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Emergence of the Intelligentsia as a Ruling Class in India*

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ABSTRACT

It has been generally accepted that the big industrial capitalists and the big land-owners have been the two Ruling Classes in India. This paper makes a case for the hypothesis that over the last four decades, the Intelligentsia have emerged as the third member of the Ruling Coalition. Although two Intelligentsia are made up of apparently diverse elements, they are a class because along with the capitalists and the land-owners they stand in a contradictory relationship with the rest of the society. This class has not acquired its position of power through any struggle with the other two pre-existing Ruling Classes but has been coopted by them into the coalitions. It is argued that the State acts like a funneling mechanism for transferring to the Intelligentsia a part of the surplus generated by the working classes and appropriated by the other two Ruling Classes.

INTRODUCTION

What we propose to achieve in the course of the paper is to make a case for the thesis that the Intelligentsia¹ in India has become a Ruling Class, as a result of which the country now has a coalition of three Ruling

*Revised version of the Dharm Narain Memorial Lecture delivered on 11 November, 1988

¹As Andre Beteille (1989) says, "The term 'intelligentsia' does not have a natural ring in the English language . . . that category is, on the other hand a familiar one in Central Europe and, to a much greater extent, in Eastern Europe . . . in its most inclusive sense it is coterminous with 'mental workers', although it is also used in a more restricted sense to refer to those in superior non-manual occupations.

Classes². Of course, we are not in a position to defend our thesis in a definitive manner. Instead of calling it a thesis, we should perhaps be better advised to call it a hypothesis.

There cannot be any controversy about the other two members of the coalition. These two other are, on the one hand, a class of big industrial capitalists (loosely called Monopoly Capitalists, Big Bourgeoisie, etc.) and the class of big land-owners (variously called Landlords, Kulaks, Rich Farmers etc.). There are of course great differences among students of the subject as to the exact identities and boundaries of these two classes, i.e. on the question as to who belongs and who does not belong to either of these classes. There are also lots of differences as to the roles played by these classes—to what extent the industrial capitalists are comprador, to what extent the big land owners are 'feudal' or 'capitalist', how big is a 'big' farmer or a 'big' industrialist, etc. But with all these differences there is an agreement among all Marxian analysts of the Indian polity that it has two Ruling Classes, one with base in agriculture and the other with base in large industries. We too hold that this was true of the Indian society during the first two decades after Independence. What we are advancing as a thesis, or rather a hypothesis, is that there has been an important change in this matter in the course of the last four decades. The change has been for the Intelligentsia to become a member of the ruling coalition. It is as well to state at the outset that this class has not acquired the position of power through any struggle with the other two pre-existing Ruling Classes. This class has been, in our understanding, *co-opted* by the other two into the coalition.

We have thought it fit to make a complete statement of our hypothesis without waiting to define and qualify the technical terms that have been used. It will be now our first task to define, explain and qualify these technical terms which are (a) Class, (b) Ruling Class, (c) Coalition of Ruling Classes and (d) the Intelligentsia. This is necessary not only for the benefit of non-Marxist readers. There is no agreement at all among Marxist scholars about the precise meanings of these terms belonging to

²It is interesting that a three class ruling coalition for the Indian State has been advanced in an altogether different way by a political scientist, Max Jean Zins (1988). His three classes are more or less the same as ours and therefore he also departs from the standard Marxian analysis about India. However, most disconcertingly for us, according to him the State in India began its career in 1947 with his three ruling classes and in the course of the last 40 years the landed bourgeoisie and the industrial bourgeoisie have eliminated the third partner from power. Our story is exactly the opposite. According to us, the third class has become a ruling class only during the last 20 years or so.

the Marxian Theory of Classes and the Marxian Theory of the State. Quite a lot of controversies and confusions are given rise to by different meanings being attached to these terms by different users. It is only natural that we should want to avoid such available mis-understandings. It goes without saying that even after that there would be lots of differences of opinion on the substantive points of the hypothesis we are propounding.

Our second task would be to advance arguments and empirical evidences in support of this thesis.

I. DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS

1. THE CONCEPT OF CLASS

It is necessary before everything else to state clearly our understanding and definition of a social class.³ We take the liberty of quoting from a paper (Rudra, 1988) of our own :

“Classes are, of course, social groups, but not all social groups are classes. By “social group” is meant a collection of individual members of a society with some common characteristics and interests, primarily economic.”

“A class is a set of individuals who have “similar” relations with the means of production (owners of the means of production, users of the means of production, etc.) and who are such that they have no “contradictions” among themselves but who have “contradictions” with members of other classes. By contradiction, we mean conflicts of economic interest that are structural in origin and therefore not transient

“While the concept of class pervades all Marxian analysis, it is a significant fact that in the entire classical works of Marxism one does not find anywhere any adequate discussion of this particular concept. As is well known, the last chapter of the last volume of Marx’s *Capital* was meant precisely to undertake this task : unfortunately, the chapter was left unfinished after running for only one page and a half. Until very recent years political economists, sociologists, historians, and other social scientists with allegiance to Marx did not devote themselves to finishing the task he set for himself but could not complete. Marxists have used the term ‘class’ as if it were self-explanatory, while all the time emphasizing that for them the term stands for something very much different and more articulated than whatever is meant by non-Marxist social scientists when they use the same term in such phrases as ‘the middle-class’, the upper-class’, etc. This is, of course, very unfortunate. Taking as understood a meaning that is complex and has never been fully clarified cannot but give rise to endless confusions” (Rudra, 1988).

or conjunctural but durable under varying circumstances and therefore with historical dimension.”

“We talk of contradictions when the conflicts of interests between two parties are such that even when the conditioning circumstances change a great deal the interests remain in conflict with each other. As an economy passes through different conjunctures, as different prices move in different directions, as certain taxes are removed or lowered and certain others imposed or augmented, controls are imposed or relaxed, etc., the interests of different members of the same class are affected in similar fashions, whereas the interests of members of different classes are affected differently.⁴ Under certain circumstances, the interests of different classes would be such as to be mutually antagonistic, by which I mean that if the interests of the members of one of the classes are to be furthered to a certain extent, those of the members of the second class would have to be curtailed to a defined extent. There may, of course, be situations where such antagonistic class contradiction does not come up to the surface but remains as a potential”⁵.

