insights, as also the equally numerous factual and analytical errors regarding India and China, would take a great deal of space, as would any demonstration of the inadequacies of his major hypotheses when seen in concrete historical situations.

The basic hypothesis of Dr. Moore is somewhat as follows: So far as the agrarian aspects of democracy are concerned its prospects are powerfully affected by the position taken up by the landed upper classes towards capitalist social evolution (also described as modernization) and by what happens to the peasantry as a consequence. The traditional landed upper classes are compelled to react in the process to the monarchy, commercialization of agriculture, the peasantry, and the urban bourgeoisie. In England they came into conflict with the monarchy, on their own took to commercial agriculture and thus gradually bourgeoisified themselves, destroyed the peasantry and in its place created capitalist farmers and agricultural labourers, and then, on the one hand, entered into accommodation with the urban bourgeoisie, and, on the other, competed with it during the 19th century for the favours of the working class.

In France, the landed upper classes did not come into conflict with the monarchy and took to commercial agriculture by a different path—by maintaining the peasantry on land though in a repressed position and by compelling it to part with a part of its produce which they then took to the market. This led the peasantry to support the Revolution of 1789 and to enter into an alliance with the bourgeoisie against the Crown and the landed aristocracy whose elimination in the end laid the social basis for democracy. The process, however, also led to the perpetuation of the peasantry, hence the ups and downs of democracy in France ever since.
In the United States, there was historically no peasantry and the Civil War broke the back of the landed upper class based on slavery, i.e., repressive political control of the agrarian sector. In all these three countries, the way to modernization was opened through a violent revolution. Moreover, the peasantry was either expropriated as a social formation by the exercise of 'massive violence... by the upper classes' or was harnessed to bourgeois interests.

In Japan, as also Germany, the landed upper classes did not struggle against the absolutist monarchy and responded to the need to produce for the market, i.e., commercial agriculture, by taking recourse to repressive social and political control over the peasant who was permitted to retain his basic traditional identity. The result was the rise and perpetuation of an agrarian structure based on landlords and tenants. At the same time, the landed upper classes allied with a bourgeoisie which had undergone substantial development but had not possessed the strength to wage a struggle against them. The two together worked for a reactionary modernization from above without making a violent political break with the past. Nor was the weight of the peasantry in the population lessened as the industrial effort remained weak. The result was Bismarkian Germany and Meiji Japan.

In both these countries, a prime condition of authoritarianism was created: the interests of the urban and rural upper strata converged against the workers and peasants and the two joined hands politically to maintain order and stability. Later, when the Great Depression threatened order and stability, both these countries took recourse to fascism based on a reactionary appeal to the landlords and rich peasants and the use of the large segments of the landed upper class elements entrenched in the political system, the armed forces, and the bureaucracy.

A successful imperialist and aggressive foreign policy provided a crucial mobilising role so far as the peasantry and the urban lower middle classes were concerned. Thus, Dr. Moore points out, the social price, which was not paid because a violent bourgeois revolution was avoided, was paid many times over by the people of Germany and Japan as also of the rest of the world in later years. One may also infer that a positive feature
in the world today so far as the avoidance of fascism is concerned is the far lesser possibilities of appealing to the glory of success in wars against other countries. One instance is the failure of extreme reaction to grow in the United States as a result of the military failure in Vietnam. Another is the fall of Ayub regime as a delayed reaction to the stalemate of the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965. A similar non-success on India's part has played some role in cautioning its fascistic political forces.

Thus, Dr. Moore has brought out quite forcefully the role of the nature of the solution of the agrarian problem in the political road that the capitalist societies followed. Very clearly, no repressive rent-extracting landlord class could permit full working out of political democracy if it would mean, as it inevitably would, that the numerically superior tenants would use adult franchise, the right of association, etc., to attack the very basis of landlordism-rent and control over land. Similarly, he rightly points out that so long as agriculture is not fully penetrated by capitalism leading to the abolition of repressive landlordism, the alliance between the bourgeoisie and the landlords remains a potential source of authoritarianism.

