CHAPTER - V

SOCIO-HISTORICAL FORMATION OF THE INDIAN NEW MIDDLE CLASS
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The theoretical stance developed so far i.e. 'the new middle class is yet another perdurable mode of work-Moksa' has sought to liberate the new middle class—an issue of daunting complexity—from the unceasing controversy of the existing debate. By postulating 'work-Moksa' as the class essence and positing the active 'subject' in the centre-stage of history, work no more remains a potent category to class analysis. The very conception of 'social' being constituted in the privileged terrain of 'work-Moksa' implies that economic, political and ideological structures of a society can be seen merely as the outcome and expression of subject's struggles towards an ever expanding sphere of work-Moksa.

As soon as these structures are conceived as drawing vitality not from work but work-Moksa, their treatment as something having the same generic content becomes far from problematic. Consequently the projected pre-eminence of economy in class research bursts asunder, and what is more, the insurmountable difficulties encountered by many a class theories in moving from economic structures to politico-ideological domain become absolutely redundant.

Hence the predominance and overarching influence of capitalist mode of production on various theories of the new middle class turns out to be mute obsession, and such practical dilemmas as arise from the rooting of these theories in 'production relations' or 'market relations' etc. are reduced to nothingness. Once class, class struggle, class formation and
class consciousness are comprehended through the true essence of social i.e. 'work-Moksa', the parameters of the existing debate on the new middle class are relegated to the background and subsumed to insignificance—hence opening the path for an adequate analysis of the new middle class as a concrete socio-historical formation in a given society.

This conception of the socio-historical formation of classes—their origin and constitution in the domain of work-Moksa—visualizes, the continuously struggling subject of history seeking entry into any expanding moment of work-Moksa while simultaneously transcending the existing forms of work. The struggles around the formation of a class (also among classes) become concomitant to the emergence and perpetuation of a particular mode of work-Moksa. Consequently the invention, adoption or rejection of a certain mode of production by a particular class(es) remains contingent upon and subject to its relative work-Moksa Potential. Thus historically, the various modes of production merely turn out to be the outcome, creation and conscious choices of subject's struggles towards evermore durable moment of work-Moksa.

The notion of class(es) being the product of a particular mode of production or merely emanating from and expression of specific material conditions etc. bears no relation to this analysis. Class formation viewed here is simply the outcome of subject's struggles for the creation, expansion, perpetuation, preservation, acquisition of or in defence of work-Moksa. Hence to perceive the existence of the new middle class — a socio-historic formation having work-Moksa essence characteristic of the
'man of cognition' and with varying historical manifestations of its 'form' and 'content' (caste, religion etc.) - at any moment in the history of a society comes within the range of a possibility. 1

COLONIALISM AND THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS

It needs no reiteration that till recent an exclusive treatment of the new middle class, pertaining both to colonial and post-independent periods, has more or less remained absent. 2 Whatever the fragmentary attention the subject did receive, formed generally a contingent part of studies devoted entirely to different purposes 3 and above all lacked any sound theoretical basis. The conspicuous theoretical neglect in most accounts is to the extent that there existed an utter disregard even for sorting out the definitional problems - much has passed under the blanket-term 'middle classes' or categories of convenience viz. 'educated middle classes', professional middle classes', 'urban middle classes' or simply in the journalistic vein such as 'intelligentsia' or 'intellectuals' etc. 4

1. Sharma has revealed that caste has inhered class and class has inhered caste for centuries in the Indian context; both the systems of 'caste' and 'class' have transformed simultaneously and inseparably since they never existed as separate or independent principles of social relations; see, Sharma, K.L., Essays on Social Stratification, Jaipur: Rawat Publication, 1980, esp. pp.1-50; and Sharma, K.L.,(ed), Social stratification in India, Delhi: Manohar Publication, 1986, pp.29-61

2. For beginning, see, Singh, G., The New Middle Class in India, Jaipur: Rawat Publication,1985


4. See, Misra, B.B., Indian Middle Classes, New Delhi:(Cont..)
The most intriguing aspect is that the theoretical problematic of this class elicited absolutely no response from the Marxist scholars in India while their peers in the West had, almost by the beginnings of this century, identified in it a potential threat of refutation to Marxism and since then have struggled to contain the problem within Marxist theory. However, as discussed earlier, their inflated preoccupation with capitalist mode of production stemming both from the 'dramatic rise of old middle class to grand bourgeoisie' and Marx's analysis of 'pure capitalism' had so heavily influenced the Western class theories that an adequate theory of the new middle class is yet waiting to emerge. No wonder then, that for Indian Marxists as colonialism generally remained the incarnation of Western capitalism, so remained the predominant explanation in otherwise casual and incoherent accounts of the 'new middle class' limited to the impact of British capitalism and its attendant colonial education, legal and administrative systems etc.

On the other hand, although there is a large body of literature on colonial administration etc. in India but it is either anecdotal or largely summaries of the development of rules, regulations and procedures etc. under which the colonial administration functioned. The present analysis has no qualms

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for not repeating the same, since it is centrally concerned with revealing the ideological effects of the changing British class structure on the nature of the colonial state, intends to capture the essence of political struggles in India and their combined contribution towards the making of the new middle class in India. It is only in the context of the ever occurring transformation of the colonial state because of the effects generated by various struggling classes that any qualitative meaning can be conferred upon the colonial systems of education, law and administration etc. Any exclusive conception and treatment of colonial administration etc. simply emanating from and product of British education, legal systems etc. subservient to Imperialist economy bespeaks nothing of the effects generated by the formation and struggles of classes; and such an exercise devoid of any social theory at best results in the blank documentation of historical events. 6

The contention here is that colonialism though initially the offspring of the then emerging British capitalist class had never remained throughout wholly conducive to its class interests. Over a period colonialism had undergone transformation and matured into an overall project of the entire British society whereby in its perpetuation or otherwise the relevant interests of all other classes (including the new middle class) had turned out to be equally at stake. Of particular significance to this analysis is the social dynamics of the new middle class within

the then changing British class structure and the substantial bearing it had made on the class nature of its counterpart in colonial India.

**Rudiments of the New Middle Class During Early Phases of Colonialism**

The advent of the Europeans by the turn of the sixteenth century was characteristic of the 'trading class' that strives historically to securely root its 'work-Moksa' in the far removed different geographic regions.* The appearance of the British, almost a century later, on the Indian subcontinent was no exception to this general proposition. Throughout the seventeenth century their experience was marked by adventures, extreme risks and uncertainties; rife with strifes, battles, loots and piracies perpetrated by contending parties (Portuguese, Dutch, French and English); ridden by arbitrary exactions of various officials of Indian rulers (including the Mughal); and above all was heavily influenced by the acrimonious relations of the emerging nation states within the socially tumultuous Europe.

In order to eliminate the disruptions in the flow of work-Moksa, to do away with the import of specie (bullion) from England and to supplant their finance through internal revenue the English merchants embarked upon to conquer Indian territories. In the background of disintegrating Mughal Empire—the battle of Plassey (1757) and subsequently the conquest of

* Henceforth, for any clarifications of work-Moksa, refer to the preceding chapter of this analysis.

Bengal etc. - East India company established control over large parts of the Indian subcontinent. However by the time English merchants took over the role of a ruler, the Company's purely commercial activity had ended and much of the mercantile concern rapidly changed into a civil and military administrative project. But the administrative outfit that emerged more or less behaved according to the norms prevalent in later Mughal times.

From the very outset, the servants who were supposed to serve the company, played truant and defied the dictates of commercial capital. The story of 'quick-get-rich' techniques through bribery, corruption, misutilization of company's 'dustuks' for private gain, illegal investment of illgotten funds in Agency Houses by company's servants etc., that too in the very knowledge of company - is well known and requires no repetition here. The despotic control over internal trade, bribery, corruption and loot by company's servants (from highest officials down to the junior most writer) reinforced by an extensive growth in services due to the backfiring of Cornwallis policies of 'minimum government', generally swallowed


10. Baibanti, R(ed.) op.cit. 1966, "Cornwallis' hope of minimum government had proved illusory" and led to an extensive growth in Services; p. 88.
up much of the surplus revenues and often landed the company into serious financial difficulties, driving it many a times to the verge of bankruptcy.

The economic project of the company had no more remained an exclusive domain of commercial capital; another social formation - outwardly and technically characterised yet as salaried servants - had very much entered in the fray and was not wholly conducive to the interests of the nascent capitalist class. The later day notions of bureaucratic rationality (Weberian) or of a subservient instrument of the capitalist class (Marxist) etc. were alien to the very structural birth of the new middle class.