One may wonder from where we have got this definition. Our answer is : we have distilled it out of the writings of Marx, especially his historical writings. According to us that is the only way one can define and develop a concept of class that may be called Marxian. Of course, I am not the only one to have undertaken this task. During the last two decades there have been various attempts by Marxian scholars all over the world to give a somewhat rigorous definition to the concept of class. Noteworthy attempts have been made by Poulantzas, Erik Olin Wright

⁴“The concepts of inter-class conflicts and intra-class conflicts obviously recall the concepts of inter-class and intra-class variations in the literature of Analysis of Variance. A little attention will show that what I am doing has more in common with what in statistical literature is called Cluster Analysis. In this latter problem, one does not start with a given number of clusters but ends with them. In many situations, one may not have any idea even about the number of clusters one may eventually identify. Similarly, in class analysis, too, one does not know beforehand with how many classes one will end. It may be objected that whereas in analysis of variance and cluster analysis one has well-defined measures of dispersion, there are no known statistical measures of economic conflicts. That, however, is not for us an important problem. One can theoretically think of various ways of indexing economic conflicts” (Rudra, *ibid.*)

⁵“Sellers and purchasers of a commodity do not constitute two different classes, for the obvious conflict of interest between these two sets of individuals is not structural and comes into operation only under one specific condition, namely, movements of prices of the commodity under *ceteris paribus* conditions. But landowners and tenants, industrial capitalist and wage labourers have conflicts of interest that are structurally based and therefore more durable” (Rudra, *ibid.*).

and Roemer.⁶ It will be noticed that while Poulantzas and Wright do not define classes like ourselves entirely in terms of contradictions, their concepts all the same attach a great deal of importance to the idea of classes having contradictions among them.⁷ On one point, however, we have important differences with Poulantzas. He seems to hold the view that the class analysis of a society has to be *exhaustive*; that is, every individual has to belong to some class or other. Thus, he writes "In Marxism we cannot admit to the existence of strata, fractions, and significant groupings outside of classes" (Poulantzas, 1977 : 116). We do not know what could be the basis of his being so assertive on this matter. We, on our part hold that "classes in the Marxian sense do not constitute an exhaustive classification of all the members of a society. That is to say, to have a class analysis of a society does not mean that every individual member of the society has to be pigeon holed into one or other of a number of classes. It is not an exercise in taxonomy. There may be many individuals, and not by way of exception, who cannot be assigned to any class whatsoever. Indeed, it is one of our important contentions that a large proportion of the agricultural population of our country does not belong to any class whatsoever" (Rudra, 1988).

Our definition however has no point of contact with that of Roemer. We have very little understanding or sympathy with his approach of defining classes in terms of hypothetical experiments about certain people withdrawing from the production relations in which they are embedded. Such experiments obviously imply some alternative hypothetical arrangement of production after the withdrawal; but this alternative is never spelled out, and as a matter of fact it cannot be spelled out. This kind of imaginary experiments is contrary to the very spirit of Marxism as we understand it. In our understanding historicity is the very

⁶Some of the recent references are to be found at the end of the paper.

⁷Thus consider the following positions :

Poulantzas : "Classes exist only as long as they are in struggle with one another" (1977 : 118);

Erik Olin Wright : "The concept of class is a relational concept . . . classes are always defined within social relations, in particular in relations to other classes". (1985 : 34); also "The social relations which define classes are intrinsically antagonistic rather than symmetrical" (1985 : 35);

Hirst : "Classes exist only in the class struggle" (1977 : 134);

Hirst : "Marx's . . . central concern was with the relational character of classes, in particular the opposition between classes, as providing the distinctive character of classes themselves" (1977 : 9);

Finally, Marx and Engels themselves : "the separate individuals" form a class in so far as they have to carry on a common battle against another class : otherwise they are on hostile terms with one another as competitors" (Marx and Engels, 1965 : 69).

essence of Marx's concept of the world and Roemer's experiment has obviously to be conceived outside history.

Anyway, it is not our intention to make any critical survey, even a brief one, of Marxian concepts of class as developed by others. Given our self-appointed task of identifying the class character of the Indian State, we do not think that the requirements of scientific discourse call upon us to engage in such a critical survey. After all, if Roemer, or Wright can write without making any references to Marxists like ourselves working in India, there is no reason why we cannot develop our own ideas in India without making an exhaustive survey which is simply not possible because of the language barrier. We know very little about the development of Marxian thought that is taking place in countries like, say, Japan and the U.S.S.R.

2. THE CONCEPT OF A RULING CLASS

This concept has a tendency to misguide the uninitiated because of the term 'ruling'. A Ruling Class *does not* rule, at least not directly. The task of ruling, that is, running the apparatus of the State, is carried out by people who specialize in different tasks involved in running that apparatus. There are such institutions as the legislatures, ministerial cabinets, Prime Ministers and Presidents, the judiciary, the bureaucracy, the armed forces, the police, etc. Local bodies also constitute parts of the State and in a country like India with a federal structure there are also the State level depositories of power. The people who perform all these functions at different levels have different class origins. But it is not by examining these origins that one can identify the class character of the State. Thus, as we have noted before, it is widely agreed that in India there are at least two Ruling Classes with bases in agriculture and industry respectively. Now, one will not find among the members of the Parliament or Assemblies or the Cabinets very many people who are either big landlords or big industrial capitalists. The same would be true if one were to examine the class origins of the top bureaucrats. In a dictatorship, where there is no representative bodies like Parliaments, the class character of the State cannot be judged by examining the class origin of the Dictator or his close associates. These people who run the apparatus of the State at different levels constitute a section of the society about the class identity of which there is a lot of differences of opinion among scholars. Poulantzas, I believe, would treat them all or most of them as parts of what he calls the New Petty Bourgeoisie. Wright, if I am not misrepresenting him, would treat them as an example of his concept of people with 'contradictory class location'. We, on our part, shall treat

these people as parts of the Intelligentsia. Whatever be the class characterisation of these people who actually carry out different parts of the task of ruling the society, they do *not* constitute a Ruling Class *by that token*.

As the Ruling Class cannot be defined by the act of ruling, it calls for a definition. Once again, we are faced with a term and a concept which is used by all Marxist writers as if it is self-evident, whereas one has rarely spelled it out in explicit terms. We have therefore task of formulating our own definition. That definition runs as follows :

A Ruling Class is one such that the policies pursued by the State, *objectively and in the long-run*, serve to further the interests of that class at the cost of the interests of other non-ruling classes. There may be more than one Ruling Class and in that case we talk of a coalition of Ruling Classes, a concept to which we shall have to give some more attention a little later.

It will be noticed that the definition given by us is closely related to the concept of the State. That, however, is not peculiar to the definition advanced by us. In all Marxian analysis one means exactly the same thing by the two expressions 'the Ruling Class' and 'the class character of the State'. A central proposition of Marxian social science is that the State is never neutral between the different classes in a society. The State necessarily serves the interests of a certain class (or classes) at the cost of the rest. It is this class (or classes) which are called the Ruling Class or Ruling Classes and the same classes are used to characterise the State when talking about its class character.

Attention may be paid to the point emphasised by us that the interests of the Ruling Class which are served by the State are of a long-run nature. The short-run actions of the State do not exhibit the pattern of systematically serving the interests of any particular class or classes. That is because the State cannot but also take various actions which would serve the short-run interests of the classes that are ruled, that is classes other than the Ruling Classes. This has to be done to maintain the legitimacy of the State in the eyes of the people as representing interests of the people as a whole. The State has to take actions to give credibility to its pretensions regarding democracy, socialism etc. Even when not having to make such pretensions it may be necessary to make some concessions to the exploited classes so that they do not rise in revolt. All such action may mean some costs to the Ruling Classes. Any short-run analysis may be clouded by the occurrence of such State actions apparently going against the interests of the Ruling Class or Classes.

