

MARXIAN FRAMEWORK AND ANALYSIS OF CLASS CONFLICT IN INDIA

K. K. DAS GUPTA

THE existentialist philosopher Kirkegaard once reflected in his 'Incomplete Philosophical Manuscript' on the role of academics and said that it ends in making tea out of dried tea leaves which were kept wrapped in a paper after already making tea three times. As far as polemics for and against Marx in the academic circle is concerned Kirkegaardian diagnosis seems to hold good with sufficient degree of exactness. One of the favourite pastimes of many academics is to bury Marx and an equally potent desire of many is to resurrect him to counteract such a move. The present situation is not an exception. This note believes however in neither the business of burying nor of resurrecting because the first attempt has been futile always and hence there is no compulsive need for the second.

The purpose of the following lines is to lay bare certain inadequacies that have crept into the interesting paper on the nature of class conflict in India, of Professor Dandekar and in the process make marginal contributions to remove the methodological lacuna. Whereas the author of the paper made a demarche to cover a wide field encompassing the concept of class, class struggle, breakdown of the capitalist system, the nature and character of the antidote that delayed or rather made the breakdown an unlikely event (at least within the time span of the existence of capitalism), the characteristics of different classes in the absence of bipolarisation or without it and finally an evaluation of the Indian situation in the context of an analysis within the Marxian framework. This brief note, on the other hand, is in the nature of critical remarks on a few (and not on all) observations of the author in the body of the text and also on omissions which according to the contributor are of a crucial nature.

A study of the classes and the understanding of the different kinds of ties and relationships that it entails with relative polarisation at a certain point of time and fluidity at another in the context of the Indian situation is certainly a bold step towards exploding a myth of an Indian society composed of castes only historically arranged in a hierarchical form which experienced little change in the content in spite of a violent shake-up of the structure due to economic development and concomitant social change in the recent past. This is an analogue of the false bourgeois notion of a uniform middle class