Since few Britishers were acquainted with Indian customs, culture, languages etc.; from those among the Indians there emerged a whole range of intermediaries, middlemen, agents, sub-agents, dallals, supervisors, inspectors, deputies, assistants, interpreters, 'dubashes' (having knowledge of two languages), paikars, brokers, tax collectors, money changers, diwans (advisors to zamindari kutcheri) and employees working in municipal corporations etc.; in the service of the company. Even early independent 'dadni merchants' were replaced by 'gomashtas' of the company who were employed by it as paid agents to render exclusive service to the company.11 Indians, irrespective of caste, religion etc., struggled to acquire such qualifications as ensured their entry into company's services. They were mainly drawn to such callings because these provided relatively better and ensured work-Moksa moment.

11. See, Chand, T., op.cit., 1967, Vol.2.,pp.108-169; His description of Indian traders, merchants, artisans etc. is of no concern to this analysis.
In contrast with the earlier prevailing anarchy, resulting from the collapse of the Mughal Empire, which was hampering their personal substance or freedom; they could now make an ostentatious display of their work-Moksha moment under the regular and stable conditions of the emerging British settlements. Absolved of the traditional constraints such people alongside the British created and opted for such conditions as were conducive to enjoy their wealth and fortunes in the urban centers of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay.

In the initial phases there occurred a substantial growth of Indians in the company's services, only to be hit hard later on by Cornwallis'\textsuperscript{12} zealous Europeanization drive that took away all the hitherto held appointments from Indians and finally shut the door upon them to higher as well as large number of subordinate posts. Besides that, towards the close of the eighteenth century, stress was laid on the need for "a large and well regulated body of Europeans"\textsuperscript{13} and beginning with Wellesley's famous despatch to the Court of Directors (1800), for the proper education and training\textsuperscript{14} of the civil servants of the company.


\textsuperscript{13} Chand T., op.cit., 1967, p.140.

\textsuperscript{14} See Cohn, B. S., 'Recruitment and Training of British Civil Servants in India 1600-1860' in Braibanti, R. (ed.), op.cit. 1966, pp.87-140.
In fact both the assumptions were mere reflection of a new thinking that was incepting to underpin the differentia incognito of the new middle class. Implicit in the former assumption was the further growth of the new middle class while the latter meant its professionalization and institutionalization within the colonial state. The die was caste for the colonial state to be a repository of the new middle class—first to be filled in by the British and only to be replaced later on by the Indians through political action.

**Changing British Class Structure, State And The New Middle Class**

The close of the eighteenth and the early decades of nineteenth century witnessed an unprecedented social transformation in the British class structure concomitant with the industrial revolution.\(^{15}\) The formation of new classes was in the offing. Society was rife with new ideas and fresh visions of social and political organization. The legitimacy of the old order was increasingly subjected to critical scrutiny—artisan and trader was struggling for more social space, the working class was in the making\(^{16}\) and above all the very English air was impregnated with a new language of class.\(^{17}\) Beginning with the 'dual-control' of Pitt's India Act 1784, (Company & British State), the colonial question remained closely tied to changing British social structure.


The new classes-in-formation were feeling more and more envious of company's servants, from "Director down to the door-keeper" who were amassing "princely fortunes" in India. If charter of 1793 was a compromise of various struggling interests, the charter of 1813 was the much famous triumph of laissez-faire that had opened Indian territories for British free-traders. Struggles continued for diverse purposes: conservatives stood for company's control, evangelists for spread of christianity, mercantile elements for more avenues of free-trade and utilitarians for imparting Western systems of law, land revenue, education etc. to Indian administration. Consequently the commercial functions of the company were divested and British State reduced it to the status of an agent for conducting Indian administration.

Henceforth colonial state got more and more preoccupied not with trade but with problems of administration: for instance introduction of new revenue policies, legal reforms and Western education system through the medium of English etc. The period was one of 'reform' in England and also in India was marked by a rethinking and change. In England, if not aristocracy, at least aristocratic ideal was on the wane, the entrepreneurial ideal that rested on the moral authority of 'individualism' had no more remained a 'sanctum sanctorum', 'collectivism' was in the offing and the considerations which seemed too potent by the turn of the nineteenth century had evaporated into a thin air.

In India the process was hastened by the revolt of 1857—hence in 1858 direct rule of the British crown was ultimately established in India. Thus colonialism had matured into an overall project of the entire British society whereby in its future perpetuation or otherwise the relevant interests of all the classes had turned out to be equally at stake.

It may be noted that there-to-fore, all personnel in the Indian civil service were mainly recruited from a very restricted group of banking, commercial and landed families of English society whose cultural and economic ties were very much buttressed by ties of descent and affinity. As regarding Indians the policy of discrimination was finally given up in 1833 since, at least in theory, colour, caste, religion and place of birth would not be a bar to any future appointments. Barring the covenanted services there occurred an increase of Indians in the subordinate services. Beyond that the change had not made any significant effect either on the nature or character of the new middle class or on the class structure of Indian society.

The above discussed process and the future formation of the British state was part of "a social revolution: a revolution in social organization, with social causes as well as social effects", experienced by the English society during the nineteenth century.


century. There were three major class ideals i.e. aristocratic, entrepreneurial and working class ideals contending for supremacy during the early decades of nineteenth century. Yet there was another class and another ideal:

"An extraordinary proportion of the spokesmen of the first three ideals were members of none of the three classes ---. To what class did this collection of lawyers, doctors, public officials, journalists, professors and lecturers belong? ---. They belonged to the professional middle class (new middle class), a class curiously neglected in the social theories of age, but one which played a part out of all proportions to its members in both the theory and practice of class conflict." 23

Perkin notes that they were the 'forgotten-class' because they forgot themselves: Except when postulating a place for their idealized selves in other classes' ideal societies, they generally left themselves out of their social analyses. Nevertheless this class had a separate, if sometimes subconscious, social ideal which underlay their version of the other class ideals. The central merit of his argument is that he has successfully put his finger on the right spot: What characterized these emancipated professional men as a class was their comparative aloofness from the struggle for income. They were above the economic battle, with the same freedom to take sides in all class struggles. Not being involved they had the more freedom to take sides. 24

23. ibid. p.252.
* Bracketed mine.
In sum: The process of formation and the attendant struggle of the new middle class was not subject to or directly influenced by the laws of property, production and market etc., rather had relative autonomy of such structures and was taking place in the sphere of already released free-moment, flowing from somewhere else through the work of some others i.e. within the domain of work-Moksa. Of critical significance to this analysis is that by the middle of the nineteenth century - even during the periods of Toryism (reaction) and Benthamism (individualism), the bedrock of laissez-faire, - the new middle class had already emerged as a potent factor in British politics and had started exerting a considerable influence on the politico-ideological stance of the British state.

The Rise Of 'Collectivism'

The phenomenon had taken unprecedented strides under 'collectivism'. Since 1860s faith in laissez-faire had started suffering an eclipse and the legislative social opinion had been gradually running, with more and more force, in the direction of collectivism.\(^{25}\) The fundamental principle involved was the growing conviction in the 'good' and 'benefit' to be derived by the mass of the people from the action of the state (even in matters which were often left to the uncontrolled management of the persons concerned). More and more people denied the moral authority of 'individualism', denounced the dogma of laissez-faire and insisted on the need for thorough-going reforms. Central to 'collectivism' were the two assumptions:

\(^{25}\) See Dicey, A.V., Law and Public opinion in England, London: Macmillan, 1930; This work is still the chief guide to (Cont..)
1) the growing awareness that laissez-faire in most cases was not the principle of sound legislation;
2) an emerging belief in the benefit of governmental guidance or interference, even when it greatly limited the sphere of individual choice or liberty. 26

The rise of 'collectivism' generated diverse struggles at various levels: for regulation of factories, mines, public health general housing legislation, food, drugs etc.; for state aid to individuals or bodies in the form of education grants, factory education etc.; for state provision for particular groups, aged, orphan children, sick-poor, public libraries, hospitals, national insurance etc.; state ownership (total or in part) of the means of production, distribution & exchange etc.; for collective bargaining through trade unionism; even the collective engagement in corporate trade (joint-stock companies etc.) fostered the growth of 'collectivism'. 27

In sum: there ensued a running battle for parliamentary reform i.e. to decide the form of constitution etc. and for administrative reforms i.e. to determine the machinery of executive government, methods and new requirements for recruiting administrators etc. and the ways and mean of implementing reforms.