We would not have thought it necessary to emphasize the point as it appears to us to be quite obvious. However, in one of the very few books

devoted precisely to the very concept of the Ruling Class (Therborn, 1978 : 146-47), it is stated categorically : “. . . when used in more complex contexts to denote “long-term” “objective” or “true” interests—that is to say, something other than factual preferences—the notion seems to provide a spurious objectivity to essentially ideological evaluations. The only effects we can consider in the present context are direct and immediate ones; if we were to go beyond these, we would incorporate the dialectics of social contradictions into the definition of state power, with, at times, the most absurd results.”

It is not at all clear to us why such a forceful assertion is made. As not many arguments have been advanced, we have no other alternative but to ignore it.

3. SOME UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

While it is agreed by all that the State serves the interests of certain classes at the cost of the others, the exact process in which this takes place is an insufficiently explored area in Marxian Theory of the State. The cliché that the State is nothing but a committee to look after the interests of the Ruling Classes is much too simplistic. The problematic is : how does the ruling class rule? That is, how does the Ruling Class see to it that its interests are furthered by the State? The Ruling Class is not a single homogeneous actor. It has not got a single head, nor has it got a single set of interests. The State again is not ruled single handedly by a person and that is true even of a Dictatorship. So what happens? In a country with capitalists constituting the Ruling Class, do all capitalists sit together and decide upon the way the State should pursue its policies so as to further their interests? Do they, after that, dictate to the top leader or leaders of the State those decisions as so many directions? It does not happen that way. The usual answer is that mediation is carried out between the classes and the State by the political parties. That, however, is a very unsatisfactory answer. Because, the problem remains exactly as before. Do the capitalists all sit together, pass resolutions and hand them over to the political parties? And do the political parties accept these dictates and pass them on as so many orders to the leaders of the State? One will agree that the reality is much more complex. All members of a class cannot possibly sit together and pass resolutions representing instructions for the political parties. Parties necessarily represent a plurality of class interests and also enjoy certain amounts of autonomy vis-a-vis the classes and the State. The same is also true of the State : the plurality of class interests served by it and its relative autonomy have to be accepted for any serious analysis. The mechanism by

which class interests of Ruling Class or Classes get translated into State policies is something that remains a Black Box in the Marxian Theory of the State. This necessarily gives rise to another area of darkness, one covering the relations obtaining between two or more Ruling Classes when there is such a plurality. We have talked about a coalition of Ruling Classes. How does the coalition work? Surely, it does not work like a coalition ministry? That is to say, members of all the classes or their representatives do not meet and decide in what way their interests would be served simultaneously? The very fact that there are more than one class in the ruling coalition indicates the existence of contradictions between the interests of those classes. If that were not so, there would not be Ruling Classes, they would constitute a single Ruling Class. This therefore means that the State at times would pursue policies which would be serving the ininterests of one of the Ruling Classes at the cost of the other Ruling Class or Classes. There would thus be a continuous tension in any such coalition. How the Ruling Classes continue to exist in the same coalition despite this tension, how political management is carried out so as to prevent the coalition from breaking up, is once again something that has not been researched upon sufficiently and therefore remains inside the Black Box. We have to accept the Black Box as it is and see to what extent we can go in our analysis.

4. INTELLIGENTSIA : IDENTITY

It would now be our task to clearly describe the people whom we are including in the category we are calling the Intelligentsia. The general meaning attached to it is more or less the same as that of non-manual labourers; that is, persons who earn their living by the sale of mental labour. However, people engaged in business and making profit are excluded. But wage or salary earning cannot be insisted upon either as a criterion, as workers of the tertiary sector who earn income by selling services involving mental labour are included in the Intelligentsia. Thus, in our category of the Intelligentsia⁸ the following are included :

1. All white collar workers in the organised private sector, from mana-

⁸We may note at this point the distinction we are making from the positions of some others who have tried to make innovations in the problematic of class identification. Thus, Pranab Bardhan (1985) presents arguments which also amount to recognising a new Ruling Class in India. He identifies it in some places with the "professionals of the public sector", but states some where else that his professionals include all white collar workers. He has also stated by way of clarification that this "idea of the composition of the class also tallies with that of the five types of non-manual worker" enumerated by the present author.

- gers and top executives down upto clerical workers (manual workers like sweepers, gate keepers, messengers, drivers etc., however, are excluded).
2. All office workers in administrative services, from top bureaucrats right upto lower division clerks (excluding, once again, all fourth class employees as well as maintenance workers, technicians, security officers, etc.).
 3. Teachers (from the school to the university levels), doctors and nurses, lawyers and judges, engineers and architects, etc., whether salaried or engaged in private practice; whether in the private sector, in the government or government financed autonomous institutions.
 4. Writers, journalists, artists and other skilled workers engaged in various entertainment industries, the advertisement business etc., once again, irrespective of whether they are salaried employees of public or private sector institutions or free-lancers.
 5. Professional politicians, trade union leaders etc.

It may be noted that we are not making any distinction between office workers of sub-ordinate and supervisory levels. It is, therefore clear that we are not following those who attach a special importance to the class position of the Bureaucracy. The top Bureaucrats, of course, exercise a lot of power; but our concept of class is not one of power relations. We shall discuss in greater detail this position later on. On the other hand, we have introduced a restriction : We are considering only those office workers who belong to the organised sector. Office workers outside the organised sector of course share with those belonging to the organised sector the characteristic of living by non-manual labour but they do not belong to the Class of Intelligentsia for reasons we shall discuss later on.

A very important section of our Ruling Class consists of professional politicians. These people man the institutions which give shape to State politics. They may be ministers, or members of Parliament or Assemblies, or they may be outside any such bodies : they may belong to the ruling or to opposition parties. They all wield power to influence policy: MPs less than ministers; MLA's less than the MPs; opposition members less than ruling party members. The amount of power varies, but it is there for everybody. As to implementation of policies, politicians do not participate directly which is the prerogative of public servants : but they may nevertheless exercise influence over those servants in the execution of their duties.

Categories 3 and 4 above differ from the first two in so far as they are mostly not salaried. Their importance in the Intelligentsia is extremely high. The importance of category 3 lies in their being possessors of

scarce resources in the form of highly specialised skills. An additional importance of the fourth category resides in their being intellectuals and therefore performing the most important task of giving ideological directions to the people.

