

A RESTATEMENT

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I am grateful for the many comments my colleagues have offered on my analysis of the Class Conflict in the Indian Society. It is customary to acknowledge such comments by means of a rejoinder. But, if I attempt to do it point by point, it will take far too much space. Moreover, it may take the argument away from the main focus of my analysis because, though a number of points raised in the comments deserve further discussion, in my opinion, they are not germane to the central theme of my Lecture. It is possible that, in spite of the length I have taken, I have failed to make clear my central theme. I shall therefore attempt a restatement.

I am attempting an analysis of the class conflict in the present-day Indian society within the framework of Marxian analysis modified in the light of the actual path and form in which development of capitalism has occurred since Marx wrote. Clearly, the development of capitalism has not proceeded quite along the lines Marx had expected. I have focused attention on a few major departures which I believe affect fundamentally certain crucial Marxian conclusions. Let me recapitulate them briefly.

Firstly, the development of capitalism has not, in general, led to a division of the society into just two sharply distinguished and antagonistic classes. Certain middle classes of the pre-capitalist society, such as the shop-keepers, have survived and certain new middle classes, such as the new professions, have emerged. Secondly, the development of capitalism has not reduced the proletariat to a homogeneous class of workers requiring no more than the simplest skills. On the contrary, it has created, within the ranks of the working class, a hierarchy based on skills and experience rewarded by higher wage and status. Besides, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, there is now interposed a class of professional managers, with its own hierarchy, the top of which merges with the bourgeoisie and its bottom with the top of the hierarchy within the working class. Thirdly, capitalist development has not proceeded uniformly in all sectors of the economy. If we take monopoly capitalism as the highmark of capitalist development, it varies greatly between one sector and another, between one industry and another. In other words, the bourgeoisie again is not a homogeneous class. Fourthly, within the capitalist system, the state has emerged as a major employer in nationalised or state-owned enterprises, public