* To some extent Dicey traced the beginnings of 'collectivism' even back to the first education grants of 1833; ibid. pp.276-79.
Engaged in the forefronts of all the struggles was the same 'Proteus'. What was apparent in 'politics' under 'Benthamism' or 'individualism'; under collectivism, became very much truism in innumerable other fields. Notwithstanding the other consequences of these struggles, the central aspect was that all roads led to a single destination i.e. the new middle class.

The spokesmen, representatives, leaders and office bearers of sundary organizations and their attendant institutions, fighting for diverse causes, reinforced by the increased employment of 'white-collar' by the state and to some extent within the production processes etc., swelled the ranks of the new middle class. The new middle class emerged in the centre-stage of British class structure and consequently altered the nature of British state.

Towards the close of the nineteenth century (even before the death-knell of laissez-faire in 1900) capitalist class was poised for a 'geological landslide' since new middle class had emerged "an important element in the social system and was already helping to determine the shape of society". Hence under 'collectivism' the new middle class was gradually taking over a social position similar to that which the 'old middle class' had occupied under individualism in the mid-nineteenth century. The social and political significance which the phenomenon of the new middle class acquired during the twentieth century needs no documentation here.*


Work-Moksa Potential of Collectivism

Thus, since the middle of nineteenth century, the new middle class nurtured by 'collectivism' had gradually acquired its own social dynamics in the British class structure and significantly influenced the nature and evolution of the British state. By positing state as extraneous to civil society, 'collectivism', has been generally seen as contributor of increased state intervention. However, in the light of theoretical formulations developed in the last chapter, the analytical content of 'collectivism' turns out to be that:

1) it raised, for the first time, enormous possibilities for the transcendence of existing forms of work and simultaneously for the emergence and legitimacy of new forms of work having increased moment of work-Moksa e.g. spokesmen, representatives and office-bearers of various organizations, institutions etc. fighting for diverse 'collective' causes etc.

2) it opened the path for an ever-more flow of work-Moksa to all sections of society e.g. regulation of factories, Ten Hours Bill etc.

3) the structuration and formation of British state got ever-more oriented towards the elimination of any disruptions etc. in the flow of work-Moksa hence creating such stable and regular social conditions as were conducive both for work and work-Moksa moments; e.g. rules, checks and inspections etc. related to working conditions; and civil amenities, housing, public transport, hospitals and even professionalization of police etc.
4) above all, 'collectivism' incorporated such an in-built mechanism that one's work-Moksa could flow in from any other societal source. The direct source of its generation e.g. agriculture, artisan etc. receded into the background and relation between one's work and work-Moksa became hazy, mystified and indeterminate e.g. trade-union leader need not himself be a factory worker; and for instance the legislation tending towards equalization of advantages among all classes, during the last half of the nineteenth century in England, in fact meant the conferring of benefits upon wage-earners at the expense of the whole body of tax-payers. 30

The following conclusions are to be derived:

1) During the last half of the nineteenth century, new middle class rooting itself in 'collectivism' had gradually emerged a significant social formation in the changing British class structure;

2) it exhibited and displayed a distinct and durable mode of work-Moksa;

3) the emerging democratic British state increasingly became a repository of the new middle class, consequently got well disposed to the nature and character of that class.

4) one of the predominant orientations of the democratic state centres around the enhancement of durability, stability and regularization of the work-Moksa of all classes (subject to their class struggles). In other words its central project and cherished goal remains to eliminate disruptions, breaks and

violence etc. detrimental to the smooth expression of societal work-Moksa. In sum: it signifies a movement away from uncertain & disruptive society towards a stable and regularized social existence. The predominant structuration of the new middle class in a state is tantamount to normative distribution of work-Moksa moment.

Work-Moksa. 'Collectivism' and Structuration of the New Middle Class Within the Colonial State and Society

Historians of colonial economy and society have completely missed the social dynamics of the new middle class. In other words the significance of 'collectivism' remains completely ignored. Time and again distinctions in terms of 'state control' do emerge in various discussions, however, the true meaning and significance of the phenomenon remains unexplored. The rise of 'collectivism' (1860s onwards) concomitant with the social formation of the new middle class increasingly moulded the 'democratic' and welfare stance of the British state, which in turn transmitted and imparted these significant effects almost simultaneously to the colonial state in India. Prior to the rise of 'collectivism' neither the British nor the colonial state had any inkling of the social duties, obligations or responsibilities etc. conducive to the collective welfare of the whole society. It was only in the last half of the nineteenth century, that British policies substantially influenced the nature and character of the colonial state. 31

In fact the whole restructuration and reorganization of administration of justice, land revenue, and general administration including the police etc. occurred mainly because the colonial state increasingly absorbed the 'collectivist' ideas and

consequently issues of social consequence turned out to be important considerations. More and more, the state recognized its social responsibility towards projects of public concern: large scale public works, railways, irrigation-works, forests & roads etc. Of particular significance is that concern for general human suffering or aspects such as public health etc. gradually appeared on the agenda of the colonial state.

Though the initiative in the beginning generally came from district officers who acted independently and purely on humanitarian grounds (without any legal sanction) to check greedy commercial profiteers—seizing stocks and ensuring distribution of foodgrains etc. or controlling the market through executive actions during natural calamities vizfamines etc. --, however, later on colonial state considering the sufferings of the mass of the people, in principle recognized and legitimatized such executive actions as part of welfare measures. The distinctive change has been noted in the context of rural welfare; especially during the first few decades after 1858:

"Considerations of rural welfare in fact called for executive action to bend profiteers to the collective will of the community. ... The report of the Deccan Riots Commission (1873-74) provided full justification for executive interference as an instrument of welfare."

In fact, the colonial state increasingly acted towards protecting tenancy rights, acquiring knowledge of agricultural

statistics, promoting local self government and demanding that
district officers must acquaint themselves with the needs of
the rural population. The author, on the sheer strength of
huge data, identified the distinction, and described state's
actions not something as the antithesis of laissez-faire, how­
ever, provided a simplistic explanation that the state merely
acted in this fashion, in the interest of its own stability.
Devoid of any social theory, the researcher missed the true
essence and root cause of the phenomenon. At work within the
colonial state was simply the social thought of 'collectivism'.

Until 1860s the colonial civil service was merely a
'fossilized culture' bound by 'a spirit of camaraderie'. The
process of education and training—started by the turn of nine­
thenth century — had throughout remained superfluous and
victitious. The history of Haileybury College is testimony
that neither teachers nor students ever took any serious inter­
rest in academic instruction. College was one "well organized
humbug" where students practised gambling, drunkenness, rioting,
smashing window-pans, destroying property or learned organizing
pranks, and individually or corporally flaunted authority.
Nothing was taught to them about the Indian social and material
conditions etc. and they generally formed a very vague idea "that
it was beastly hot and there were niggers" in India. No wonder
then, that this ignorant lot after landing in India had generally
remained unconcerned and insensitive to the social and economic
condition of the Indian masses.

33. ibid.
34. See, Cohn, B.S., op.cit. 1966, pp.117-140.
The rise of 'collectivism' and changes in British class structure were concomitant with the changing tasks and responsibilities of the civil service in India. As discussed earlier, the emergence of British new middle class since 1850s was already helping to determine the future shape of the British society. More and more pressing demands for jobs also came from this class. Soon with the rise of political activity in India, the absorption of educated Indians in suitable employment had also to emerge a weighty consideration. 36 The system of nominations and fourfold competition had to give way to recruitment through open competition and examinations. A socially meaningful education and training had to result in the true professionalization of civil service. What is important, the new administrators had to increasingly bring with them the 'collectivist ideas', so characteristic of the new era. As discussed above, the initial executive actions to provide relief to the ordinary people from famines or greedy commercial profiteers etc. had come from independent administrators. Once the principle of executive action was recognized and legitimatized by state, its operation was gradually extended to other economic fields such as land revenue, industry, commerce, tariff and taxation etc.