5. THE COMMON DENOMINATOR

It is necessary for us now to expose the elements of commonality between all the diverse elements that we have put together to define our third Ruling Class. Two basic properties define this class. The first is that the members of this class are mental labourers as distinguished from manual labourers. (The second is that the value of the products that they produce (which are of the nature of services) are less than the value of their labour power.) In this respect members of the Intelligentsia occupy a position symmetric but opposite to that of wage labourers employed by capitalists. It may be recalled that one of the most far-reaching contributions of Karl Marx to political economy was the distinction that he drew between the value of labour power and the value of the product produced by labour. While wage labourers generate positive surplus, the Intelligentsia produces what may be called a negative surplus. While the positive surplus produced by wage labourers gets appropriated by the owners of the means of production, the negative surplus of the Intelligentsia is taken care of by transfers made from the surplus generated by the wage labourers. It may be noticed that we are *not* assuming, as is done in the material production definition of value, that the Intelligentsia does not produce any value whatsoever. That assumption gives rise to many problems. As Andre Beteille correctly observes, it is "difficult to see how only the mason can be said to create value (even in the material product sense of value) and not the architect." Of course there *are* many members of the Intelligentsia who do not produce any value at all. But we need not assume all of them to be so. In conventional value theory and national income accounting certain kinds of activities are supposed to produce no value whatsoever. For instance domestic work, begging, thieving, prostituting etc. Conventional practice is, however, highly inconsistent. The denial of value to the product of domestic labour has been much criticised and rightly so. We, on our part, feel that many respectable occupations, conventionally treated as producing value, are not really any more productive than begging or stealing. Also, there is no reason why moral prostitution indulged in by so many intellectuals and artists should be treated as productive and only sexual prostitution treated as unproductive. There would perhaps be more of a wide agreement that a whole range of pro-

professional activities like, say, advertisement and administration following the Parkinson's Law are unproductive. Anyway, the details as to which particular activities produce zero value is not of crucial importance to us for our argument, which only requires that the value of the output of the Intelligentsia be less than the value they receive by way of remuneration. The essential point we are making is that the Intelligentsia is subsidised by the two property owning ruling classes. The State acts like a funneling mechanism for transferring to the Intelligentsia a part of the surplus generated by the working classes and appropriated by the other two ruling classes.

It is to be recognised that this common source of subsidy in the surplus generated by others is the only common economic denominator of the otherwise diverse members of the class we are considering. There is no homogeneity whatsoever in the income, wealth and level of living of the various segments belonging to the class. Inequality in these respects is indeed very high within the class. After all, we are including in this class school teachers and lower division clerks at one end and ambassadors and managers of enterprises at the other.

The other common denominator of this class is social. All members of this class belong to what is loosely called the 'middle class'. (The Intelligentsia belongs to this so-called middle class but not all members of the middle class belong to the Intelligentsia.) Till recently membership of this class was open only to the upper castes and even now most members of this class belong to the superior castes. They constitute what in North India would be called the Babu class and in Bengali would be described as Bhadrалoks. Despite economic disparity, this class is closely knit in terms of kinship bonds. It is difficult to think of a lower division clerk who has not got some relative or other who holds a high position in the government or is a prosperous doctor or engineer. It is difficult to imagine an Indian of this class settled abroad and enjoying the standard of living of the middle class of Western countries who cannot find some near or distant relative who is no more than a school teacher or an ordinary office worker in a private firm.

This social homogeneity gives rise to the third common denominator of these diverse members of this class which is on the level of culture and ideology. Members of this class have got common social and personal values, a common life-style, if not a common life style at least common aspirations.⁹ The ideology of this class is a hotch-potch of

⁹We have recently carried out some surveys to enquire into the consumption habits of families of white collar workers. A striking result of our enquiry is the extremely low degrees of correlation between income and the consumption of a large number of items. Whether it is durables or education, medical treatment or holiday
(*fn. 9 contd. on p. 167*)

the modern and the traditional, the Western and the Indian, the radical and the conservative, the rational and the superstitious. The cultural homogeneity is of course relative. Taking the Intelligentsia by itself one can easily find very great divergences in the matters referred to above. What is so common, one may wonder, between the jeans-clad, drug-taking, young daughter of the business executive and the dumb, demure young wife of a lower division clerk? The homogeneity reveals itself most clearly when one compares either of the two examples given above with members of the working-class proper belonging to the lower castes. Their life-style, values, attitudes, aspirations, etc., again with a lot of diversity within them, are so very different from those of the 'babu-class' that the two might really be from two different continents. There is indeed very little of communication between people of these two categories, so much so that people of the 'babu-class' have little understanding of what goes on in the minds of the non-babu-class people, even when they live and work in close proximity, say in the capacity of employer and domestic servant. Intellectuals belonging to the babu-class may write novels about the people of non-babu-class, make cinemas and TV serials about their condition, or choose to adopt subaltern postures against 'elitist' researches, but the two remain total strangers to each other.

II. ARGUMENTS AND EVIDENCE

6. CONTRADICTIONS WITH OTHER CLASSES

We have now to defend our proposition that the Intelligentsia is a class satisfying our definition in terms of contradictions. As members of the class derive a part of their income by way of transfer from the surplus extracted by the property owning classes, their interest lies in the total surplus being large. Therefore the interest of the Intelligentsia is in consonance with the interests of the property owning classes who extract the surplus and are in contradiction with the interests of the labouring classes who generate the surplus.

They have contradictions with the other two Ruling Classes too, in so far as the transfer to them represents a deduction from the incomes that

(fn. 9 contd. from p. 166)

travel, or big events like marriages and other ceremonies, income seems to be an extremely poor explanatory variable. The results are being published in a series of joint papers with Manabendu Chattopadhyay and Robin Mukherjee of the Indian Statistical Institute with the general title, *Inter and Intra-occupational Variations in Income and Level of Living*. Some very similar results are presented by my research student Sukla Chatterjee (1989).

may be enjoyed by the propertied classes for the further expansion of their property bases as well as consumption. We thus see that the Intelligentsia has got important contradictions with the two Ruling Classes in agriculture and industry as well as the two labouring classes in the same two sectors.

Members of the Intelligentsia have conflicts of interests among themselves too given that they have to share the same aggregate surplus. That however is relatively insignificant.

We have therefore demonstrated that the Intelligentsia constitutes a class with minimal intra-class contradictions and maximal inter-class contradictions with other important classes in the society.

7. POWER BASE

What could be the power-base of this class? Our definition of class, unlike those of some others, does not involve power relations.¹⁰ All the same, we have to ask this question, as the concept of Ruling Class in our sense does require it to have some power which enables it to acquire this position of superiority. Before giving our own explanation we shall reject a few others that have been suggested by other analysts to explain the privileges enjoyed by the Intelligentsia. One line goes along the concept of 'human capital'. If classes are conceived in terms of property, then one asks the question : what explains the higher earnings of white-collar workers, professionals etc., compared to those of manual labourers? The answer given is that those people earn more by virtue of their ownership of 'human capital'. These people have invested money in acquiring education or higher skills and their higher income represents return on the capital thus formed. They are like so many capitalists : it is just that their capital is not embodied in buildings and machinery but is implicit in their higher skills.

We do not find this explanation very satisfactory. If indeed incomes were returns to a kind of capital, then their earnings should be proportionately more with higher values of the capital. That is to say, the earnings among members of the Intelligentsia should vary depending upon their levels of skill. That, however, is not true. The correlation between

¹⁰Erik Olin Wright is much concerned about the power aspect of the class question. His conception of dual class location is imposed on him by his pre-occupation with the fact that a factory manager is, on the one hand under the power of his capitalist boss, and on the other he exercises power over all the factory workers. Naturally, any work organisation has got such positions of relative power over others and relative subordination to others. In our scheme, this phenomenon is not a matter that decides class location.

the income earned by a person and his or her educational qualification is extremely low in our country. With the same educational qualification and the same kind of experience one earns very different amounts from different employers. A bank officer with only a B.A. degree may earn much more than a college teacher with a M.A. degree. Even in the narrow field of higher education, lots of Ph.D.s rot as college teachers and lots of Lectures and Readers in universities are appointed from people with ordinary M.As. Therefore, the argument is very weak that the level of skill is an important determinant of the level of earning in this branch.