Another crucial aspect is whether landlords dominate the village in the non-economic fields or that such dominance has been successfully undermined by the peasantry. At the same time, one cannot leave the issue at that as Dr. Moore does. In the conditions of mid-20th century India, with the limited capacity of the urban sector to absorb rural labour, the rural capitalist strata are not likely to behave as supporters of political democracy as British capitalist farmers did. They are more likely to feel as threatened by the access of agricultural labourers and the poor peasants to organization or to the ballot box as the repressive landlords. In other words, it is doubtful that the spread of capitalism to agriculture will strengthen political democracy in India today, unless one postulates a long-term political alliance between urban capitalists and the rural poor.

Unfortunately, Dr. Moore has brought out the role of the agrarian structure in fascism by underplaying, to the extent of distorting the picture, the role of the changes in the structure of capitalism during the last two hundred years. Fascism in Germany and Japan was not so much a response of the remnants of feudalism, though it certainly gained a certain mass support
and bureaucratic military backing from the landed interests which had not been cleared out of the way by an agrarian revolution or fuller development of capitalism in agriculture, as the political tool of a dying monopoly capitalism. Dr. Moore of course notes that fascism appears only when capitalism fails to work well or to solve its internal strains, that the German and Japanese monopoly capitalists were the main beneficiaries of fascism, and that the radical right component of the fascist movements which had appealed to the backward-looking agrarian interests was soon snuffed out by the victorious fascist regimes.

In other contexts, he repeatedly points out that a movement is to be characterized by looking not at its leaders or participants but at its beneficiaries. To quote him: “In a word, it is not only who fights but what the fight is about that matters”. It is on this basis that he characterizes the revolutions in England, France, and the United States as bourgeois revolutions. But he fails to make this his starting point in the analysis of fascism. This underplaying of the role of monopoly capitalism is surprising when we keep in view that his analysis clearly points to one major generalization, namely, political democracy comes into being and exists only when capitalism can successfully mobilise the lower orders behind itself.

The third strand to be taken up by Dr. Moore is that of peasant revolutions as exemplified by China (and Russia). When the landed upper classes and agrarian bureaucracies fail to respond positively to commercialization in agriculture and industry and at the same time fail to destroy the prevailing social organization among the huge peasant masses, when they intensify the exploitation of the entire peasantry and thus succeed in uniting all its sections, when the indigenous bourgeoisie is too weak to introduce modernization either by making a revolution or through reactionary means from the top, when the landed upper classes come to completely dominate the bourgeoisie, the country is not modernized and the peasantry revolts.

While in France the peasant revolt is harnessed to the bourgeoisie which then attacks the peasantry, in China (and Russia) it is the Communist Party that reaps the harvest and then attacks the peasantry. Here Dr. Moore makes, among others, two serious errors. Firstly, the role of the working class is
virtually reduced to zero (this he does in the case of fascism also). Now to see the communist revolution in China (and even more in Russia) as primarily a peasant revolution is more than an exaggeration. It points to a serious lacuna in historical understanding.

In the earlier part of his book, Dr. Moore has himself fully described the important role that the peasantry and the urban sans-culottes played in the physical struggles and political battles of the French Revolution without even indirectly suggesting that it thereby became primarily a peasant revolution or the urban poor’s revolution. Undoubtedly, the peasantry was a major force in the Russian Revolution and the main force in the Chinese Revolution. But not to see the decisive role of the working class in these revolutions is an error which is hard to understand.

Allied, perhaps, to this error are two others of using terminological inexactitudes. Throughout his penetrating study of the English and French Revolutions, he discusses political developments sociologically, i.e., by relating them to social classes, social strata and groups. Not once do we come across a political group which is discussed as an abstract entity, an entity in itself and for itself, that is apart from its capacity to represent the interests of or act as the symbol of a social group. Thus, for example, the peasantry is opposed by, supported by, led by, used by, allied with by sections of landed upper classes or urban bourgeoisie and other social strata. Yet, in the case of the Russian and Chinese Revolutions, the peasantry is joined to the Communist Party, an abstract and purely political entity, whose class or social basis or characterization is nowhere given.