To run and manage huge commercial and industrial undertakings, railways, irrigation-works, roads, bridges, forests, salt and opium factories etc. required specialization, expertise, skill

36. Mehrotra, S.R., *The Emergence of Indian National Congress*, New Delhi: Vikas, 1971; the rapid expansion of institutions of higher education had soon to produce degree holders who could not find government employment which they considered suitable to their qualifications; p.245.
and temperament of office. The extension in the scope of state's activities reinforced by considerations of specialization meant a corresponding expansion in the domain of white collar work. Decentralization of administration and judiciary, delinking of police from magistracy, separation of execution and control reinforced by extended activities of supervision and control etc. led to a further growth, hierarchies and stratification of white collar jobs. In fact, the process of "opening of more and more departments"\textsuperscript{37} continued unabated -- producing deputies, assistants, separate cadres in different fields viz. forest, agriculture etc., co-operative registrars, inspectors and host of other employees. Considerable growth also occurred in the professions of teaching, law, journalism, medicine and engineering etc.\textsuperscript{38}

Of critical importance to this analysis is that State's activities created innumerable new forms of work having durable, better and ensured moment of work-Moksa and consequently opened new paths for the transcendence of already existing forms of work. What had been achieved through various class struggles under the influence of collectivism in British society, the colonial state was more willingly transmitting the same to colonial social structure. The colossal growth of new forms of work ultimately turned the colonial state into a repository of white-collar-workers-predominantly British and to a lesser


\textsuperscript{38} However, it is to be noted, that despite the initial growth, none of these professions was expanding fast enough towards the close of the nineteenth century to absorb the surplus college graduates; Seal, A., The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century, Cambridge: Univ. Press, 1971 p.128.
extent Indians. In time, these white-collar-workers were to graduate to become the new middle class under the constant influence of political struggles for freedom; and this political interaction had to further transform the nature and character of the new middle class.

Again it was 'collectivism' that opened the path for political action whereby emerged the 'new middle class' as a leading force in the freedom movement. The widely held notion that British education system produced politics in colonial India is too simplistic and demands serious rethinking. The one and only one instance of 'collectivism' in the whole history of British state that goes as far back as 1833 was the recognition by it of a national responsibility for the education of English people. Prior to that British state recognized no responsibility, incurred no expenses and did not impose upon parents any legal obligation to provide for the education of their children. From 1833 onwards, the state made grants, to begin with of £20,000 -- a mere pittance from the richest nation of the world -- for the indirect promotion of education of the English people. To a certain extent, state for the first time admitted in principle, its duty as a national educator. However the assumption of such a duty was delayed by the distrust of 'state intervention' that was so characteristic of the Benthamite era.

If this was a stray excursion of 'collectivism' in the hey day of 'individualism' the same was more glaringly manifest in the initial phases of colonial education policy. In the charter of 1813, a provision was made for the yearly grants of

Rs. one lakh (£10,000) to be spent for the promotion of knowledge and education among the inhabitants of British territories in India. Between 1813-23, the full amount was never spent in any year and the clause remained almost a dead letter.  

Even the enthusiasm of 1830s for the 'dowanjard filtration' -- i.e. of providing elementary school to every hamlet -- drowned in no time since the thinking was odd with the predominant current of the times. It ended up in the opening of some educational institutions in the provincial city centers and merely produced the much desired clerks in subordinate services or helpers and assistants in various professions. The arguments that economic considerations were responsible for the backfiring of initial enthusiasm are frivolous; the matter of the fact is that both British and colonial states were yet simply naive on matters of social policy.

It was only during the last half of the nineteenth century that 'collectivism' gradually took root in the formation of colonial education policy. Colonial state increasingly affirmed its responsibility to educate those who possessed no means to educate themselves. Though an interplay of 'individualism' (laissez-faire & free enterprise in education) and 'collectivism' (state's commitment & efforts to promote education) remained in vogue, however colonial state through advances, retreats and sometimes by display of 'neutrality' moved in the direction of accepting, in principle, a social responsibility and obligation.

towards the education of the ordinary people of India.

Colonial state's efforts reached culmination only by the turn of this century (the year 1900 is marked by the end of laissez-faire in England), in that colonial education policy came under the predominant influence of collectivism — state moved in to exercise academic controls and regulations over various aspects of education and above all shifted its efforts away from the education of the few towards the education of the masses. Implicit in the whole assumption was an in-built trap i.e. colonial state simultaneously incurred upon itself a moral obligation of providing jobs to educated Indians — consequently raising their consciousness in the form of a right to demand suitable employment.

In fact the question of employment formed the central plank of earlier political activity and more or less remained one of the main issues throughout the struggle for freedom. English education during the earlier periods had produced mere 'dubashs' and 'babus'; thus it was not British education system per se rather the effects of 'collectivism' which introduced educated Indians to the domain of politics.

Above all the increasing manifestation of collectivism within the colonial state raised for the first time a possibility for any collective action in the colonial society. The emergence of new forms of social and political consciousness had been concomitant with the rise of collectivism. The period is marked by the birth of all social and political activities characteristic of the social thought of 'collectivism'. The origins and formation of local political associations by western-educated
Indians in the major cities goes back to the middle of the nineteenth century. Since 1860s there occurred an enormous growth of English and vernacular newspapers. The earliest recorded actions by workers against employers -- the first signs of working class consciousness that was to develop into trade union movement -- took place in the mid-1870s.

In fact, the last half of the nineteenth century was marked by the formation and growth of a bewildering variety of societies, associations and organizations: cultural, linguistic, religious and social reform societies; local voluntary societies; local political associations; professional and economic interest organizations. The period also witnessed the birth of Indian National Congress and the rise and growth of the organized struggle for Indian Nationalism. Thus the principle of collectivism, that was radically affecting the nature and restructuring of the colonial state, had also found an explosive expression in the wider arena of colonial society, e.g. essential to nationalist ideology and congress vision was "that the collective welfare of all Indians could be improved by restructuring the relations" and "subordinating the interests of self, family and caste to the interests of the Indian Nation".

47. McLane, R. John, op.cit., 1977, pp.10-12.
Once the legitimacy of the new forms of collective action was recognized, there emerged from within the interstices of multifarious struggles the same Proteus. All popular movements of the colonial period were led and directed by "middle class" leaders. 50 Peasant movements were mainly initiated and led by "urban middle-class professionals and the intelligentsia". 51

Again, that the "educated middle class" formed the 'spearhead and had throughout remained central to nationalist movement has been well documented. 52 In sum: all struggles produced a whole range of spokesmen, representatives, leaders and office bearers of the attendant institutions and organizations and they together constituted a social formation characteristic of the 'man of cognition'.

Once the colonial society seized upon 'collectivism' -- which had an in-built mechanism for the transcendence of existing forms of work -- it constantly struggled to enter that distinct domain wherein ensconced was the foreigner perpetuating and enjoying a particular mode of work-Moksa. Notwithstanding other aspects, a critical consequence of foreigner's disposal from that domain was the structuration and formation of the Indian new middle class, in various institutions of state and society, having a perdurable mode of work-Moksa.

The British new middle class had struggled against the well entrenched aristocratic and bourgeois ideals. It emerged

50. Sarkar, S., Popular Movements and Middle Class Leadership in Late Colonial India, Calcutta: Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, 1985. This analysis, however, is a misplaced Marxist understanding of various struggles.


by undermining and displacing such ideals from within the British society and state. However, the process of formation and struggles of the new middle class in the colonial society, from the very beginning, could develop and maintain an uninhibited political dialogue with its counterpart of the colonial state. The 'class' within the state internalized the effects of the political struggles, developed a political consciousness and continuously transformed the very nature and character of the colonial state. In turn, the state impinged upon the political stance of the freedom struggles; influenced and moulded direction of political course; determined the political domain and set the limits for possible political strategies. 53

In fact colonial state behaved not as the 'British' but predominantly as the British new middle class. For instance, the central orientation of the colonial state with time emerged in the form of a concern "for providing educational and related service opportunities that required the skills and temperament of the office rather than the scepter and sword". 54 Again the distinct class character of the new middle class within the colonial state can be judged from the fact that British officialdom had simply remained practically unaware of the political voice of the non-official British community in colonial India. 55

On the other hand, for instance Congress -- the main vehicle of freedom struggle -- displayed the predominant organizational

ethos of the new middle class. Its structuration was marked by a ruthless adherence to well defined norms and well codified rules, regulations and procedures of the distinct political discourse. Its leader throughout remained "deeply influenced by ideas imbedded within British law, administration, and political values, including respect for correct procedure, evidence and rights, and for the distinctions and conflict between private and public obligations".56 He always desired political action within the legitimate limits of 'law' which made immense demands of self-control on Congress members. Above all, he stressed the need to build a grassroots organization equipped with regular machinery of professional staff that "should, so far as possible, be whole time workers, and may, if necessary, be paid out of the Provincial or District funds".57 Though with differing aims, the organizational outfit which had emerged in colonial society was more or less structurally akin to the one within the colonial state. This was so because "from the early days of Indian Nationalism there was a conviction among the Indian leaders that British officialdom in India was the real barrier to the attainment of India's legitimate aspirations ...."58

Although the one within the colonial state was predominantly British and the other within the colonial society was completely Indian, yet both well recognized the common denominator of politics since their structuration centrally rested on the principle of 'collectivism'. Throughout the long drawn struggles of free,

57. ibid., p.239.
movement both sides had never failed to understand legitimate limits and language of a particular political discourse. Subsequent question of the Indianization of services etc. had throughout remained mainly hinged to the thrusts of the political struggles.