To explain the higher earnings of people of the managerial or bureaucratic cadres, an alternative approach, also involving the notion of capital, is to say that these higher earnings are returns to an asset in the form of control over managerial or organisational resources. The idea is that running any complicated activity calls for certain complex organisations. Access to the levers of such an organisation is a kind of asset which yields revenue. In this line of analysis a manager or a bureaucrat is once again a capitalist, his capital being not any particular skill acquired by him but his being in a position from where he can operate the organisational machinery. This explanation is also not applicable to the Intelligentsia as a whole. That is because, not all members of the Intelligentsia belong to managerial or bureaucratic cadres. Most of them are workers with very little power over other workers.

The power which lies behind the Intelligentsia becoming a Ruling Class lies not in any kind of capital or property but its functions. The Intelligentsia in our country has to perform certain functions which are so crucial as to have given it the power to become a Ruling Class. Our society, like all others, is run by a large number of institutions. Thus, the top political decisions are taken by the Parliament and the Central Cabinet. Similar decisions at the next level are taken by State legislatures and ministries. Personnel for these bodies—ministries and legislatures—are supplied by the political parties. Implementation of policies adopted by the government is carried out by administrative bodies. Provision of credit and other monetary matters are handled by banks, co-operatives etc. Education is discharged by schools, colleges and universities. Values, attitudes, opinions of the literate public etc. are influenced by books, newspapers, radio, TV, cinema, theatre etc. Now a most staggering fact about India is that all these institutions are manned, practically from top to bottom, by people belonging to the Intelligentsia. Cabinet ministers, members of Parliament and legislatures, the leaders and cadres of all the political parties from the extreme right to the extreme left, government servants from the top Secretaries to the

lower division clerks, office workers in the private sector, from the top manager to the petty clerk, writers, journaists, artists—all belong to the Intelligentsia. It is not only in policy formulation and policy implementation that the Intelligentsia plays a decisive role—it also sets the trends of values and attitudes for people belonging to the ‘lower orders’. We may make use of a certain imagery to explain the role of the Intelligentsia in our society. The other two Ruling Classes, the capitalists and the rich farmers are like the owners of a car; whereas the Intelligentsia takes the seat of the chauffeur. Intelligentsia has not got the power to oppose the interests of the monopoly capitalists and the rich farmers. But it has the power to so manipulate matters that its own interests are served along with the interests of the other two Ruling Classes. And being manufacturers of ideology, the Intelligentsia can see to it that its manipulations are cleverly hidden behind persuasive hyperboles and rhetoric in the name of the down-trodden.

We think that this role of the Intelligentsia is not true of all other countries. Thus, a Trade Union leader or a leader of a farmer’s organisation in India necessarily belongs to the Intelligentsia; but this probably is not true in many other countries. In America and Eurpoe a farmer’s organisation is led by leaders who are themselves farmers. A miner’s organisation would be led by leaders who are themselves miners. Not so in India. This overwhelming domination of all the organs of power in their actual working by the Intelligentsia is what has made it possible for it to become a Ruling Class.¹¹

8. STATE POLICY AND THE BOURGEOISIE

We now require to show that the Intelligentsia satisfies our criterion of having systematically gained economic benefits as a result of policies pursued by the State. Before doing that, we shall briefly take a look at the applicability of our criterion to the two other Ruling Classes.

That the big industrial houses have grown from strength to strength does not call for any elaborate demonstration. Statistics relating to that is all too familiar and without any ambiguity. One can however point at various actions of the government which might have appeared in the

¹¹The fact of wide disparity in the economic status of people who are near or distant relatives may be even more true of Western societies where a high court judge or a university professor may have cousins who are blue collar workers. However, the kinship bonds being weaker in those societies than in ours the blue collar cousins do not care to keep up with the high court judge or the university professor cousin. They follow distinctly different life styles and do not have much social communication between them.

short run to counter the interests of the industrial capitalists. Not only the MRTP but the entire arsenal of controls, licences, quotas, etc., such actions as the nationalisation of banks and the establishment of State Trading Corporation etc., have long been interpreted as socialistic measures and therefore directed against the industrial capitalists. The fact remains that the industrial capitalists' wealth has grown at a higher rate than that of any other class; and that has happened thanks to the plans providing private industries with a heavy industry base and infrastructural facilities and the government spending fantastically large amounts by way of subsidies and loans to as well as of equity participation in the private sector. If anybody requires a demonstration of how the public sector has been a hand-maiden to the private sector, how planning, in the name of establishing socialism in the country, has actually established an industry which is directed to the production of luxury goods, that would be an easy task but calls for a different paper. The present paper takes it for granted.

9. STATE POLICY AND THE RICH FARMERS

Likewise, the fact that the Green Revolution strategy has led to a process of mounting prosperity among big farmers is something that we take for granted. Agricultural income continues to remain untaxed. Ceilings and other Land Reform measures continue to remain unenforced. We have seen that one can think of many instances of government intervention which have adversely affected industrial capitalist in the short run. The same, however, is not true of the big farmer class. As a matter of fact, one can think of not a single step taken by the government since the Zamindari abolition that has affected adversely even slightly, even in the short run, the interests of the land owning class.

In this connection, it will not be a digression to comment on the much debated question of the so-called 'urban bias' of our State policies. A certain increasingly influential opinion in the country would have it that State policies have been favouring industries at the cost of agriculture. The arguments that have been advanced involve comparisons of per capita incomes in the urban and rural sectors and index numbers representing terms of trade between the two sectors. Per capita rural income is indeed lower than that in the urban sector and terms of trade may indeed be going against agriculture (though the matter is controversial). The point that has been overlooked in this simplistic demagoguery is that these are by no means the results of any government policy. As a matter of fact, the government's price policy has all along been directed entirely towards raising the agricultural prices above what they would have been if they

were left to market forces. Again, the government is responsible for pumping into agriculture huge amounts of capital through investments and loans whereas it is well known that in the resources disbursed by the government contribution made by the rich farmers is minimal. Hence, whether the government ought to do even more for the rich farmer class or not, our criterion of being a Ruling Class is fulfilled-- rich farmers have benefitted systematically over time from the policies pursued by the State.

10. ECONOMIC GAINS OF THE INTELLIGENTSIA

We now come to the economic fate of the Intelligentsia. Our first argument will be that this class has systematically prospered over time. Our second argument will be that this has been the result of deliberate policies pursued by the State.