Secondly, we may also take note of the fact that the current sociological omnibus, catch-all word ‘elite’ finds no place in the concrete historical analysis of the English and French Revolutions or historical developments. And rightly so, for its use would confuse rather than clarify. We can imagine what pure ‘elite’ analysis would do to the analysis of the different phases of the French Revolution. However, Dr. Moore brings this word into play in the much less rigorous analysis of the political developments of India and China.

The most serious error that Dr. Moore makes is that of virtually ignoring the role of imperialism in modern China and
India. Thus, for example, the fact that the Chinese Revolution was as much an anti-imperialist revolution as a peasant one is ignored. The Kuomintang reaction after 1927 and 1945 (as also warlordism earlier) is seen as a landlord-based reaction, pure and simple. The KMT after 1927, it is said, was based on landlords, gangsters, pseudo-Confucianism. The suppression of Chinese industrial effort was mainly done by domestic agrarian interests, according to Dr. Moore. Criticism of imperialism is often seen by Dr. Moore as a ‘convenient scapegoat’ by Marxists and nationalists.

We need not multiply instances. Suffice it to say that the virtual omission of imperialism abstracts away the most important segment of the historical reality of modern China and India. This also leads him to apply in an abstract, formal, and mechanical way a historical model derived from the western historical experience and thus contributes to the sterility of his analysis of India and China. For example, he fails to see that the capitalist class in India and China was fragmented and played many diverse historical roles both section-wise and time-wise. Similarly, the roots of dictatorship in KMT China were not only in the bourgeoisie’s alliance with, or subordination to, the landlords but also in their joint subordination to foreign imperialism.

In fact, in recent times, this last has been an invariable component of right-wing dictatorships in the ex-colonial world. Examples are the political systems in Latin America, West Asia, South Korea, and South Vietnam. On the other hand a primary condition for the survival of political democracy in India has been its relative freedom from foreign control. The failure to study the role of imperialism combined with his lack of familiarity with the historical terrain of India and China makes his discussion of the developments in India and China stand out as a sore thumb in an otherwise thought-provoking work.

At the same time an Indian reader would find many valuable directions for serious research or thought in the European and Japanese parts of Dr. Moore’s study. In particular, his emphasis on the dangers from landlordism not only as an obstacle to economic growth or social justice but also as a potential and inevitable threat to political democracy is timely. His work should
certainly help turn the attention of Indian historians and even more sociologists and political scientists to a study of India’s agrarian structure—a task hitherto left to agricultural economists. The struggle for political independence bequeathed a democratic political structure which will not be put on a firm footing till the agrarian roots of authoritarianism are dug out and the rural rich are no longer available as an ally to the newly emerging urban forces of dictatorship. The timeliness of Dr. Moore’s study is evident when we note that the Indian votaries of fascism have been in recent years finding fertile soil in the upper class and upper caste rural strata of northern India.

Dr. Moore’s is a valiant effort to take sociology out of methodological strait-jackets and the ennui of the minutiae and to restore to it the receding majesty of the broad sweep in dealing with issues which matter and which do not merely titilate or earn short-lived academic reputations though long-lasting academic positions. He also rightly assigns a minor role to cultural explanations and emphasizes the role of social classes and strata. He refuses to see social change as an exceptional phenomenon and wants the sociologists also to explain the status quo and stability and the social forces underpinning them, and benefiting from them.

He rejects the notion that all reactionary ideas are remnants of the past and wants their social basis in the recent past and present to be examined. He takes a positive look at the historical role of revolutionary violence and points to the historical cost of moderation as well as the degree and extent of violence that an unjust social order represents in its day to day existence.

But pre-conceptions are not so easily given up especially when they deal with basic problems of one’s society and also involve firmly entrenched academic traditions. Revolutionary breaks are always difficult to make and nowhere more than in academic disciplines. But, to use Dr. Moore’s phrase, the cost of not making revolutions is quite high even in the academia. Any beginnings in that direction are, therefore, to be heartily welcomed.