In sum: the emergence and continuation of political struggles and the whole process of an uninterrupted dialogue between colonial state and politics of freedom movement is an outstanding testimony that both sides, though antagonistic to each other, however, had well identified and understood the legitimate limits of the political language of a 'single class' and had always recognized the parameters of political discourse on a particular 'class ground' whereupon was fought the war of freedom. If the concept of class is at all to be retained central to the analysis of colonialism, then barring the initial phases, much of the colonial question can be properly understood only through the idiom of the new middle class. Notwithstanding other aspects, Independence saw the formation of a politically conscious Indian new middle class and its structuration in various institutions of state and society.

NEW MIDDLE CLASS IN INDEPENDENT INDIA

The argument presented so far is that rise of collectivism was concomitant with the formation of the British new middle class which had produced drastic changes in British class structure and altered the very nature and character of the British state. The effects of collectivism were almost simultaneously transmitted and imparted by the British state and society to the colonial state in India. The increasing

59. ibid. pp.53-66 see for Indianization of the civil services in India.
reorientation and restructuration of the colonial state around the principle of collectivism turned it into a repository of white-collar workers. Also the dissemination of collectivist thought to colonial society had opened the path and raised the possibilities for innumerable new forms of 'collective action'.

Notwithstanding the other aspects of the 'freedom movement', an outcome of critical significance was that from within the interstices of multifarious struggles had emerged a politically conscious new middle class. The struggles of the British new middle class were particularly against the already entrenched aristocratic and bourgeois ideals and its emergence and formation had throughout remained contingent upon the displacement of those ideals from inside the British state and society.

The formation-process of the Indian new middle class, though had posed a serious challenge of transformation to traditional structures; yet its struggles were, in essence, never directed against the traditional social structure. The struggles of the Indian new middle class were mainly against a similar social formation ensconced in the colonial state. The disposal of the 'foreigner' from within the colonial state meant the structuration of the Indian new middle class in various institutions of state and society.

Historical Disjunction, Increasing Indeterminacy and Mystification of Relation Between Work and Work-Moksa: Expansion of The Indian New Middle Class

The post-independent India, witnessed a broader process
of modernization of traditional social structure. The new middle class which had already captured a vantage-ground in the emergent new structures (including the political) had soon to acquire an independent class dynamics producing far reaching consequences in the Indian social structure. The social existence of this nascent social formation -- an incarnation of the 'man of cognition' -- remained centrally hinged to the new forms of knowledge. From the very outset, this class had been a harbinger (and throughout had to remain so) of new ideology of secularism, egalitarianism, justice and freedom whereupon were built the institutions of democracy.* The broader limits of discourse about the nature and character of the Indian state were determined by this class. Again it was this class that demarcated the parameters of the debate wherefrom emerged the new social, economic, political and legal structures of modern India.

In essence, the new forms of knowledge structured upon collectivism, created a new domain of work-Moksya, whereby work was no more required to be contingent upon the traditional structures viz., kinship, caste, religion etc. The process was more of a historical and ideological disjunction since henceonwards work would draw its meaning, organization and vitality etc. from the new emergent structures. As discussed earlier, collectivism's

61. For instance, economic anthropology of Godelier points to the emergence of the idea of work separate from such structural locations to be seen as a discrete activity in a distinct 'economic' domain, see, Godelier, M., 'Work and its representations: a research proposal' History Workshop Journal Vol.10, 1980. However anthropological history of 'work' remains yet unexplored.

* Democracy & socialism are different forms of collectivism.
inherent potential raises enormous possibilities for the transcen
dence of the existing forms of work and confers legitimacy on
new forms of work -- having increased moment of work-Moksa.
Above all collectivism incorporates such an in-built mechanism
that ensures the flow of work-Moksa from any other societal source.

The direct relation of work and work-Moksa (as in agricul-
ture, artisan etc.) recedes into the background and relation in
the new domain becomes hazy, mystified and indeterminate. Now
the entry into such a new domain meant that "personality is
integrated through a planned, a socially directed, collective
endeavour for historically understood end ..."62 'Subject' of
contemporary Indian history struggled to create and seek entry
into the democratic institutions and organizations of Independent
India. This resulted in an unprecedented growth of corporations,
departments, offices related to agriculture, industry and commerce;
banking, insurance & financial organizations; educational, legal
and political institutions; scientific and industrial research
bodies; co-operative, rural & community development, and social
welfare programmes and host of other institutions and organizations.
There also cropped up a plethora of autonomous, semi-autonomous
and voluntary organizations and associations.

This led to a vast expansion of the new middle class due
to an enormous growth of administrators, executives, managers,
teachers, scientists, doctors, engineers, judges, lawyers; repre-
sentatives, spokesmen and leaders advocating diverse interests;
supervisors, assistants, deputies and clerks etc.. The total
employment in the secure, regular and organized domain, for the
year 1984, has been reckoned at 234 lakhs: central Govt. (33.30
lakhs), State Govts. (61.47 lakhs), Quasi-Govt. (52.43 lakhs).
local bodies (21.29 lakhs), and non-Govt. (65.82 lakhs). 63

Above all the new middle class flourished conveniently within the institutions of state, making use of the ideological advantage as the presumed promoter and defender of collective interests -- not merely an upholder of democracy but also displaying colours of welfarism and socialism. For instance while in 1939 the central government of undivided India had on its pay roll 8.09 lakh employees, the number after partition fast rose to 12.03 lakhs in 1951 -- thus registering an increase of about fifty percent. 64

The numerical strength further rose to 33.30 lakhs in 1984 -- roughly a three times growth within three decades since 1950s.

In fact, true to the essence of collectivism, internal to the whole process is an in-built tendency of an endless multiplication leading to the creation of departments, boards, commissions, committees and sundry advisory, controlling, regulatory and supervisory bodies etc. -- hence reproducing white-collar positions. Long time back administration reforms commission noted:

"... prominent feature of personnel system today is the rapid rate of growth of the staff employed under Government. This is true as much of the state Govts. as of the Central Govt. There has been proliferation of personnel not only in the field organizations, but also at the level of State Secretariats and

63. India, A Statistical Outline, Delhi: Oxford & I.B.H. Publishers, 1987(8th ed.)pl9. The figures also include the so called 'labour aristocracy'. Since this class analysis is not structured upon 'work' and moreover compared with the uncertain and irregular conditions of work-Moksa moment at the lowest levels, their inclusion into the new middle class is far from problematic. (Position subject to change in future).

Directorates. ... The expenditure on salaries and allowances has accounted as much as 55 per cent of the total revenue expenditure in all states.65

The situation of 1960s is still perpetuating unabated in the 1980s. Given state's permanent commitment to renumeration to employees, salaries remain the main burden and continue to soak the revenues -- revenue expenditure on salaries has been increasing at an estimated rate of 2 per cent/anum. Moreover because of the attempt to keep apace with inflation rates, pressures on revenue account have been increasing steadily over the years.

"With every instalment of Dearness Allowance given to central government staff, pressures mount on state governments for an equivalent increase. Anywhere between 50 per cent and 60 per cent of revenue expenditures are accounted for by wages and salaries." 66

That new middle class soaks up and consumes major share of the surpluses is true for almost all other fields. Despite public sector's67 claims of 'commanding heights' and a 'model employer', its history is marked by scandalous losses. Notwithstanding other aspects, the creation of public sector meant an enormous expansion of the new middle class. At least one central interest it serves is to support and provide a secure niche to

a larger section of the new middle class. Of critical significance is the increasing penetration of the new middle class in the rural social structure. The village government, extension of banking education and health facilities, co-operatives, community and rural development programmes etc. employ a large number of permanent salaried employees. They have emerged as a new social force and has added a new dimension within the rural society.