The fact that the intelligentsia has benefitted economically during the last few decades would be stoutly opposed by many members of that class. It would not be easy to convince them with statistical evidence. It is well known that there is no systematic income statistics in the country. In our National Income Statistics, no special attention is paid to the category we are delimiting as the intelligentsia. The aggregate income of government servants is of course known from budgetary sources but that covers the fourth class employees which are excluded from our definition of the class. There is no means of knowing the salary income of members of our class belonging to the private sector. Practically nothing is known about the aggregate value of the various perquisites given out to these people in either sector. Income of professionals like lawyers and doctors is an area of total darkness. There would also be tricky index number problem for reducing money incomes to real terms.

If, despite all these statistical difficulties, we are convinced about the level of living of the class going up, that is because of some indirect macro-economic arguments as well as some highly fragmentary direct evidences collected by us. The indirect argument is as follows. According to official statistics, the personal income component of the National Income is indeed going up, though at a very moderate rate. But, according to government sources, about half the people still live below the poverty line. According to certain surveys, there have been practically no increase in the private consumption level of the average rural house-

hold.¹² Putting all these things together one has to conclude that the moderate income rise at the national level must have meant a very immoderate rise of the income of some small sections of the population. Unless one wants to believe that all this rise has taken place only among the two Ruling Classes, namely rich farmers and big industrial capitalists, one has to infer that the income rise must have taken place among people other than those below the poverty line and also outside the other two Ruling Classes.

Another indirect evidence may be obtained from the production statistics of durable consumer goods, superior quality textile products and various other non-essential consumer goods. The expanding markets for these products cannot but indicate increasing purchasing power in the hands of that microscopic minority which does not belong to the masses. Not all the gadgets, not all the silk sarees, not all the electronic toys for adults, not all the domestic and foreign travels, not all the modern apartments which are mushrooming in our big cities are being purchased and used by the family members of monopoly capitalists and big farmers. Where are all these goodies going? Obviously to a section of the middle class!

But the most direct evidence lies precisely in the body of facts which we shall now present regarding the government policy directed at increasing the purchasing power of the class identified by us.

11. INCOME POLICY FOR THE INTELLIGENTIA

The State has got no income policy for the people as a whole. There are no norms as to the maximum tolerable extent of income disparity. The State pays no attention whatsoever to the workers in the unorganised sector. After forty years of independence and seven five-year plans, there is not even the beginning of any social security. The countries of West Europe do not call themselves socialist. They are full-fledgedly capitalist. Yet, all these countries have got social security schemes of different kinds, covering the entire population. The lead, it may be remem-

¹²The author carried out an investigation jointly with Professors Nikhilesh Bhattacharya and Manabendu Chattopadhyaya of the Indian Statistical Institute to compare the levels of consumption and other indicators of levels of living for a control group of households between 1972 when they were surveyed by the National Sample Survey and 1985 when they were re-surveyed by us by following identical survey techniques. The sample belongs to the rural areas of three districts of West Bengal. Our results, published in a series of articles (see Bhattacharya, Chattopadhyaya and Rudra (1987)) show that there was hardly any improvement in the average levels of living of the rural population.

bered, was given by the Labour government of Great Britain after the Second World War with its National Health programme. After that different countries followed suit, not only in the matter of health but also in a large number of other fields like education, unemployment benefits, maternity benefits, old age pensions, provisions for the retarded, a whole range of benefits for children irrespective of the discarded concept of illegitimacy and so on. Our government, supposedly engaged in planning for socialism, has not even made a beginning with anything that may be called a social welfare programme for the people as a whole and this conspicuous absence is not even commented upon by the formidable community of economists who are forever engaged in critical discussion about the performance of our development efforts.

While there is no social security programme the State takes very special care of its own employees. It is a common knowledge that salaried employees of big private enterprises, especially higher executives, enjoy a fantastic range of perquisites, including allowances for domestic servants, allowances for children's education, allowances for entertainment and what not. What is not a common knowledge is that many public sector enterprises provide many benefits to their employees which surpass those enjoyed by private sector employees.

Government employees and employees of various institutions which are autonomous or semi-autonomous but financed by the government enjoy various provisions made for their economic well-being without their having to ask for them, let alone engage in any kind of struggle. Thus, Pay Commissions are set up every few years to revise their salaries upwards. Dearness allowances are paid to them with an indexing mechanism such that as the price level goes up the allowances increase automatically so as to neutralise, at least partially, the effects of price rise. This makes the Intelligentsia indifferent to the inflationary policies of the State, for they are not affected. In addition, there are various perquisites.

There have of course always been things connected with housing like quarters, free or at nominal rentals, and house rent allowances at various arbitrary and heavily subsidised rates. But these have been left far behind by the flood of money being paid out by way of house-building loans at heavily subsidised interest rates.¹³ Similarly, the provision of office cars, restricted till recently to people of ministerial rank and top administrators and executives, is now dwindling in importance before the massive loans being given for the purchase of motor cars, motor cycles, scooters,

¹³In the course of a few years house building loans given to Central government employees and employees of autonomous institutions financed by the Central government have increased so as to reach Rs. 2½ lakhs per person at rates of interest less than half that of the bank rate.

etc. (These loans are often combined with generous allowances for covering running costs.) There is also the phenomenon of handsome 'conveyance allowances', which are paid whether one travels or not. As to TA/DA' it is perhaps not known to everybody that while travelling abroad our government officers draw daily allowances at the rate \$ 150 which compares with the upper ceiling of \$ 80 imposed by the federal government of the US. As to holidays, if one is a central government officer one can travel first class or second class by railways to the farthest corner of the country. If one is a bank officer one can travel AC first class or even fly. In most cases one has to submit papers showing that one has actually travelled, though cheating on that score is made extremely easy. However, in some organisations one need not cheat; one gets one's LTC for the entire family, even if one has not travelled at all. Many organisations provide cheap and comfortable holiday homes for their staff in tourist spots. We can safely predict that soon one will be paid for international travels by Air India. Many public sector organisations now provide loans also for all kinds of durable consumer goods. One can now watch films showing the poverty of the poor by progressive directors like Mrinal Sen and Govind Nihalani, sitting in one's air-conditioned drawing room furnished with the help of loan money. Then there are the various bonuses and advances for festivals, flood, drought and what not. These advances usually do not represent large amounts; but practically everybody who is entitled to them applies for and gets them for their being interest free, practically no attention being paid by anybody as to whether one is really affected by festivals or floods or drought. Talking of floods and droughts, it is remarkable that while development projects have been drastically cut in the name of the drought, that reason was not used for postponing the salary revisions even by a year or putting any cuts on all the different kinds of consumer loans to the rich.¹⁴

None of the schemes mentioned above can be treated as parts of any social security programme even for the microscopic group having access to them. Social security is a concept of protection against hazards. None of the above scheme are designed to provide any protection against any hazards. They are meant to meet such needs which, in the context of our country, constitute luxuries and not necessities. This is true not only of the consumption loans for buying durables and the different advances but also of house building loans and tour expenses. House building loans are not given to people who live in slums. It is given to people who are already living in apartments or official quarters. While millions of people live in unspeakably squalid slums without sanitation, without electricity,

¹⁴See Chatterjee (1988) for an exposition of this anarchic pattern.

and without running water, the loan receivers move from one comfortable accommodation to another even more comfortable accommodation. As to official tours, there are a few services in which touring is obligatory. But in others, it is usually discretionary. One would hardly expect an officer to go on tour if in that process he should incur financial losses. As a matter of fact, in most cases each tour provides the touring officer with some extra cash and all kinds of utilities (e.g. sight seeing, meeting friends and relatives, etc). In so far as travel is a form of enjoyment, there cannot be any doubt that official tours are at least partly a kind of perquisite. Let us not forget that those who fly or travel first class when going on tours usually travel second class when travelling on private account. At least the difference in comfort between these different modes of travel has to be accounted for as a fringe benefit to the travelling officer.

It is not on record that government servants have ever seriously agitated to acquire these benefits—they have been given these as pure gifts. Many of these benefits are enjoyed by all citizens of the developed capitalist countries of the West. The peculiarity in India is that the State uses public resources collected from the population as a whole to provide these benefits not to the population as a whole but only to its own employees. Once the lead is established by the Central Government all State governments follow suit. Then all the autonomous government-financed institutions formulate their own rules for benefitting their employees on similar lines. As to the organised private sector,¹⁵ perquisites are not imposed upon them by any State directives; but the State policies with regard to government employees act indirectly much in the same fashion as the support prices for agricultural products push up the prices of those products in the open market!

As to people in professions engaged in private practice, the State support takes the form of omission rather than of commission. There are no controls over the fees charged even for such an essential service as that provided by doctors. Private practising doctors may and do charge whatever they like and provide whatever services they think fit. The same is true of lawyers. Justice in our country prides itself in being blind-folded. As a result, in so far as advocacy has any effect on the course of justice, the poor are at a disadvantage.

¹⁵There are various definitions of the organised sector. According to one, those units that are covered by the Factory Law belong to the organised sector. According to another, the organised sector is defined by a minimum number of persons employed. For our purpose none of them is satisfactory. We think of such labourers as belonging to the organised sector as those who are organised trade union-wise and who are subject to some labour law protections.

As to the fourth category, namely, writers, artists, journalists etc., there is direct State patronage in the form of grants and subsidies for publishing books and producing films and commissioning of painters and sculptors for decorating public buildings. Newspapers and other media industries receive support through government advertisements as well as loans. Important journalists are extended many perquisites meant for the top bureaucrats : in Delhi many such people enjoy the vast luxurious villas given out as quarters meant for Secretaries. Important members of these manufacturers of ideology are often made members of delegations abroad.

We have been talking about direct State patronage. But equally important, and in the case of those who are not salaried employees of the State even more important, are the taxation policies as applied to them. As is well known, the country's public finance depends overwhelmingly on indirect taxes. But even in the area of direct taxes the treatment meted out to the members of the Intelligentsia is particularly soft. As to salaried employees, there are increasing provisions for various exemptions clauses in addition to the Standard Deduction, so much so that a person earning a monthly income of Rs. 2,500 may not pay any tax at all. Given that for tax purposes husband's and wife's incomes are reckoned separately, a couple earning Rs. 5,000 per month may also not pay any tax whatsoever. When it comes to non-salaried professionals, the tax authorities show undue leniency towards them. Doctors, advocates, writers, journalists, film stars, etc. are not known to be paragons of virtue declaring all their taxable incomes and the tax authorities are not known to try to discover them and to give out any punishments to the evaders. In the case of film stars publicly acknowledged tax evasion has to be counted in lakhs and crores and yet not one of them has ever been harassed or punished.

As to politicians, it is well known that politics in our country is financed almost entirely by black money. Most active politicians do not have any visible sources of income. On the other hand, most of them spend money quite liberally. In their personal habits many of them may not be extravagant, but the compulsions of politics require them to travel around a great deal. The travel expenses alone for any ordinary politician would be quite considerable.

Party funds remain a matter of mystery. There must be considerable amounts coming from foreign sources. There cannot also be any doubt that a considerable part of the party funds are contributed by businessmen out of their black money. The relevant point for us here is that the income tax authorities do nothing about it. Allowing business houses to evade taxes and pay politicians with their black money clearly reveals

the State's role as servitor of the interests on the one hand of capitalists and on the other of the Intelligentsia to which class belong the politicians.

12. INVESTMENT BIASES

We have, in the previous section, discussed in detail the policies which impinge directly on the incomes in cash and kind of members of the Intelligentsia. We shall now discuss certain other investment policies of the State which do not concern directly personal incomes but which never the less reveal State patronage being extended to the Intelligentsia.

Consider the allocation of resources for development. Consider the allocation for such sectors as public health, sanitation, transport, communication, housing, higher education, scientific research, tourism and what may be called international public relations in the matters of sports and culture.

In the field of public health, the bulk of the population has of course to depend on government hospitals and dispensaries. They remain in pitiable conditions which is reflected in the mushrooming of private hospitals and nursing homes all over the country. The government itself depends on these private peddlers of medical services when getting its VIP's treated with public funds. As to sanitation, drinking water supply for all remains as much unattained a goal as that of primary education for all children. Malaria and many other epidemic diseases have made a come back and taking their tolls from among the poor. Schemes for the supply of nutritious food for mothers and children have not even been thought of. Supply of an essential food item like milk is ensured only in the very big cities.

As to Transport, one is computerising railway reservations and building more and more international air terminals. But lakhs of villages have still not got any roads inside them and are connected with the nearest highways only by muddy and dusty dirt roads.

As to Communications, one can now watch cricket on the other hemisphere on coloured T.V. through satellite transmission and the same high technology ensures smooth telephone conversation with cousins living in America. But the postal system which serves the ordinary man is getting more and more expensive and more and more slow and undependable.

As to Housing, the slums of the megalopolies remain the 'Cities of Joy' that they are described so vividly by Dominique Lapierre—miles of squalor, garbage, shelters made out of junk, and hardly any toilet facilities. The government, however, has been spending huge amounts for

building houses and giving loans at highly subsidised rates for those who can afford, Rs. 2½ lakhs and upwards for an apartment. It may be recalled that in the Soviet Union and the countries of East Europe, while nobody lived in slums, comfortable housing was a luxury denied to most people for the sake of saving steel, cement etc. for the heavy industries. Exactly the opposite is happening in India—the heavy industries are languishing and steel and cement are being eaten up by a boom in the house building industry.

As to higher education, it is generally agreed that the country has got no perspective in this field. Colleges and universities are being set up with scant regard for academic standards. The principal concern seems to be not education but the unemployment problem. The aim is to create some jobs for teachers and to convert the open unemployment of the school leaving youth into disguised unemployment.

On scientific research, our structures may be less readily agreed upon. Symbolic of the mindlessness of our Science Policy is best represented by our Space Programme. With infantile enthusiasm the country has wanted to join the small club of space researching countries. Most developed countries and all third world countries other than India have kept away from this extravaganza. There is hardly any R and D in our industrial sector. There is a lot of scope for improving the primitive technologies in agriculture and transport, symbolised by the age old bullock and plough and the bullock-cart without going in for mechanisation of Western models. Very little research has however been carried out with that end in view. Very little research has been carried out for harnessing non-conventional energies. Research in all these fields would have enormously benefitted the country. Space research on the other hand can bring nothing whatsoever to the country. Not even prestige. For Indian scientists in this field are trailing so much behind the superpowers as to make their efforts look quite ludicrous. There cannot be any question that the programme exists only to satisfy the vanity of some scientists and some ministers and bureaucrats, all belonging to the Intelligentsia.