"Apart from the direct economic and social effects of this additional group of employees and the programmes they administer, they represent a new social force in rural India. They are on the one hand a new group of intermediaries between village and the government, replacing the traditional one; on the other they are source of power, influence and patronage ..." 68

Moreover, that substantial funds allocated for various developmental programmes dry up due to leakages, corruption etc. before reaching the *targetted population* 69 simply speaks of the power and influence of the new middle class. As regarding political parties; all have well structured bureaucracies and employ a large number of salaried personnel, however, there is hardly any literature about their salary structures or modes of payment. Though their budgetary and financial matters are hazy and mystified, yet it can be argued with fair certainty that considerably large sums are involved in the form of salaries etc. for running political organizations. Besides that 'man of cognition' has invented and created a whole range of voluntary, autonomous or semi-autonomous associations representing diverse kinds of interests. He has struggled through complex mechanisms

69. See, Pual, S. and Subramanian, A., 'Developmental Programmes (...Cont.)
to make sure that provisions for the social existence of such associations within society are guaranteed by the state.

'Man of cognition' did not even spare the exclusive domain of labour i.e. trade unions. Indian trade unions incorporate, skill, expertise and all other features characteristic of the large managements and corporations. Their organizations generally appear to be all head and no body -- a series of official and executive organs at various levels employing numerous white-collar workers. The typical trade union leader is well educated, comes from a high status family and generally belongs to a political party -- in all of this he is very different from workers he leads. Leaders tossed up from ranks are in minority; the rosters of Indian unions include officials with distinguished backgrounds and most of them were formerly clerks or professionals. Indian trade Unions:

"tend to, in some respects, become mirror images of capitalist corporate organizations. Skills and expertise become highly valued, a concentration of decision making develops, a hierarchic structure is copied. The unions begin to escape from the control of the rank and file workers. The union gets dominated by the professional, full time, specialist official ...."  

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71. Millen, H.B., The Political Role of Labour in Developing Countries, Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966, p.27, (see also p.18.).
In good many instances the men who stand at the top of the structure are self-appointed spokesmen for a membership which is at best only partially committed in its loyalties to the union. However, what is of critical importance to this analysis, is that a casual glance at the expenditure statements of thousands of trade unions involving crores of rupees reveals that only about 15% of union funds are utilized for tasks such as compensation to members; sickness, funeral, unemployment, educational, social and religious benefits; legal aspects and conducting trade disputes; and publication of periodicals etc. While whopping 85% of the budget is spent on salaries, allowances and expenses of officials, office establishments and other expenses. The same is more or less true of Federations of worker's unions and even of the Employer's unions. In sum: thriving on new forms of knowledge structured upon 'collectivism', in-built whereinto is the mechanism for the creation of new forms of work (with increased work-Moksa moment), the new middle class has struggled to ensure a wider and diffuse domain of perdurable work-Moksa in the interstices of Indian social structure. The new middle class is irrepressibly ballooning within the institutions of state and society.

New Middle Class' Insatiable Drive Towards Work-Moksa

It is to be noted that a great many elements of the new middle class have already been discussed. Different facets of

73. See for instance, Trade Unions in India, Ministry of Labour, Govt. of India, 1966 esp., pp.64-81 & 88-89.
Indian administration have been elaborated. Significantly, bureaucracy in the sociological framework of culture, social system and personality etc. has also been well analysed. There are valuable studies of professions which have discussed particularly the upper stratum of the new middle class. The emergence of industrial bureaucracies within the production processes; and development of modern ethos and role-structures of political, intellectual and bureaucratic macro-structures consistent with democratic institutions albeit under the structural constraints of Indian society have been seriously examined.

All such contributions are vital to the understanding of the different aspects of the new middle class.

However the present analysis is an attempt to develop a socio-historical perspective of the Indian new middle class. The effort is to historically capture, in essence, the social dynamics of this class in the context of changing social structure.


in India. The process of its formation is not seen as the outcome of education, legal system, industrialization or mode of production etc. Central to this perspective is the inherent 'work-Moksa' potential of 'collectivism'. Above all, the perspective retains an active and struggling 'subject' in the centrestage of history. Subject's struggles around 'collectivism' had resulted in the creation or adoption of democratic institutions and had even effected qualitative changes in the organization of production processes. The perspective does not conceive a dormant 'man of cognition' in history or as merely serving the interests of other classes.

Central to the increasing dissemination of 'collectivism' and all new forms of 'collective action' had remained the same Proteus: 'Man of cognition' had struggled and created for himself an immense social space within the interstices of new structures whereby has flourished the social formation of the new middle class. The Protean character of this class is remarkable in that it acquires different forms in a variety of structures. Its class essence i.e. 'durability of work-Moksa' remains the same.

The degree and content of its essence may vary in different structural locations: it may mean non-work-time; work-conditions, autonomy and freedom at work; access to institutional and organization support; guarantee of life long employment, pension, life and health insurance and other privileges and perks etc. Above all, it may mean undisrupted civil amenities or stable and peaceful conditions so that non-work time is expended


78. Very recently, efforts have been made to understand the changing historical meaning and significance of 'work' as a 'social construct', see Joyce, P (ed), The Historical Meanings of Work, Cambridge University Press, 1987; however, the exercise is still within the preconstituted social.
smoothly in the civil society. Indian new middle class has an insatiable desire for work-Moksa: notwithstanding five days week and stipulated large number of holidays a big question mark hangs on its punctuality and performance at 'office'. Recently a serious concern has been voiced on the official edicts of proclaiming 'holidays' on the slightest pretexts:

"If things go on this rate, the day may not be far when this country would have many weeks in the year of sabaths each...

Almost everyone seems to have developed a vested interest in maximizing pay and perks and minimizing 'work and productivity'.79

This class'drive for work-Moksa knows no limits: delays in the execution of developmental projects regularly impose upon the country whopping losses of crores of rupees. It has been argued that merely setting up of offices or creation of departments is no guarantee for the execution of developmental work. Different development-offices for every conceivable developmental activity have for long existed down to district levels in the country. However predominant preoccupation of such offices (even in 'line' as opposed to staff departments) has remained with what has been termed as their 'internal administration';

"Office establishment matters such as 'Travel Allowance Bills', gradation lists of seniority, promotion policies, provident fund accounts and pensions, to name a just few, invariably dominate office time where the work-effort is already at a low-level equilibrium".80

79. Times of India, Jan.28, 1988, "When Shall We Work".
Significantly the development is at least generating the development of work-Moksa for the new middle class. The above discussed socio-historical perspective hinges centrally to this assumption i.e. the formation of the new middle class is an ultimate culmination of 'subject's historical search for a perdurable mode of work-Moksa.

**SOCIO-POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEW MIDDLE CLASS**

There exists no social and political theory of the Indian new middle class. Even in the west, in the absence of an adequate theory of the new middle class, the social and political significance of this class has remained hazy and unclear. Generally, class and political theories (particularly of the Marxist Variety) in their extreme moments of stress have sought refuge and solace in the 'state'\(^1\) -- an institution posited external to civil society and mostly described as ruthless, brute and repressive creation of capitalist class or 'cold Monster' etc. However, efforts have also been made to build bridges between state and Indian society: by equating 'state' with 'market'\(^2\) or constructing a 'continuum'\(^3\) between Indian state and society etc. But this type of analyses also do retain abstraction of state external to civil society. Such a conception of state needs to be abandoned.

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Unobtrusive Politics of New Middle Class Within The Indian State

To this analysis state is within society and very much part and parcel of it. A state structured upon 'collectivism' (whether democratic, social democratic or socialistic) is simply a repository of the new middle class. It is predominantly the political ground of this class. Notwithstanding other aspects, struggles of the new middle class built the body of the Indian state, as discussed earlier, a secure and durable domain for the perpetuation of a particular mode of work—Moksha. The politics of the new middle class is not to be mainly understood in the form of political battles fought around entrenched or opposing 'warring interests' etc. This class consistently exercises its social and political influence in a subtle and invisible fashion (evolving rules, laws & even secrecy etc.) from within the state.

The politics of this class is discreet and circumspect which has repeatedly jumped out of social and political theories. In fact, it is the new middle class which is the life-line of 'democracy' in India. This political institution may reduce to dwarfism without the knowledge, information, specialization and professional expertise of this class. It is the new middle class that determines the parameters of political discourse hence influencing the political content of policy, planning etc. in all the fields.

"The model on which the Indian system is based is one in which political leadership lays down the broad lines of policy, while the administration is supposed to apply these policies to particular cases, but ... the actual relationship has been
On the sheer strength of 'collectivism' (translated as public interest) the new middle class formulates policies and takes decisions which determine the fate and direction of wider society. All classes, in the absence of requisite knowledge and particular expertise, may not even understand the meaning and repercussions of such decisions taken on behalf of them. State more or less turns out to be exclusive prerogative of the 'man of cognition'. Even seasoned politicians are no match to the ingenuity of the new middle class.