The country has been spending increasing amounts for promoting domestic and international tourism. International tourism is sought to be justified in the name of earning foreign exchanges, though nobody has as yet carried out a Cost-Benefit Analysis to show how much the country has actually benefitted at what cost. But domestic tourism cannot be justified on any such grounds. To invest money in that field is clearly meant to benefit the middle class, inclusive of the Intelligentsia, for the poor do not travel for pleasure.

The country has been spending a great deal for the noble cause of organising exhibitions of Indian culture abroad. There are lots of program-

mes for sending our 'cultural messengers' abroad. Along with writers and artists, dancers and musicians, there are always some chaperons who specialise in the art of international public relations. For the sake of sports, hundreds and thousands of crores are spent on various building activities, as was best seen in the case of the Asiad. Participation in any Olympics, from where not even bronzes are brought back in any number, is once again a highly expensive programme for entertaining the middle class.

We have made a rapid survey of a number of different fields in which investments are being carried out by the State in considerable amounts. These investments are such that the beneficiaries in each case are members of the middle class. In most cases, a little examination will show that to benefit fully from these programmes one has to belong to that part of the middle class which we have designated as the Intelligentsia.

13. BIASED POLICIES NOT INVOLVING INVESTMENT

There are many other policies which do not involve investments but which nevertheless serve the interests of the Intelligentsia at the cost of the people at large. A good example is the phenomenon of Brain Drain. There are some categories of skilled personnel leaving the country and settling abroad which are such that they could not have served the country in any fruitful fashion if they stayed back. In this case the phenomenon indicates the total aimlessness of our educational system, the resources spent on the training of the people concerned being totally wasted. In other cases, the migrants are such that their leaving the country causes difficulties for the domestic economy. In these cases it is not the educational system that is at fault, but the policy that allows migration. It is not difficult to think of various ways in which the Brain Drain may be stopped. After all, passports have to be issued and various other documents required. There is everything to be said in favour of the closed-door policy pursued by the Soviet Union till recently, There is everything to be said to produce skilled personnel on the basis of careful manpower planning and insisting upon the trainees to sign bonds committing them to serve the country for a minimum number of years. Not only that this has not been done, there is no National Service at all in our country on the lines of the compulsory services, military or otherwise, to which all young citizens of both the developed countries of the capitalist West and the socialist East are subject. All young people in those countries have to devote one or two years after they finish their basic education and before they begin their working life for some services to the country against a provision of bare subsistence.

exceptions whatsoever are made to this rule for any VIP's children. Nothing prevented our government to implement such a rule for those benefitting from the higher education system. The literacy problem could have been solved in a few years if one insisted that adult education should be one task in such a Compulsory Service Programme. Health services in the countryside could have been improved enormously if it were made a condition that before getting a degree each medical student would have to serve for a year or two in some rural hospitals. The fact that such obvious steps have not been taken is one more clear proof that the families from among which these young people come to benefit from our higher education system are in a position to make and unmake State policies and therefore, by the token, members of a Ruling Class.

14. HOW TO BECOME A RULING CLASS

We now come to the last part of our analysis. We have to answer the question : how does the Intelligentsia, without having any property base, become a Ruling Class? Our answer is as follows. This class did not become a Ruling Class by acquiring power through any struggle with the other two Ruling Classes. The Intelligentsia, through its own efforts, acquired many of the privileges it enjoys. The remaining privileges have been given to it as gifts by the other two Ruling Classes for a very crucial political reason. This class has been, as it were, co-opted into the ruling coalition by the other two more powerful and preexisting members. Let us amplify.

We have described before in Section 7 how the members of the Intelligentsia occupy all the positions from where one operates the gears and steering wheels of the State machinery. We have shown before that politicians who formulate such policies, bureaucrats who supervise their implementation, the subordinate workers who carry out the actual implementation, and the trade union leaders who resist or do not resist the implementation all belong to the Intelligentsia. As such, members of the Intelligentsia are in a position to prevent the implementation of all such policies that might affect their interests adversely, and promote the formulation and implementation of all such policies which further their interests. It is therefore, not surprising that State policies which get actually implemented should be such as to serve the interest of the Intelligentsia.

What could be the reasons for the two pre-existing ruling classes to co-opt the third? The answer has got an economic and a political dimension. The economic rationale is that pumping more and more of purchasing power into the hands of the intelligentsia has for its aim the creation

of an ever expanding 'home market' for luxury products. From this angle the policy of subsidising the Intellegentsia is an integral part of the strategy followed by the State which we have called elsewhere "Luxury-led Growth Strategy."¹⁶ Many among our economists for a long time made the elementary error of thinking that luxury products could not be the basis for the industrial development of our country. The rich are very small in number, they argued, and therefore the market for luxury goods has to be very limited. The elementary mistake lay in that the size of a market does not depend on the number of customers but on the volume of purchasing power in their hands. A huge amount of money is being pumped into a small enclave consisting mostly of the Intelligentsia by way of various *tied loans* at subsidised interest rates. That is the surest way of expanding the markets for automobiles, motor cycles and scooterst housebuilding materials etc. As to the LTC and official tours, they involve, transfers from one budget head to another and expand the markets for the services of the railways and the airlines. *The government is thus acting as an agent for the entire luxury goods industries for promoting hire-purchases!*

How is this operation being financed? As is well known, by borrowing from the public. Economists have noted that the Government is getting the country into a debt trap. The intelligentsia, however, is not getting into any kind of trap. That is because it is *simultaneously lending money to the government at high rates of interest and borrowing money from the government at half those rates, or even lower.*

The political reason for the other two Ruling Classes co-opting the Intelligentsia as a junior partner in the coalition is that it is the Intelligentsia that provides leadership to all the currents of political thought and action from the Extreme Right to the Extreme Left. Radical thinking and radical action are the prerogatives of this class. If this class is discontented they might promote restiveness among the masses and make them challenge the hegemony of the erstwhile Ruling Classes. If there is ever any kind of a revolution in this country that would be led, in thought and in action, by the Intelligentsia. If, on the other hand, the Intelligentsia remains content with its lot, their radicalism would remain restricted to postures and rhetoric and would not give rise to any challenge by the masses to the established order. As such, it is in the interest of the erstwhile Ruling Classes to have the Intelligentsia as an ally rather than as an adversary. It has therefore been the strategy of the erstwhile

¹⁶I have developed my arguments in support of this thesis in the article "Luxury-led Growth Strategy and Its Beneficiaries" published in the *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 21, 1988.

Ruling Classes to *buy up* the Intelligentsia. That of course means some price to be paid by those two classes. They have to sacrifice a part of their wealth and income derived from surplus extraction. They obviously have found it worth the price.

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