"It is the bureaucracy which in reality frames policies. A minister's options in policy decisions are generally limited. He has to select out of alternatives presented by the bureaucracy. Generally the bureaucracy presents policy alternatives before the minister in such a way that he approves in reality what the departmental bureaucracy wants, ... the influence of bureaucracy is much more than is generally assumed. It has been argued that all assumptions which underlie the Indian bureaucracy are false or at best they are a priori beliefs and not validated facts. In the garb of 'anonymity' and 'neutrality' civil servants misuse and abuse power in collusion with politicians. Hundreds and thousands of officials in secretariats and field-offices issue licenses, approve contracts and give orders on crucial issues having significant social and political implications. The power is

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* To this analysis, administration, bureaucracy, professions, intelligentsia etc. are merely different 'forms' of the new middle class; having the same class-essence.
heavily and increasingly in the hands of officials. The role of politician is largely confined to that of choosing between the alternatives as presented to him by officials. Active political involvement of civil service, collusion between bureaucracy and political leaders and liaison between administration and political parties for mutual benefits and political gains have been well established. It is to such an extent that politicians are generally captives and prisoners of the bureaucratic labyrinth. 86

Significantly central to the suggested-solutions to the complex problem, forwarded by yet another structural component of the same class (i.e. intelligentsia) is the thinking that the politicians in power should 'permanently employ' outsider experts and subject specialists for seeking advice on policy matters. Such a thinking falls well within the ideology of the new middle class: firstly it may mean simply a replacement of one structural component by another of the same class; secondly it may tentamount to a further growth of the new middle class. Hidden under such proclamations made in the interest of other classes, is precisely the politics of the new middle class.

New Middle Class' Political Manifestation In Economy And Society

The politics of the new middle class is interwoven in a complex way in various structural crevices of Indian society. All processes viz. industrialization, agriculture, urbanization, rural development, education etc., have not escaped the social and political imprint of the new middle class. The popularly known 'politician-babu' 'permit-raj' in industry hardly needs any elaboration. Central to the policy of industrialization has 86. See, ibid., pp. 252-77.
remained the institutionalized form of the new middle class which has continuously made expanding claims on government expenditure.

"Behind the industrial policy is the rise of a new class, based on government bureaucracies, resembling the ruling 'intelligentsia' of socialist countries, that both looks down on business and depends on its power to license the private sector to extract the rents that make up much of its income". 87

There is considerable evidence of overstaffing, private appropriation of public goods and other forms of corruption in public sector; and more-over this inefficiency etc. has been increasing over time. The root-cause of these problems has been identified in the active political involvement of 'managements' in the public sector.

"In India the political control of public sector has frequently meant that management is extremely politicised ... becoming part of the exchange and other benefits that form the basis of faction formation and alliances in Indian politics." 88

The politicisation of managements in public sector has substantially affected the industrial policy and even the performance of private sector. Though its counterpart in private sector is more efficient and less politicised, yet private corporate managements have also effected a significant retreat of the capitalist class similar to the one witnessed by Western


88. ibid., p.81.
capitalism. Again the much sought after solutions simply can't lie outside the ambit of the new middle class' ideology. For instance, if public sector managements are too political and inefficient, then fire the incompetents and create or organize a more highly politicised techno-managerial meritocracy. It may be reiterated that 'collectivism' has a basic 'commitment' to ensure the socio-political existence of the new middle class.

The main bulk of the new middle class lies in cities and towns interspersed in public administration, transportation, communication, banking, life insurance, educational institutions, public hospitals, professional organizations, voluntary or non-governmental associations, political parties and trade unions etc. Its strategic placement in urban centers (including the seats of power) and being producer, custodian and disseminator of new forms of knowledge, consistent with new democratic structures, directly influences the socio-political processes in India. In a country where larger sections of the population are still embedded in traditional structures, new middle class remains the main vehicle of perpetuating secular, egalitarian, democratic and socialistic values.* Its very existence in society and proximity to state and democratic institutions confers legitimacy on new social, political and other structures of modern India. Above all new middle class is highly organized; its unions being no less militant than workers' unions:

"In India, unlike the countries that industrialized earlier, white-collar unions constitute a large proportion of the organized work-force. National unions those with the greatest capacity to

* Struggles within the new middle class are also centred around the reinterpretations of traditional structures.
act on all-India basis, tend to be predominantly white-collar: employees of the Life Insurance Corporation of India, of the post and Telegraph Department and of nationalized banks. 89

It has been argued that white-collar and workers' unions display quite different patterns of behaviour i.e. role of white-collar unions is generally non-militant. It is further held that because of the amorphous nature of the new middle class, policies aspirations and attitudes of white-collar unions are never characteristic of the whole class, rather they are often fragmented projections of particularistic interests such as those of bank clerks, insurance employees or public servants etc.

However the experience of the white-collar strikes in India points to the contrary i.e. "... proneness to strike action, their indulgence in direct action by seeking alliance with other employees and their concern with manifold social, economic and political issues". 90 White-collar unions "adopt new strategies and tactics, which may not be very different from those adopted by industrial workers". 91 As the predominant concern of white-collar workers remains with salaries, dearness allowance, bonus etc., the white-collar unions display a strong resistance to any reduction in 'real earnings' or against any scheme of retrenchment etc. of the employees. And in a situation, "if the efforts of the employees fail to get adequate compensation" and the conflict becomes inevitable white-collar unions "are likely to adopt

91. ibid.
an aggressive and militant course of action like that of manual workers".\textsuperscript{92}

Many a times the politics of the new middle class has paralysed governments, threatened their existence and marred the election prospects of various political parties in India. A recent analysis\textsuperscript{93} demonstrates that the "two anti-reservation agitations in Gujarat were essentially struggles within the middle class..." In both the agitations, besides 'old middle class' the other predominant political actor had been the new middle class. Doctors, engineers, teachers, journalists, lawyers, bureaucracies and employees of the state government, municipal corporations of various cities, banks, post-offices, electricity and other boards and students had played an active and radical political role in those anti-reservation agitations and had virtually paralysed the governments in 1981 and 1985.

The new middle class had utilized both the traditional structures viz. caste, religion etc. as well as the new structures of mass media, press, educational institutions and bureaucracies etc. to guard and consolidate its existing socio-economic position in society. The new middle class perceived in the reservation policy a threat of encroachment to its social position and demonstrated against it an extreme political solidarity. Strikes by professionals\textsuperscript{94} viz. doctors, teachers, lawyers etc. have recurred, in recent time with increasing frequency. Strikes resorted to as

\textsuperscript{92} ibid. pp.87-88.
\textsuperscript{93} Shah, G., 'Middle Class Politics: Case of Anti-Reservation Agitations in Gujarat', Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. XXII, Annual Number, May 1987, AN 155-72.
\textsuperscript{94} The Times of India, Strikes by Professionals, Dec. 15, 1986.
'means of genuine grievance redressal' has often taken the form of absolute socio-economic battles.

The professionals are no more living in ivory towers, their social position has increasingly become similar to the rest of the new middle class. In the face of changing social reality, their socio-economic concerns have found a serious translation into political action. The emerging political orientation is more or less at par with the new middle class. No wonder, central to the above discussed anti-reservation agitations were also doctors, engineers, teachers and lawyers. Judged against such a cohesive political consciousness, notions of fragmentation etc. turn out to be a superficial reading of the new middle class, and are simply frivolous.

Discreet Politicalization of The New Middle Class in Urban and Rural Social Structures

The politics of the new middle class is even more intricately manifest in the phenomenon of urbanization. Beginning with the policy formulation down to implementation etc. the processes of city and town planning, urban development, land acquisition etc. are heavily influenced by the active political involvement of the new middle class. The politicians in liaison with white-collar at various levels strive to build secure political constituencies in urban centers. In the beginning, the initiative for urban policy formulation is ... preempted by politicians and bureaucrats in state governments, at the top of the representative and bureaucratic hierarchies. 95 At the level of implementation,

particularistic interests impinge upon city administrations. Local representatives, spokesmen and leaders etc. intervene, bargain and massage the administrative process.

White-collar workers, working in different departments of municipal corporations get initiated and graduate to the subtle art of politics. Once politicised, 'white-collar' carries out the translation of various political interests in the form of new roads, bridges, construction and demolition of colonies, selection of sites, land acquisition, payment of compensation, electric connections, water supply, street lightening etc. Even there is politicking of garbage disposal. "By satisfying particularistic claims political and bureaucratic actors earn the loyalty and support of their constituents".\textsuperscript{96} The active political involvement of the new middle class in liaison with politicians translates and converts administrative decisions into patronage and creation of secure political constituencies in urban centers.

The whole process has a two pronged effect which is conducive to the politics and growth of the new middle class. Firstly, the new middle class placed within the institutions of urban administrations etc. graduates to the intricate, complex and manifaceted urban politics. Secondly large number of spokesmen, representatives and local leaders etc. emerge from among the different sections of urban population (e.g. such as unemployed educated youth etc.) as advocates of diverse interests. They get absorbed in (or create and form) various societies.

\textsuperscript{96} ibid.
associations, non-governmental organizations and even in the existing political structure -- hence substantially enhancing the growth of the new middle class.

A similar process is also at work within the rural social structure. The 'white-collar' working in state-sponsored programmes, co-operatives movement, Panchayati raj, and other developmental schemes, is highly politicised and is an active participant in the political process that nurtures political constituencies for various politicians or parties. It has been noted to the extent in the context of 'development administration' that:

"... administrative operations from policy formations through implementation are yet another expression of politics. As such development administration can be accurately treated and more usefully analysed as part of the political system ..." 97

The same is more or less, true of all other fields. Notwithstanding other aspects, educational structure is yet another 'political ground' in rural India. 'Salaried man' including the 'teacher' plays all kinds of politics both within the 'educational structure' as well as in the rural society. What is of critical significance is that teachers are, of their own, drawn to politics. 98

The politics of general administration etc. has already been discussed above. In fact, the increasing penetration of the 'institutionalized form of the new middle class' in rural India, is of crucial significance since it represents the parameters of

of the modern political discourse. The education, social status, life-style and a durable mode of work-Moksha of the 'white-collar', in essence, is an ideological construct for the dreams and ambitions of the illiterate, downtrodden, soil-stricken and work-pressed rural poor.

The very 'collar' being white makes real sense and meaning, and forms a subtle politico-ideological appeal to the villager. Even the extreme 'neutral' presence of the white-collar in the rural social structure is a 'political idiom' that transmits the effects of modern political structure. Above all the 'salaried man' remains in the center-stage wherefrom accrue the benefits of all the developmental programmes etc. No wonder then that 'white-collar' alongwith local and state level leaders remains central to the translation of various political considerations.

The whole network of institutions in rural India which is a repository of the new middle class can, in fact, be treated as a 'political form'. This 'political form' effected significant changes in rural structure and opened new paths for the rural population to transcend their existing forms of work. The traditional structures viz. caste, religion etc. have found new interpretations and are given new meanings. Even "traditional leaders changed their political allegiance and loyalty and advocated secularism, democracy and equality". Sections of the new power elite that has emerged in rural India are:

"Those people who wield political power but do not necessarily enjoy corresponding economic positions, ... These elites

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would have a regular source of income, including salaries of some members of the family working in cities or elsewhere or in the village itself.\textsuperscript{100}

As the new institutions were absorbed into the fabric of social and economic relationships in the countryside, they also brought about a new structure of political careerism.

\textldots co-operative mechanisms, educational societies, and local government institutions had several consequences. One important effect was to provide the ambitious with resources by which they have been able to enhance their political careers.\textsuperscript{101}

Any new qualification such as social work or representation of collective interest meant a close interaction with operational and implementation processes of various developmental programmes. By opening new paths one could avail of new opportunities and accrue benefits from public resource distributions, which encouraged "political aspirants to come forward in order to enhance personal careers."\textsuperscript{102}

Similar to new middle class' careerism there emerged a new structure of political careerism. Thus besides the salaried 'political form' of the new middle class its counterpart grew well within the 'power elite' or 'expansive elite' i.e. in the rural political structure. To this analysis, the only difference being that while former's work-Moksa is perdurable (guaranteed by life long employment), the work-Moksa moment of the later is punctuated since it remains contingent upon the 'term'.

\textsuperscript{100} Sharma, K.L., 'Power Elite in Rural India,' in, ibid., p.150.
\textsuperscript{102} ibid., p.20.
and duration of political office. However the combined social and political effects of both generate the same 'work-Moksa' consequences in the rural social structure.

The new middle class has created and structured upon the 'work-Moksa' potential of collectivism, yet another domain in the form of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Since 1970s a plethora of NGOs has emerged -- constituted by Developmental Action Groups, Social Action Groups, and Voluntary Agencies etc. representing diverse collective causes such as rural uplift, women's problems, environmental concerns, matters of public health and child welfare etc., and has formed an institutional part of public life. The whole 'sector' has grown into complex organizations and elaborate managements involving crores of rupees in the form of funds from abroad as well as public and private donations from within the country.

The socially motivated NGOs -- characteristic of social activism structured upon 'collectivism' -- though have professed to be above politics and displayed abhorrence and distanciation from politics, however, "what they conveniently ignored is that even the apparently non-political development and social activity has a political content". NGOs "can be referred to as a 'sector' of the Indian polity". This sector has grown into a significant factor in the polity and is simply yet another social and political form of the new middle class.

103. The Times of India, Jan. 12, 1988 'Politics without People: Role of Voluntary Agencies'.
104. Ibid.
Independent Socio-Political Dynamics of New Middle Class

The new middle class has emerged, grown and got structured through the work-Moksa potential of collectivism. Theoretically and practically it can not fore-close such paths and options as lead into its perdurable domain of work-Moksa. Obviously, one of the central commitments of the new middle class remains to enhance the secure and durable existence e.g. 'employed-status' of the ever increasing proportion of the population. Thus, notwithstanding the other aspects, underneath the whole policy structure ranging from 'public sector' to green revolution has lied the weighty consideration and crucial issue of employment.105

The education being no exception to this proposition, and moreover since it remains the main vehicle for any transition into the new middle class; such a compelling priority heavily influenced the education policy. No wonder then that post-independent period witnessed a colossal growth of the educational structure. Forced expansion in employment resulted in the, already discussed, unprecedented growth of the new middle class, disproportionate to the economic growth.106 The politics in and of the educational structure is well documented.107 Student-politics has formed the radical wing of the new middle class.108


108. For unemployment, student-politics etc. see Rudolph, L.I. and Rudolph, S.H. op.cit., 1987, chap.11.
what is more, the massive educated unemployed youth clamouring for jobs has conferred a standing legitimacy on any broadening of the 'salaried domain', irrespective of the consequence to economy etc. In fact the new middle class has its own logic of development and has acquired an independent socio-political dynamics in the Indian society.

Though very much in the Indian air, the problematic of the Indian new middle class has missed the grasp of social and political theories. Often the concerns of the new middle class have emerged peripherally in various discussions. For instance, in a very recent analysis of the political economy of the Indian state there is abundance of arguments such as the importance of 'white-collar' in the organized sector; existence of world's third largest professional class; organizational and mobilization strength of white-collar profession; white-collar unions having greatest capacity to act on all-India basis; student-politics as a determining force; a plethora of voluntary associations; political marginality of labour and private capital; dependent nature of capitalism etc. and above all:

"The vast majority of doctors, scientists, engineers, teachers and professors are employees of the government organizations. Because government is the principal employer of managers

109. In the recent context, see, The Times of India, 'Destruction of the New Middle Class' (May 10, 1984); 'All Aboard the Middle Class' (Oct. 7, 1984); 'Middle Class Budget' (March, 1986); 'Middle Class under Siege' (Dec. 9, 1987); 'Ideolcgy and Economics' (March 28, 1988).

technicians and clerks -- generally speaking the white-collar class -- the interests of India's non-capitalist, non-property owning middle classes are closely related to those of the state.111

However by positing state between 'labour' and 'capital' in order to build the so called 'continuum' the conclusions derived are that Indian state is a self-determining, self-justifying, self-serving and consumptionist 'third-actor' which is marginalizing the other classes. In the absence of an adequate theory of the new middle class and plausible conception of state such conclusions are but natural. The solutions lie beyond the domain of 'political economy'; which has already long skirted in vain, around the problematic of the new middle class. In fact, it is the Indian new middle class entrenched within the state and society which is self-determining, self-justifying, self-perpetuating, self-serving and consumptionist; and above all socially and politically marginalizing other classes in India. The new middle class is a perdurable mode of work-Moksa, and the socio-political dynamics of the new middle class is producing far reaching consequences in the Indian social structure.

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111. ibid., p.255.